# PUBLIC OPINION AND JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES DURING THE KOIZUMI ADMINISTRATION

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# ABSTRACT

Recent studies diverge in their assessments of the extent to which Japanese public opinion may have an influence in foreign policy-making. Societal participation has traditionally not played a significant role in policy formation. This view has been strongly represented in academia until today. Over the 1990s a visible change and an emerging societal activism was taking place in Japan. Research has only recently begun to understand how, and to what extend, public opinion affects the policy-making process on salient domestic issues, but we know far less about the relationship to and effects of public opinion on Japan's foreign policy-making.

The aim of this PhD thesis is to take a closer look at the possible impact of public opinion in Japanese foreign policy decision-making during the leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi (2001-2006). More precisely, to identify and test conditions, which facilitate the impact of public opinion in the foreign policy decision-making processes of Japan. The results shall contribute to explanations of governmental behavior during a strong prime ministerial leadership. Further evidence shall be given, how and when a strong leader chooses to react to public opinion.

Methods used in this study are cases study analysis and process-tracing. Reconstruction and interpretation as well as standardized, general questions will further guide the analysis of each case study. The case studies applied are the North Korean abduction issue, the Iraq War and the Yasukuni Shrine issue. Approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis and Public Opinion Research are applied as theoretical framework to guide and structure the analysis.

By considering the three events described above, the following questions arise: When did Prime Minister Koizumi take public opinion into consideration in foreign policy decision? Under what conditions was Koizumi most likely to follow public opinion in his foreign policy decision-making? When did the public's impact vary?

On the background of these questions, this study tries to identify a reasonable model of causes guiding foreign policy decisions by considering public opinion as a determining variable. My argument is, that *the combination and relative strength* of opinion magnitudes, consensus or disagreement among elites, opinion coalition abilities, political incentives on the domestic front, Kūki/the climate of opinion and the decision stage can contribute to constituting public opinion as a determining variable in the foreign policy-making process during the Koizumi administration. Further, I argue, that the strength of each condition is mutually interdependent and therefore can help to explain variance in strengths. Lastly, I

assume that public opinion, as in the case of domestic politics, *always matters* in foreign policy decision-making albeit the degree of impact may vary.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACSA | US-Japan Acquisition and Cross-serving Agreement |
| APEC | Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation |
| ARC | Administrative Reform Council |
| ASDF | Air Self Defense Forces |
| ASEAN+3 | Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus China, Japan and South Korea |
| ASEM | Asia Europe Meeting |
| ATSML | Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law |
| CCS | Chief Cabinet Secretary |
| CS | Cabinet Secretary |
| DPJ | Democratic Party Japan |
| DPRK | Democratic People's Republic of Korea |
| EAS | East Asian Summit |
| EEZ | Exclusive Economic Zone |
| FM | Foreign Minister |
| FTA | Foreign Trade Agreement |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| GSDF | Ground Self Defense Forces |
| IAEA | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| JABF | Japan Association of Bereaved Families |
| JCP | Japan Communist Party |
| JDA | Japanese Defense Agency |
| JSDF | Japanese Self Defense Forces |
| JSP | Japan Socialist Party |
| KWP | Korean Worker's Party |
| LDP | Liberal Democratic Party |
| LP | Liberal Party |
| MHW | Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan |
| MITI | Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan |
| MSDF | Marine Self Defense Forces |
| MOF | Ministry of Finance of Japan |

| | |
|---|---|
| MOFA | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan |
| MST | Mutual Security Treaty |
| NCP | New Conservative Party |
| NDPO | National Defense Program Outline |
| NHK | Japan Broadcasting Corporation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NPO | Non-Profit Organization |
| NPT | Non Proliferation Treaty |
| NTV | Nippon Television |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| PARC | LDP's Policy Affairs Research Council |
| PKO | Peace Keeping Operations |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| ROK | Republic of Korea |
| SCAP | Supreme Command of the Allied Powers |
| SDF | Self Defense Forces |
| SDP | Social Democratic Party of Japan |
| SG | Secretary General |
| SPT | Six Party Talks |
| TCOG | US-Japan-ROK Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNPKO | United Nations Peace Keeping Operations |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| WMD | Weapons of Mass Destruction |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

# FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

Diet            Japanese Parliament

Kantei          Prime Minister's official residence

Kazokukai       The Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea

Rachi           Abduction

Rachi Giren     Parliamentarian League for the early repatriation of Japanese citizens
                kidnapped by North Korea


# TRANSLITERATION OF JAPANESE WORDS AND NAMES

Transliteration of Japanese words follows the modified Hepburn system. Japanese words are not capitalized except for names, institutions, newspapers, locations or laws. Japanese names are written by surname first followed by the first name. Japanese laws and institutions are cited in English translation. Original titles of Japanese laws, enactments, treaties and institutions are transcriped and listed in the appendix.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Japanese foreign policy-making has a reputation of indifference. In particular, Japan's patterns of behavior and foreign policy agenda often remain puzzling to many, when compared to other major industrialized powers. Japan's foreign policy has been labeled as "immobile", "reactive" and "inconsistent" for many years (Hook et al 2005; Green 2001).

The legacies of Japan's colonial past, the Second World War and the Cold War, have had greatest resonance in Northeast Asia and continue to constrain Japanese foreign policy-making. The US-Japanese Alliance is the linchpin of Japanese security and defense policy until today. As Japan seeks to develop a larger role in international economic, political and security affairs (cf. Polymeropoulos et al 2011), it must do so within these constraints of history. Relations with Asian countries, most notably those with China and Korea suffer and are difficult to sustain in a stable manner.

At the same time Japanese policy-makers are challenged by their country's domestic hardships, which have made it difficult to achieve consensus on what type of foreign policy would best serve Japan's interests. Especially in the years of the Koizumi administration (2001-2006) many unexpected developments arose that extended Japan's foreign and security policy, on the one hand, but deteriorated bilateral relations with its Asian neighbors, on the other hand.

When taking a look at the domestic sphere of Japanese policy-making process, it can be seen that societal participation has traditionally not played a significant role in policy formation in comparison to other democratic societies. Politicians, bureaucracy and big business have usually been defined as main actors in Japan's policy-making process (cf. Drifte 1996: 16; Zhao 1993: 11; van Wolferen 1993; Hook et al 2005: 45). Some refer to this group of actors as the "iron triangle" or "Japan Inc." (Berger 2007: 264; Hagström 2000: 3). This view has been strongly represented in academia until today. For a long time the main source of Japanese power was situated in the bureaucracy rather than in democratic institutions, such as the Diet (Japanese parliament), and to a lesser extent in the Prime Minister's Office (van Wolferen 1993). Kotler and Hillmann (2000: 2) have stated "the Japanese people generally refrained from challenging authority. Instead, the public

expected Japan's central government, in particular its bureaucrats, to protect and advance the public interest as a matter of course".

However, this trend has changed. It has been argued in the literature on Japan's civil society that over the 1990's political scandals and the burst of the economic bubble have made the public distrust their government. This suspicion turned into an increase of civic participation in the political process (cf. Pollard 2004: 162; Kotler and Hillman 2000). Emerging activism is part of a gradual "political realignment" including political reforms and "social restructuring" of Japan (Green 2001). Gradually, numerous actors outside the iron triangle, such as organized, non-state, non-market organizations, pressure groups, nonprofit organizations (NPOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), public opinion, and news media are increasingly involved in the policy-making process (cf. Pekannen 2003, 2006; Schwartz and Pharr 2003; Green 2001; Kingston 2005). However, "the ministries and the policy elites still wield tremendous power over all aspects of their jurisdiction" (Cooney 2007: 92). The foreign policy executives (Cabinet Secretariat, the Prime Minister's Office, the Foreign Ministry) have learned with variable effectiveness, to "manage" the activity of non-state actors (Pollard 2004: 162).

In research on Japanese civil society and particularly public opinion, the majority of scholars are of the opinion that Japanese public opinion does not have a great impact on foreign policy decision-making (cf. van Wolferen 1989; Drifte 1996; Green 2001). Other scholars have argued, that there has been significant evidence, that public opinion exerts some power in policy-making (cf. Risse-Kappen 1991; Midford 2011). Research has only recently begun to understand how, and to what extent, public opinion affects the policy-making process on salient domestic issues of Japan. Recent studies have shown that public opinion's influence has been visible, active and effective (cf. Yamamoto 1999; Schwartz and Pharr 2003; Kingston 2005). But we know far less about the relationship to and the effects of this "evolving" public opinion on Japan's foreign policy-making! The trend of an increased civic participation does not only exist in domestic affairs but in foreign affairs as well. Yamamoto Nobuhito, Professor at Keio University in Tokyo, has asserted, the Japanese government seems to be gradually trapped by the public's opinion (Asahi Shinbun: 2005.12.13).

The question therefore arises, how does the so-called "institutional and societal realignment" of the 1990's reflects itself in Japan's foreign policy decision-making of today?

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In an interview Ambassador Nishimura Mutsuyoshi, special advisor to the Cabinet, has argued, "if you are a top leader, you have to have good judgment. You really have to listen to public opinion, but at the same time, you have to have integrity and the power to decide properly" (Interview Nishimura Mutsuyoshi: 2010.09.08).

This study shall contribute to explanations of governmental behavior during a strong prime ministerial leadership. Further evidence shall be given, how and when a strong leader chooses to react to public opinion. The aim of this study is to take a closer look at *the possible impact of public opinion* in Japanese foreign policy decision-making. More precisely, to identify and test conditions, which facilitate the impact of public opinion in the foreign policy decision-making processes of Japan.

During the Koizumi administration (2001-2006), one of the longest political tenures of a prime minister in Japan, foreign policy changed. With the dispatch of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to Iraq, on the one hand, Japan's foreign and security policy became active with military personnel for the first time since the end of World War II, and took a turn towards proactivity on the international platform. On the other hand, diplomatic relations towards the neighboring countries China, North- and South Korea deteriorated strongly. Although significant improvements in relations had taken place before Koizumi's tenure, the diplomatic atmosphere in East Asia changed thereafter. Political relations between Japan and the East Asian countries became highly vulnerable to emotional issues related to the historical past. This vulnerability was enforced by political decisions and actions of Prime Minister Koizumi. Furthermore, in 1994, 1999 and 2001 significant institutional changes of the political system were enacted that enabled a different policy-making than in the years before. This type of political environment, that began to be fully implemented during the Koizumi administration, exists until today and reflects the institutional circumstances under which each Japanese prime minister has to function.

Since the Koizumi administration, the importance to examine the relationship between public opinion and the decision-maker, with regard to Japan's foreign policy directions, has increased. Tanaka Hitoshi, former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs (2002-2005) has stated at an *Asahi Shinbun* symposium, that foreign policy-making in Japan has changed. Public opinion and the media have started to have a great influence on Japan's foreign policy. In his opinion this influence has increased since the end of World War II, and especially during the Koizumi administration. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs started to become very sensitive to public opinion and showed greater responsiveness to the domestic public.

From a historical point of view, it reveals a new phenomenon in Japans foreign policy-making (Asahi Shinbun: 2005.12.13).

Koizumi was a prime minister who depended very much on public opinion for his policies as an ally against the strong opposition from both his own party, the LDP, and opposition parties. At the same time, he is described as a prime minister with a strong character, who followed his own convictions and admitted ignoring public opinion if necessary (Chan 2007).

Nevertheless, to a variable degree and depending on the situation at hand, Koizumi showed great sensitivity to national public opinion in foreign policy-making. Especially the abduction issue in North Korean-Japanese relations was one example in which Japanese public opinion was very influential. "The abduction is perhaps the first example in postwar Japan in which public opinion has significantly altered the course of diplomacy" (The Japan Times: 2007.11.19). A further very sensitive issue during the Koizumi administration, in which public perception was very strong and partially constraining the policies, was the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq and Japan's support of the Iraq War. Lastly, during the decision-making process of the prime minister to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, public opinion was said to have been taken into consideration (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2005.12.21).

By considering the three events described above, the following questions arise: When did Prime Minister Koizumi take public opinion into consideration in foreign policy decision? Under what conditions was Koizumi most likely to follow public opinion in his foreign policy decision-making? When did the public's impact vary?

On the background of these questions, this study tries to identify a reasonable model of causes guiding foreign policy decisions by considering public opinion as a determining variable. My argument is, that *the combination and relative strength* of opinion magnitudes, consensus or disagreement among elites, opinion coalition abilities, political incentives on the domestic front, Kūki/the climate of opinion and the decision stage can contribute to constituting public opinion as a determining variable in the foreign policy-making process during the Koizumi administration. Further, I argue, that the strength of each condition is mutually interdependent and therefore can help to explain variance in strengths. Lastly, I assume that public opinion, as in the case of domestic politics, *always matters* in foreign policy decision-making albeit the degree of impact may vary.

By analyzing the three cases of Japanese foreign policy during Prime Minister Koizumi's tenure mentioned above, in which sensitive issues were touched that have automatically

involved the public to a variable degree, I will demonstrate conditions under which an impact of public opinion on the prime minister's decision was most likely to occur.

The way to understand whether public opinion is an important determining variable in foreign policy-making follows a Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) approach, in particular approaches of Public Opinion Research. It is necessary to take a closer look at the domestic political environments and general policy-making processes of a country, to identify which actors and influences are involved in the decision-making process.

Without doubt, public opinion is only one of the many factors that influence the foreign policy-making process. This study does not profess, that FPA approaches have the sole universality for explaining phenomena of foreign policy-making. However, it is argued, that public opinion *is* one very important determinant of the black box, where special emphasis is put on in this study. Moreover, since public opinion research in foreign policy-making is still dominated by research on western countries, most of all public opinion in the United States, this study shall expand research and contribute to comparative opinion research by taking a closer look at the Japanese public.

In providing evidence that public opinion interplayed in past foreign policy decisions, as the normative ideal that public opinion should play in policy-making, this thesis will give partial answers to 1. the nature of the linkage process between public opinion and the decision-makers, 2. the particular relation between public opinion and foreign policy in Japan and 3. on the adaptability of the theoretical assumptions of the elitist vs. the pluralist view in the case of Japan.

In the following sections of this chapter, I will sketch my main arguments and lay down the basic concepts and definitions as well as the methodological approach of the study. Chapter two will then provide the actual theoretical framework of the study that will guide through the analysis for identifying and testing the conditions under which public opinion was an important determining variable in Japan's foreign policy decision-making in the three cases discussed.

## 1.1. Current State of Research – a short overview

### 1.1.1. Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign policy is "the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals […] (it is) the observable artefact of a political level decision" (Hermann 1978: 34).

The interest in foreign policy analysis has increased steadily. However, consensus regarding the conceptual boundaries and the most appropriate manner to analyze its substance has not been reached. A new form of analysis is the theoretical discipline of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). FPA, as a theoretical field is often described as an intersection of International Relations (IR) Theory and Public Policy. At issue is whether Foreign Policy Analysis remains a sub-field of International Relations or whether it is accepted as an independent approach for understanding and explaining state behavior (Carlsnaes 2002: 332).

The beginnings of FPA date back to the late 1950s and early 1960s[1]. All researchers use different explanatory variables but share the assumption that "foreign policy is best understood as the product of a country's internal dynamics" (Rose 1998: 148 in: Carlsnaes 2002: 334). The distinctiveness of foreign policy analysis research has been "to look below the nation-state level of analysis to the players involved" (Snyder et al 1954: 53).

Krippendorf (1963) has argued that Foreign Policy Analysis should always be put in reference to sociopolitical analysis. In his view the discipline of FPA is impossible without taking the broad societal structure of a state into account. The societal structure of a country should represent the groundwork of foreign and domestic policy, because foreign policy-makers should best represent the interests and requests of society (Krippendorf 1963: 246). Therefore, researchers should ask themselves whether foreign policy is literally *foreign* policy ("ist Aussenpolitik *Aussen*politik?") (Krippendorf 1963).

Hudson (2007) affirms this argumentation and identifies foreign policy as "the continuation of domestic politics". When the domestic field is analyzed in the context of foreign policy, "we explore the political contestation present in the larger society and how it affects foreign policy" (Hudson 2007: 125). To understand how foreign policy has been decided, one has to understand domestic policy-making first, for its effects on government behavior

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[1] The works of Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Burck, and Burton Sapin *"Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics"*, (1954), James Rosenau's *"Pre- Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy"*, (1966) and Harold and Margaret Sprout's *"Man-Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics"*, (1956), built the foundation of Foreign Policy Analysis (Hudson 2007: 14, 15).

(Hudson 2007: 128). The problem in making such an analysis is that research of the interdependence of domestic and international politics is very young. Therefore, theories[2] of this interaction have only been few compared to theories of International Relations (IR) (cf. Milner 1997).

*1.1.2. Research of Japanese public opinion and foreign policy-making*

The study of public opinion in foreign policy-making began only recently and was mainly concentrated on studies of western industrial countries such as the United States.[3] Our understanding of the Japanese public and policy-making still tends to be limited. Conclusions that have been made by American scholars for the American public opinion, cannot be simply adapted to the Japanese case. As Risse-Kappen (1991) stated: „the nature of the impact of public opinion on policy is very much context-dependent". Foyle (1999) further highlighted the importance of researching public opinion in foreign policies of different countries, because a small number of research cases only weaken the possibility of generalizing theoretical approaches developed.

In Japan and in western studies of Japanese politics the elitist view, which argues that "public opinion is often malleable and able to be manipulated to the point that it usually does not threaten to become influential" (Eldridge and Midford 2008: 3), has dominated up to now. In research, it is often claimed that public opinion has had little influence on Japanese foreign policy, and is often described as unsteady or as subject of influence by elites (Eldridge and Midford 2008: 4). Therefore, only few studies that deal especially with public opinion and Japanese foreign policy do exist.

The 1990s are viewed as the "lost decade" in which Japan lost its economic and political way and public trust in the government eroded (Kingston 2004: 1-42). This development emerged as societal activism, which is part of a gradual political and social reconstructing of Japan (Kotler and Hillman 2000: 10). The Japanese "iron triangle" of politicians, bureaucracy and big business, was severely discredited and led many to reconsider existing

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[2] Existent theories of FPA will be introduced in detail in chapter 2.

[3] For literature on public opinion and American foreign policy see works of: Lippmann (1922, 1955), Almond (1950), Herman M. (1978), Kegley and Wittkopf (1987), Page and Shapiro (1988), Graham (1989, 1994), Powlick (1991), Hinckley (1992), Holsti (1996), Foyle (1997, 1999), Sobel (2001), Entman (2004).

social and political arrangements (Kingston 2005: 242). Civic participation and public opinion did play a greater role than in the past, and "there is a growing shift in the way people perceive and interact with those who lead Japan and the institutions that govern the nation" (Kingston 2005: 3).

Since the end of the 1990s there have been numerous studies on societal transformation but mostly without any focus on foreign policy[4]. Despite this new trend, which has been analyzed quite thoroughly on the domestic sphere, there are only few studies that determine how the interplay of public opinion and the decision-makers in Japan functions, how public opinion is received by decision-makers, and as to how the connection of public opinion and foreign policy-making is determined. One of the very few major western publications that try to explain the linkages between public opinion and foreign policy in Japan are Mendel's (1961) "The Japanese People and Foreign Policy", Risse-Kappen's (1991) study "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies", Eldridge's and Midford's (2008) analysis of "public opinion in the War against terrorism" and Paul Midford's recent study "Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security: From Pacifism to Realism?" (2011). Lynn (2006), Schoff (2006) and Hughes (2006) have made significant contributions that, among other topics, have analyzed and described the significance of media, society and public opinion in Japanese foreign policy towards North Korea and the abduction issue. Also several studies on Japanese public opinion and the media in foreign policy have been conducted (cf. Shinoda 2007). However, only Risse-Kappen, Midford and Scott have tried to elaborate a framework of several domestic conditions that determine the impact of public opinion.

### 1.1.2.1. Public opinion polls in Japan

Public opinion surveys in Japan, as used in the western sense, were introduced after World War II and were encouraged by the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP). Opinion surveys were seen as an indispensable tool of democracy to involve the public in political decisions (Yamada and Synodinos 1994: 118). As the Cabinet Office outlines on their public opinion poll webpage: "In order to grasp the awareness of everyone, public

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[4] See for example works of: Yamamoto (1999), Yoshida (1999), Hasegawa (2002), Schwartz and Pharr (2003), Pekkanen (2003, 2006), Kingston (2004), Tsujinaka and Pekkanen (2007), Scott (2008).

opinion polls are conducted as a policy measure of the government" (Cabinet Office: *yoronchousa* website, translation by the author).

In 1947 the first proposals for public opinion surveys were discussed in the Prime Minister's Office together with American public opinion poll experts. Together with media representatives, news agencies and people from academia, they made the arrangements for the establishment of a public opinion poll association. In 1950 the Association for Public Opinion Research (Nihon Yoronchōsa Kyōkai) was established as an incorporated foundation. In 1965 the first bulletin on public opinions *(yoron)* was published (Japan Association for Public Opinion Research: 2012). As of April, 2012, 31 organizations were members of the Association for Public Opinion Research. They include all major Japanese newspapers as for example the *Yomiuri Shinbunsha*, the *Asahi Shinbunsha*, the *Mainichi Shinbunsha*, organization as the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT), TBS TV or the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai Hōsō Bunka Kenkyūjo) and special organizations such as the Public Relations department of the Cabinet Office (Naikakufu Daijin Kanbō Seifu Kōhō), (Japan Association for Public Opinion Research: 2012).

The Cabinet Office annually conducts its own public opinion polls on social consciousness, polls on the public's living, and polls on foreign policy. These polls are displayed on the Cabinet Office's website and date back to 1977. Additionally, special opinion polls on the Self Defense Forces (SDF) are conducted as well as polls on the present condition of the whole country, introduced in 2007 (Cabinet Office: *yoronchōsa index*).

Yamada and Synodinos (1994: 118-120) have found out, that between 1975 and 1990, there was an increase in the number of surveys compared to the years before.

A self-conducted database search (Figure 1.1) of public opinion polls conducted by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun* from 1984 to 2010 moreover shows, that public opinion polls, at least in the two major Japanese newspapers mentioned, drastically increased in the years 2000-2006 during the Koizumi administration.

**Figure 1.1: Number of opinion polls by the Asahi Shinbun and Yomiuri Shinbun**
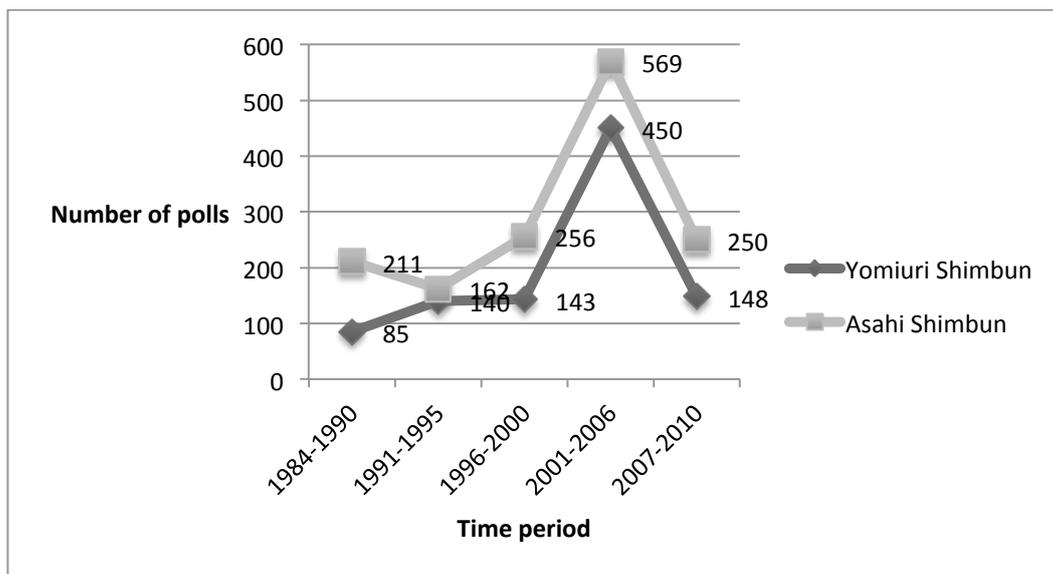


Source: keyword search of *Yomiuri Shinbunsha yoronchōsa* and *Asahi Shinbunsha yoronchōsa* via Crossasia database access of the *Yomidasu Rekishikan* and *Kikuzō II visual* databases. Search starts from 01.01. until 12.31. of every year.

Several interviews conducted, have revealed that not only governmental polls are considered but media polls as well. "The prime minister has his own unit where public opinion is gathered, but they look at media polls as well, because media is influential and can change effects, especially since the dissemination of information in the internet" (Interview Anonymous A: 2010.07.28). "Prime Minister's look at polls all the time" (Interview Anonymous G: 2010.08.03). "Public opinion is gathered the fastest through the media, governmental planers pay lots of attention to these polls" (Interview Anonymous C: 2010.08.25).

According to Mizutani Akira from Hitotsubashi Univeristy, the most common procedure is that public opinion is directed through the media to politicians. Mostly, these polls are studied by bureaucrats of the Director General level or from members of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (Naikaku Hōseikyoku), and are forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office (Interview Mizutani, Akira: 2010.08.06).

Although authors, such as Ōishi Yutaka (2005), have argued that media polls oftentimes lead to biased results, because through strategically questioning they alter the direction of poll results, media polls are considered in this thesis as well, since interviews have proven, that not only official governmental polls, but also media polls are observed by the govern-

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ment. A comment by Prime Minister Koizumi in the *Asahi Shinbun* on August 7, 2001 regarding differences in poll results between the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun* further proves prime ministerial attention also to media public opinion polls.

Regarding the use of public opinion polls in Japan, it does not differ from any other western industrial nation. One has to be aware, that in Japan as well, depending on the urgency and the political context of an issue, politicians try to exploit survey results in their favor. They refer increasingly to polls if they appear favorable, but do not comment results that are unfavorable for them.

## 1.2. The research question

The principal research question of this study is as follows:

Under what conditions can it be assumed that public opinion was a determining variable in foreign policy decisions made by Prime Minister Koizumi?

The issue that should be explained is the prime minister's reaction to public opinion in foreign policy decision-making. That is, the decision to ignore/lead/educate, follow or compromise with public opinion.

The explanatory variables are the *domestic conditions* that must be given, under which the Prime Minister was most likely to react to public opinion, and, therefore, make the public a determining variable for the decision-making process.

### 1.2.1. *What is to be explained - the dependent variable*

The main goal of this study is to develop a reasonable model for the causes of foreign policy decision-making by considering public opinion as a variable.

Prime Minister Koizumi's *decision* how to react to public opinion in each foreign policy-making process is, therefore our dependent variable. In general, I try to scrutinize and understand governmental "behavior" in order to monitor if Koizumi stuck to his originally planned course in each case or whether he took public opinion into consideration and eventually changed his course. In each decision-making process Prime Minister Koizumi had to make a decision out of several *choices* for behavior. It will be elaborated whether

public opinion was an important variable within this process of deciding which *choice* to make. According to Hudson (2007: 133), four scenarios are possible: a) Prime Minister Koizumi could take public opinion fully into consideration and abandon his original plan and *follow* public opinion, b) Prime Minister Koizumi could *ignore* public opinion and continue with his original plan and c) Prime Minister Koizumi could consider public opinion but at the same time try to *lead* or *educate* the public in favor of his decision, in which case he would d) risk being *constrained* in his original plan of taking the *middle-way,* that is to fulfill his original plan but not to the full extent. In such a case public opinion is mostly strategically considered, however, Prime Minister Koizumi also took the risk of having to *compromise* with public opinion.

*1.2.2. The explanatory variables*

To resolve the prime minister's decision and determine if public opinion was an important variable in each decision process it has to be examined, what connection exists between the public and the decision-maker. "The relationship between public opinion and government policy-making is fundamental to understanding how democracy works" (Shapiro and Jacobs 2000: 223). Public opinion does not translate itself automatically into policies. Certain conditions have to be given to elaborate the public's impact. David Shapiro and Marc Jacobs have called these conditions "*linkages between decision-maker and public opinion*" (cf. Shapiro and Jacobs 2000). Furthermore, "the influence of public opinion on policy is not direct; it is rather conditioned by a *mediating framework of variables*" (Shiraev 2000: 297).

Accordingly, condition variables that build this mediating framework between the public and the decision-maker have to be identified in order to be able to understand the conditions under which Koizumi was more likely to respond to rather than ignore public opinion in foreign policy decisions.

This study follows the work of Midford and Scott (2008) and Midford (2011)[5] by using their theoretical assumptions, but also employing additional assumptions from different western theoretical approaches on public opinion research (Graham 1989; 1994, Pharr 1996, Powlick and Katz 1998), together with a Japanese approach (Ito 1996, 2002), testing

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[5] It has to be noted that assumptions made in Paul Midford's study of 2011 are included for the actuality of the state of research of this thesis. However this PhD thesis had already been conducted and almost finalized by the time Midford's work was published. Therefore, possible similarities in the argumentation may appear although they were conducted by the author herself.

and combining them, and expanding the framework of conditions that make public opinion an important variable in Japan's foreign policy decision-making process. These approaches build the background for this study's theoretical framework.

With these models in mind, I will solely emphasize the domestic level, as I will argue that the influence of public opinion in Japanese foreign policy-making is mediated by various stable and contingent domestic conditions. The following linkage conditions have been identified as arbitrative for the linkage process between public opinion and decision-making: opinion magnitudes, opinion coalitions-abilities between the public and elites, political incentives on the domestic front, consensus or disagreement among elites, Kūki/the climate of opinion and the decision stages. These constitute the main explanatory variables in this study.

### 1.2.3. Defining public opinion

In this study, public opinion is understood according to Sobel (2001: 10), as follows: "Public opinion implies predominance – from pluralitly to supermajority – of sentiment among the entire population as revealed in polls".

Likewise, the term public opinion can be divided into four subcategories and embraces the general/mass public, the electorate, the attentive public and the elite (Price 1992: 35-43). It is the interaction of these subgroups that form the concept of public opinion. To understand public opinion as one sequence would lead to biased results. When analyzing public opinion one should at least be aware of the different elements the term consists of. The most common operational definition of public opinion is "the electorate", which encompasses approximately 70 percent of the public (Price 1992: 36-37). This study will take all four subgroups into consideration when analyzing public opinion and will not differentiate in levels. The majority side of public opinion, which is more visible, will be considered in every decision-process.

## 1.3. Research design

The research design is graphically presented in the following diagram:

```
┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│                  │                    │   Reaction of PM     │
│  Public Opinion  │ ─────────────────▶ │   Koizumi to public  │
│                  │                    │   opinion in foreign  │
└──────────────────┘          ▲         │  policy decision-making│
                              │         └──────────────────────┘
                    ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Framework of domes-│
                    │   tic conditions   │
                    └──────────────────┘
```
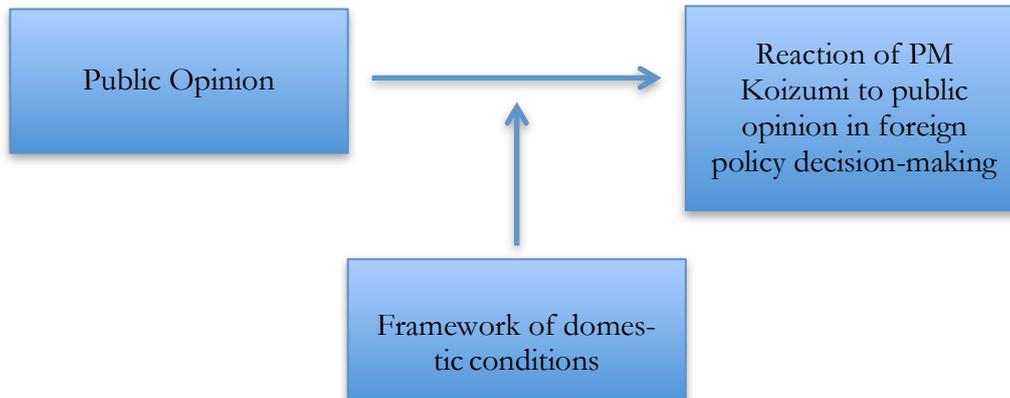
The aim of this study is to look at the domestic sphere of foreign policy decision-making with special emphasis on public opinion as the domestic variable.

In doing this, I will identify and combine *domestic conditions* upon which the importance of public opinion as a variable in foreign policy decision-making process depends. In other words, conditions that make the decision-maker *most likely to follow public opinion in decisions than to ignore them.*

For the classification of possible conditions, I will use a multilevel and multifactorial approach and will derive propositions from theoretical approaches on public opinion and foreign policy decision-making based on works of several authors such as Midford (2011), Midford and Scott (2008), Graham (1989; 1994), Pharr (1996), Powlick and Katz (1998) and Ito (1996, 2002). These theoretical predictions shall be subjected to empirical analysis and will be combined and tested as a reasonable framework of variables that links the public and the decision-maker. In order to draw conclusions and test the propositions developed, I will follow a research design based on case study analysis.

First, the selection of cases will be based on the variation of the dependent variable. Second, all three cases represent issues that have been very salient for public opinion and were the Japanese public was involved and very vocal. The best evidence for public salience of the three chosen cases has been a comment by Prime Minister Koizumi himself in his Email-magazine No. 192 of June 16, 2005, who shared the impression, that the three chosen

issues exemplified a vocal public opinion. On the question if he can recall any readers' opinions that left an especially deep impression on him, his answer was:

"The candid exchange of opinions we had at that time is something that comes immediately to mind. Of course, particular issues or incidents always spark a variety of arguments for and against, and these have included North Korea, Iraq and visits to Yasukuni Shrine,, (Koizumi 2005.06.16. Emailmagazine No. 192, english version).

Third, all three chosen cases had strong media coverage, and, therefore, strong attentiveness domestically. It is therefore assumed that these issues represent cases, where public opinion generally existed and was ascertainable. The strength of each explanatory variables (the conditions) tested, shall explain this variance.

In formulating the research problem, the following three issues have been chosen for analysis as fitting the criteria formulated in the previous paragraph:

**Table 1.1: The case studies**

|  |  | The case | Public Opinion as a variable | The Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Case 1** | North Korea | Normalization Efforts towards NK ("The abduction issue") | Strong impact of public opinion | Original Course: Normalization Result: course against normalization |
| **Case 2** | War in Iraq | Supporting the Iraq War and the dispatch of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to Iraq | Partial impact of public opinion. | Original course: Dispatch SDF Result: did not dispatch to full extent |
| **Case 3** | China/South Korea | The Yasukuni Shrine Issue ("Koizumi visits") | No direct impact of public opinion | Original course: visit Yasukuni shrine Result: visited Yasukuni Shrine only timing changed |

Methods used to analyze the cases are process-tracing via reconstruction and interpretation, as well as standardized, general questions that guide the analysis of each case.

Process-tracing is a helpful method for "within-case analysis". "It is an essential supplement to all forms of case comparison" (George and Bennett 2005: 160). When using the method of process-tracing, "the causal effects of an explanatory variable" are defined and are responsible for the change of value of the dependent variable (George and Bennett 1997). Within the method of process-tracing two approaches are accomplished: First, *process verification,* where the researcher tests "whether the observed processes among the variables in a case match those predicted by the previous designed theoretical framework". Second,

the *process induction,* where inductively possible causal mechanisms are observed and possible hypotheses for future testing are generated (George and Bennett 1997).

Therefore the cases selected will be split in different sub-decisions or small-*n*-cases to reconstruct the decision-process as a whole in more detail. The second step will be "a focused and structured comparison" (cf. George and Bennett 1997) of all three case study results, which have been obtained by answering the same questions. The generalized questions in each case are:

1. **Was public opinion an important variable in the decision-making?**
   - What was the original course planned by Prime Minister Koizumi?
   - What was the public's opinion?
   - Was the original course altered? Did Koizumi follow, ignore, lead or compromise with public opinion?
2. **What factors may account for this outcome?**
   - What was the value/strength of each explanatory condition?
   - Which combination of conditions was given?
3. **Which combination of conditions leads to which result?**

In order to conduct process-tracing and focused, structured comparison, case study analysis was the most suitable research approach method.

### 1.3.1. The use of theory

The research project shall specify linkage *conditions* under which public opinion is an important variable in the foreign policy decision-making process of Japan. Therefore, theoretically derived predictions developed in Chapter 2 will be tested and help to guide the analysis. These theoretical predictions shall then be subjected to empirical analysis by means of case studies. This study is derived within the theoretical discipline Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), and uses in particular approaches on Public Opinion Research. The normative prescription that public opinion should play a role in the foreign policy-making process will set the context for exploring its actual role.

To prevent a unilateral description of the issues, as previously described, different theoretical approaches of public opinion research will be used to make a systematic analysis and comparison feasible.

Using a theoretical framework has the advantage of functioning as a lens that guides the researcher on what determinants to place emphasis on. With the help of a theoretical framework, the analysis becomes systematic, focused and structured.

### 1.3.2. The use of sources

Since this study is based on empirical analysis, fundamental for my research was literature in Japanese, English and German on Japanese Foreign Policy, Japanese civil society and public opinion, Japanese policy-making and Japan's relations towards East Asia. Theoretical literature on political science, especially on the theoretical disciplines of Foreign Policy Analysis, Public Opinion Research and Decision-Making were further of major significance. This literature was supplemented by Japanese academic publications and publications of weekly journals on public opinion.

To explore political interests, public opinion trends and attitudes of political elites, media data and survey analysis were analyzed. Media data of the *Asahi Shinbun* and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* were primarily used because both are newspapers with the highest circulation in Japan and represent different political orientations, the *Asahi* being more left oriented and the *Yomiuri* being more conservative and close to government.

In addition, public opinion surveys were used and divided in two categories:

1. Value Orientations surveys (including political culture, political interest and political behavior/activism). For this purpose, surveys of the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan on social awareness, of the *NHK* Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, *the East Asian Barometer* and the *World Value Survey Organization* were used since all of the mentioned surveys represent long-term trends.

2. Annual public opinion surveys on foreign policy from the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for long-term trends as well as from several Japanese newspapers and TV stations, such as the *Asahi Shinbun* polls, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* polls, *Mainichi Shinbun* polls and *Nikkei Shinbun* polls and *NTV* polls were used for short-term trends and process-tracing.

All public opinion polls have to be used with caution since they do not reflect an ultimate and unassailable picture of what the public truly thinks. However, this selection of polls represents available data, which allows at least an approximation of Japanese public opinion.

To further analyze the research criteria developed out of the theoretical framework online accessible speeches, parliamentary debates, media debates and statements were used.

In order to get an impression of the media sphere and media's trend of argumentation within each case, several existing analyses on media coverage were employed as primary sources. The analysis was only supplemented with self-conducted media research if the results of already existent analysis were not sufficient for the approach. For media coverage analysis articles of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun* were primarily considered. All media data access was conducted via the CrossAsia database of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, which provided access to the databases CiNii (Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator of Japan), GeNii (Japan's National Institute of Informatics academic content portal), *Yomiuri Shinbun's* archive *Yomidasu rekishikan,* and *Asahi Shinbun's* archive *Kikuzou* II visual.

Finally, research was complemented by interviewing Japanese academic experts on Japanese public opinion and foreign policy, journalists and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan as well as from the Cabinet Secretariat during a three-month research stay in Japan.

### 1.4. Outline of the study

This study consists of eight chapters. In chapter two I introduce the analytical framework based on approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis, in particular approaches of Public Opinion Research. Therefore, I will first review theories of foreign policy analysis and public opinion, and second, I will introduce the key approaches that build the hypothesis for the explanatory variables used in each case study to explain under what conditions can be assumed that public opinion was an important variable in the decision-making process.

Chapter three deals with the structure of the Japanese state, society and domestic institutions in order to introduce the nature of Japanese foreign policy decision-making process as well as to explain the state-society relationship in Japan. These are two major aspects that build the foundation for understanding the linkage process and causality of the

Japanese public opinion and the decision-maker as well as the Japanese state-society relationship in general.

Chapter four gives an overview of the key-aspects of the Koizumi administration, which is the time period under examination. Prime Minister Koizumi's leadership-style characteristics, his relation to public opinion and his policy-making will be introduced.

Chapter five, six and seven present the three case studies conducted. Chapter five deals with the Japanese-North Korean Normalization process and the abduction issue, chapter six with the Japanese participation in the Iraq war and the dispatch of the Self Defense Forces, and chapter seven with the visits of Prime Minister Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine. Each case study is structured in a comparable manner and is examined with the same set of questions derived from the theoretical assumptions in chapter two. Each case study chapter concludes by reviewing the value of each explanatory variable, and elaborates which of these variables did or did not enable public opinion to be an important variable in each decision-making process.

Finally, in chapter eight all results of all three case studies will be discussed to derive at a general conclusion about the importance of public opinion as a determinant in foreign policy decision-making. After a brief overview of each case study result, I will systematically compare the cases. From this comparison, general conclusions will be drawn that form the answer to the research question posed at the beginning of this study. Finally, conclusions and implications on the strength of the overall explanatory framework will be made.

# 2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1. Foreign Policy Analysis - a theoretical approach

The major aim of the theoretical approach of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is to understand "decisions taken by human decision-makers with reference to or having known consequences for entities external to their nation-state" (Hudson 2007: 4).

There exist many different possibilities for levels of analysis. Analysis is possible from single to a constellation of decisions, or the stages of decisions. In other words, FPA is the systematic study of and research into the processes of foreign policy (Hudson 2007: 4).

The explanatory factors of FPA are these factors that influence foreign policy decision-making and foreign policy decision-makers (Hudson 2007: 5). Until now, the analysis of influences of a decision-making process in its totality has been the most challenging part of FPA. Problematic is the collection of data on a great number of variables (McClosky 1962: 201). According to Valerie M. Hudson, such criticism has been used often to justify the use of the nation-state or other as the principal actor in the study of IR (Hudson 2007: 5).

FPA, on the other hand, views the explanation of foreign policy decision-making as "multifactorial, multileveled, multi-/interdisciplinary, integrative and agent-oriented". That is, variables in FPA are examined in more that one level of analysis, under consideration of the use of many different intellectual disciplines. Hence, FPA research is not applicable without integration of multiple factors, perceptions and approaches, and, therefore, is a very integrative theoretical approach (Hudson 2007: 6).

FPA "is premised not primarily on the international system as the generator of behavior but on the importance of unit-level factors and actors for understanding and explaining state behavior" (Carlsnaes 2002: 332). In this sense not states but political representatives are understood as agents in this approach. The FPA approach is profoundly *actor-specific* oriented. "The perspective of FPA is that the source of all international politics and all change in international politics are specific human beings using their agency and acting individually or in groups" (Hudson 2007: 6).

FPA, as a multifactorial approach, includes many different determinants such as psychological factors and the behavior of individual decision-makers, bureaucratic, organizational and neo-institutional politics, crisis behavior, policy implementation, group decision-making processes, decision-making processes, perspectives of society and opposition and transnational relations and public opinion research (cf. Carlsnaes 2002; Neack 2003; Hudson 2007).

Each method concentrates on different factors that can influence foreign policy decision-making.

Through these approaches "the political contestation present in the larger society and how it effects foreign policy" is explored (Hudson 2007: 125).

When making the domestic sphere the focus of study in foreign policy-making, most commonly the analysis first concentrates on the political elites/regime with its characteristics, political institutions, strengths and weaknesses, on the one hand, and on the various societal actors, and their proximity, cohesiveness, size and difference in viewpoint or the level of activity on an issue, on the other hand. A further step of analysis is to look beyond the identification of actors and structures towards the strategy of decision-makers that determines the linkage between societal actors and decision-makers (Hudson 2007: 127-131). This means that the focus of analysis is the standpoint of the political elites *reacting* to domestic opposition regarding its foreign policies.

According to Hudson (2007) four basic strategies are exercised by decision-makers as *reaction* to securing their interests when facing opposition. These are: following, ignoring, direct tactics/indirect tactics (leading) and compromise. To ignore means to refuse any engagement of the opposition. Direct tactics are direct rewards or punishments for the opposition. Indirect tactics are actions that gather support on an issue to prevent the need to change the policy direction. It can also be described as *leading* the opposition. Compromise is often used, even when one of the above mentioned strategies are used (Hudson 2007: 133-134).

In summary, FPA, as an approach, tries to understand foreign policy decisions by looking at the domestic and social structure of a state and by using actor-specific multifactorial and multidimensional approaches for their explanatory variables.

Approaches relevant to this study are domestic perspectives especially of society and opposition to the government. In particular, approaches of *Public Opinion Research*. The effects of public opinion on foreign policy-making vary according to reaction *chosen* by the decision-makers. Opposition is more likely to have influence if the decision-makers are rather responding than ignoring domestic demands. In the following, the theoretical approaches of public opinion and its relation to foreign policy-making will be introduced.

## 2.2. The concept of public opinion

Until the mid-19th century, the study of public opinion had a normative and philosophical character. With the development of social sciences, public opinion came under increased scrutiny and attention was focused on understanding the "social and behavioral aspects of public opinion" (Price 1992: 15). Since then, researchers have been interested in "the question of the function and powers of public opinion in society, the means by which it can be modified or controlled, and the relative importance of emotional and intellectual factors in its formulation" (Binkley 1928: 393 in: Price 1992: 15). "Public Opinion is central for democratic accountability and decision-making" (Aldrich et.al. 2006: 477). Until some decades ago, the public was believed to be relatively uninterested in political issues, especially in foreign affairs. At the same time policy-makers often failed to sufficiently consider public tendencies in decision-making.

According to Hinckley (1992: 134) research on public opinion in foreign policy decision-making is relevant for several reasons: understanding public opinion can contribute to a wider-ranging perspective of political issues and political option and improve policy-making. If public opinion is taken into account and widely understood, it is a helpful variable to better comprehend the domestic political climate which helps the decision-makers to properly define the parameters and limits of possible options and decisions. He summarizes the importance of public opinion vividly by contenting that:

> *public opinion influence in executive and legislative governance and foreign policy-making is growing. The intellectual and political challenges for foreign policy-makers are to come to grips with the actuality and direct it in a positive and beneficial course. To do this, they must become more knowledgeable of public opinion* (Hinckley 1992: 140).

Price (1992: 33) asserts, public opinion is difficult to grasp as an entity, because the public is "loosely organized through communication surrounding an issue, it includes both active and passive strata, it changes in size and shape as it develops, and it passes into and out of existence along with an issue". To use the term public opinion as one sequence, leads to biased results of examination. When talking about public opinion, one has at least to be certain about the different elements public opinion may consist of.

Today we are likely to understand public opinion as "what polls try to measure" (Price 1992: 35). However, Price has differentiated the term and has summarized four concepts of public opinion: accordingly, the term public opinion embraces the general public, the electorate, the attentive public and the elite or active public (cf. Price 1992: 35-43).

The *general public* is the *mass public* (the 100% population) and has been defined as a heterogeneous unorganized group that has very little interaction and is formed outside "the arena of public debate". *"[…] what binds together the mass is […] a common focus of interest or attention…"* (Price 1992: 28, 36).

Another entity of public opinion is *the electorate*. This group of people votes regularly and represents approximately 70% of the general public. Crespi (1989) states public opinion is "the sum of the opinions of the individuals who make up the electorate, rather than as a force that emerges from organized society" (Crespi 1989: 11 in Price 1992: 36, 37). "The electorate is one of the most common operational definitions of the public" (Price 1992: 37).

Out of the 70% of the electorate, about 50% count as *the attentive public*. The attentive public has been introduced by Almond (1950) and is regularly used among scholars as a description for the public which shows a general interest in politics. In Almond's understanding the attentive public is a group "which is informed and interested in foreign policy problems, and which constitutes the audience for foreign policy elites" (Almond 1950: 138). The attentive public is supposed to be the group that pays the most attention to political affairs and engages in public issues (Price 1992: 38).

Finally the *active public* or *the elite* represent about 15% of the attentive public. This part of the public changes in composition and is actively involved in framing issues or making policy proposals.

One further characterization of the attentive and active public has been the *issue publics*. This group has been often described as a group that involves a public that is particularly attentive to special issues, and beyond this, is engaged in organizational structures or is very active in informal participation in discussions with others (Price 1992: 39-40; 65 Risse-Kappen 1991: 482). The following graphic representation demonstrates the sub-entities of public opinion:

**Figure 2.1: Sub-entities of public opinion**
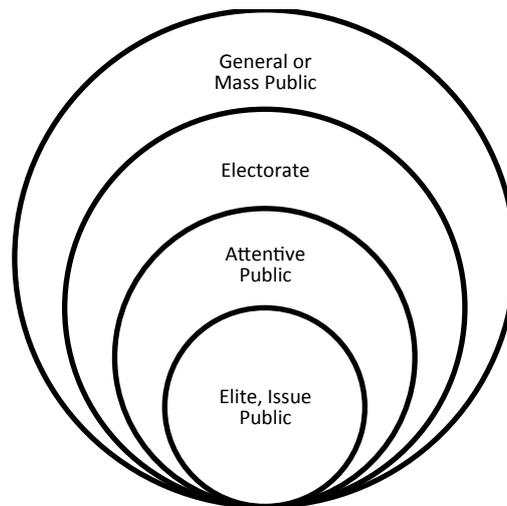


Source: Graphic representation made by the author based on Price's (1992) definitions of public opinion.

Price maintains that all subgroups of public opinion can play a significant role. Risse-Kappen shares this argumentation and states in research on public opinion "one should at least distinguish between 1. the mass public opinion, 2. the attentive public and 3. the issue publics and 4. the elite" (Risse-Kappen 1991: 482), since it is the "interaction among these groups" that determines the impact of public opinion in policy-making (Lang and Lang 1983 in Price 1992: 43).

These definitions show that public opinion is a product of individual interpretations, and which definition is adequately useful for the analysis, depends on the research question the researcher whishes to answer.

In this study public opinion will be used as the all-encompassing term of the four concepts. Since it is not the goal to explain how public opinion developed, but rather to examine under what conditions it is considered in foreign policy decision-making, the focus is directed to the general/mass public that includes all three other sub-entities. When talking about public opinion in this study, the distinguishable majority opinion (= mass public) (Price 1992; Sobel 2001:10) is considered regardless of which sub-entity out of which the opinion results.

To understand the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy the potential impact of public opinion has to be understood. The impact of public opinion has been discussed in different schools of thought. Four different assumptions can be summarized

according to Russett (1990: 87-88): 1. Public opinion is irrelevant, 2. Public opinion is controlled, 3. Public opinion is controlling and 4. Public opinion and policy interact. Research in this scholarly field has its roots in studies on American public opinion. Theoretical conclusions are based on these results and dominate theories and research on public opinion until today. In the following chapters the main trend of discussion as well as research approaches discussing the public's impact on foreign policy-making will be presented.

*The impact of public opinion on foreign policy- the Realist vs. the Pluralist view*

Price states, public opinion research has been organized around six basic subjects that dominate the discussion of impact: relevance, competence and resources, the majority issue, mass persuasion and domination by elite minorities (Price 1992: 16, 17). In the course of this debate the biggest conflict has evolved between the realist and the pluralist view. The realist view denying the impact of public opinion on foreign policy and the pluralist view defending it.

The realist view shared by scholars such as Hans J. Morgenthau, Walter Lippmann and Gabriel Almond started in the early 1930s, and has dominated the academic perspectives throughout post-World War II. These scholars deny the effective impact of public opinion on policy-making and describe public opinion as "a barrier to coherent diplomacy" (Holsti 1992: 440). In the realist view the general public is ill informed, uninterested and ambivalent about foreign policy. They maintain that „the public is likely to be driven by naive moralism and uniformed emotion" (Lippmann 1955; Almond 1950; Converse 1964; Nincic 1992: 773).

In a similar vain, Almond argues that public opinion tends to be volatile and unstable „[…] driving foreign policy off the path of cool reason, and ultimately undermining the national interest" (Nincic 1992: 773), a viewpoint also shared by Walter Lippmann who has criticized policy-makers who paid attention to public opinion.

For realist scholars "public opinion as an aggregate or collective phenomenon was unworthy of responsiveness by unrestrained democracy" (Shapiro: 1988: 212). Early empirical research seemed to confirm this viewpoint because only weak congruence between elites' foreign policy decisions and public opinion was found (Knecht and Weatherford 2006: 707).

The overall consensus among realists in the post-World War II era was, that public attitudes lack in structure and coherence (cf. Converse 1964) and have very limited impact on foreign policy decision-making (Holsti 1992: 442). In the realist view, the public's attitudes are changed, and at the same time are lead, by political elites and decision-makers (cf. Almond 1960; Graham 1994: 191). For these reasons, a stronger executive-lead policy-making in foreign affairs was widely supported (cf. Lippmann 1955), because public opinion was not believed to be an important variable for foreign policy decision-making. In sum, "realists concede the quality of domestic policy might be enhanced by public deliberations but the benefits of public participation do not extend to foreign affairs" (Holsti 1992: 6).

In the course of the Vietnam War a renewed interest in the subject of public opinion and foreign policy, especially in the United States, grew (Holsti 1992: 445).

Whereas public opinion was once described as having little relevant impact on foreign policy-making, it is described as a powerful determinant by pluralists today (Holsti 2000: 214). In their view the negligence of the public's power by policy-makers is labeled as very jeopardous for policy-making (Kennedy and La Balme 2003: 13).

Contrary to the main argument of Gabriel Almond that public opinion is "mood-driven", Shapiro and Page (1988) concluded in their study "that all changes of American policy preferences […] are understandable in terms of changing circumstances or changing information […] (they) are reasonable, or sensible, in that they reflect in a logical fashion the impact of new information" (Shapiro and Page 1988: 243-244). In their view public opinion, which they refer to as the "rational public", is firm, stable, and reacts sensibly to information and should be taken into account in foreign policy-making to the same extent as in domestic politics, whenever the information that reaches the public is reliable (Shapiro and Page 1988: 244; Shapiro and Page 1994: 234). They further discovered, that opinion changes were only measurable when linked to significant external events or shocks (Nincic 1992: 777). This argumentation has been supported by studies of Bruce Russett (1990) as well.

Pluralists believe that public opinion can be "multifaceted and multidimensional" in its effect on policies (Sobel 2001: 24). In other words public opinion has various possibilities to impact foreign policy-making.

Kegley and Wittkopf (1987: 308) and Sobel (2001: 25) assume that public opinion has an impact on the decision-makers attitudes and the domestic climate of opinion, "because the opinion context […] fixes the limitations within which action may be taken". Philip Powlick (1991) and Natalie La Balme (2000: 271) further stated that 84% of foreign policy officials in Powlick's study, and 91% in La Balme's study tried to anticipate public opinion, and seemed to be constrained by the public's possible reactions on decisions they make. They perceived public opinion "conditions the choice of options that can be considered without being determinative of which option is ultimately chosen" (Powlick and Katz 1998: 44). Rissen-Kappen (1991: 482) believes public opinion has the power to "strengthen or weaken the positions of bureaucracies or single actors within the government" that support or oppose their opinions and hence indirectly impact foreign policy-making. Furthermore, public opinion can be a constraining factor through elections and raise the concern among decision-makers to be punished for foreign policy decisions made that were against the public's opinion (cf. Kegley and Wittkopf 1987: 307).

In general, pluralists believe that public opinion has the power "to limit governments and present guidelines for decision-making". Whereas realists believe that public opinion has no effect on decision-making, pluralists have the opinion, "that public opinion at minimum *constrains* foreign policies and at maximum *sets* and *defines* policy" (Sobel 2001: 25).[6]

In summary, public opinion can have a fourfold impact: 1. it has a *full impact* on policy-making when the decision-maker has altered his original course and *followed* public opinion. In other words public opinion *sets* policy (Foyle 1999; Sobel 2001: 25);

2. it has a *constraining* impact on foreign policy-making when the range of options of the decision-maker has been limited compared to his original planned course for decision;

3. it has an *indirect* impact when it is *lead* or is *educated.* That means, that public opinion is considered in foreign policy-making, in as much as decision-makers made the effort to ponder their options, with possible effects on public opinion, with the alternative of being able to stick to their original plan. At the same time they invest strength and strategies to convince the public of their plans (cf. Russett 1990; Foyle 1999; La Balme 2000: 271-274);

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[6] Studies that show evidence of public opinion impact on foreign policy are: Foyle 1999; Graham 1989; Graber 1968; Holsti 1992, 1996; Jacobs and Shapiro 1996, 2000; Powlick 1991; Sobel 2001.

4. it has *no impact* when no consensus is visible between the public's opinion and the final decision. In such a case public opinion is ignored. Consequently, in the pluralists view, public opinion and decision-making are linked with each other to a variable degree (cf. Foyle 1999; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994 in Nacos et al 2000).

As Holsti (1992: 459) has noted, the most difficult challenge in theories of public opinion research is to identify when and under what circumstances public opinion does have and can impact foreign policy and decision-making. Several theoretical attempts have been developed in the course of public opinion research, which try to fill this gap. These principles of these theories will be introduced in the following, as they build the foundation for the theoretical identification of the explanatory variables of this study.

## 2.3. The linkages between public opinion and decision-making

For the purpose of answering the research question, I focus on *domestic conditions* that link public opinion and the decision-maker in foreign policy-making.

As pluralists argue, policy-makers in democracies are aware of public opinion. They are in frequent contact with the public to a varying extent (Shiraev 2000: 297), and respond to public opinion in a substantial amount of cases (Shapiro 1994: 234). The least developed area in this research field, however, is the opinion-policy link (Holsti 1992: 459). In other words, for the decision-maker to *react* on domestic public opinion, specific domestic *conditions* have to exist. In the previous chapters it was shown, that public opinion has the power to impact policy-making to a varying degree, and that the decision-maker can choose between four different kinds of reactions: to follow, to ignore, to compromise with or to lead/educate the public. Research has not been sufficiently exhausted yet to define, when the decision-maker chooses which reaction (cf. Hudson 2007: 133; Foyle 1999).

Some theoretical approaches exist that demonstrate a growing evidence that "mediating variables" (Shiraev 2000: 297) determine the *linkages* and relationship between public opinion and decision-makers, because public opinion does not automatically translate itself in a certain foreign policy decision. Eric Shiraev states "the influence of public opinion on policy is not direct; rather it is conditioned by a mediating framework of variables" (Shiraev 2000: 297). This assumption has been supported by many pluralists such as Shapiro and Page (1994), Hinckley (1992), Sobel (2001) and Midford and Scott (2008). These mediating variables are *conditions* that determine whether the decision-maker is most likely to follow public opinion than to ignore them, and represent the explanatory variables of this study.

Paul Midford and Paul Scott (2008) have defined a set of conditions they have adapted to cases of Japan's security policy.[7] These assumed conditions will be used as a theoretical foundation for the analysis, which are then further combined and extended with theoretical predictions of Graham (1989; 1994), Pharr (1996), Powlick and Katz (1998) and Ito (1996; 2002). In the following sections domestic conditions which accordingly, build the mediating framework relevant for this analysis are introduced.

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[7] The elaboration of conditions has been slightly extended by Paul Midford (2011): „Rethinking Japanese Public Opinion and Security".

*2.3.1. The magnitude of public opinion*

Thomas Graham (1994) has introduced a concept called the magnitude of public attitudes for an issue (cf. Graham 1994; Midford and Scott 2008). He assumes that when large and stable opinion majorities exist (well over 50%) the influence level of public opinion can be very high. Midford and Scott (2008) have also come to this conclusion. The following table shows the distribution of public opinion and its assumed possible impact:

**Table 2.1: Levels of public opinion and differential impacts on decision-making according to T.W. Graham:**

| Categories | Percent | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Nearly unanimous | > 79 | Almost automatic |
| Preponderant | 70-79 | Substantial, deters opposition |
| Consensus | 60-69 | Important, may defeat strong bureaucratic opponents |
| Majority | 50-59 | Problematic, impact related to presidential policy leadership |
| Plurality | > 50 | Insignificant |

Source: Table from Graham 1994: 197

Graham states that *majority-level* public attitudes (50-59%) are influential, whenever they are combined with a strong and decisive policy leadership. *Consensus level* public opinion (60-69%) successfully influences the process even with possible bureaucratic opposition; and *preponderant level* public opinion (70-79%) "causes" the decision-makers to act according to their interests and "deters" political opposition. *Unanimous opinion* (well over 80%) dominates the decision-making process and decisions appear automatic (Graham 1994: 198). Summarizing, it can be assumed that when opinion magnitudes well over 50% exist, the decision-maker is most likely to at least consider public opinion for decision-making. Accordingly, opinion magnitudes are an important domestic condition for the public-policy link.

*2.3.2. Consensus or disagreement among political elites*

Among situational conditions the level of consensus or disagreement among the political elites represents a significant mediating variable to determine the public-policy linkage (Powlick and Katz 1998: 35; Shiraev 2000: 303). An active public opinion, and, therefore, a possible interaction of public opinion and the decision-maker is most likely when an issue produces a debate among political elites (Powlick and Katz 1998: 31; Midford and Scott 2008: 127). It enhances the attention when this discussion is consequently widely covered by the media (Powlick and Katz 1998: 31). In cases of disagreement on an issue among elites, the public will most likely take sides in the debate. In such a case the character of elite discussion determines whether the public is supportive or in opposition. Following the argumentation of Powlick and Katz (1998) or Zaller (1992), "if opposition opinion is better able to represent the publics "frames"[8] the public is likely to be activated towards the oppositional side". If political elites reach a consensus, the public is likely to be "acquiescent" or "supportive". When political elites hold real public debates due to disagreement, public opposition to one policy may result (Powlick and Katz 1998: 35). "On the contrary the absence of debate means the absence of an active public opinion." (Powlick and Katz 1998: 45).

Disagreement between political elites can imply competition within one and the same party (Midford and Scott 2008: 128; Midford 2011: 22), competition between coalition-parties or competition between ruling parties and opposition parties. Especially in the case of Japanese political parties, where intraparty factionalism[9] is very present, a special emphasis on intraparty competition of the strongest ruling party is advantageous (Midford 2011: 22). Therefore, the degree of consensus or disagreement in this study is focused primarily on intraparty disagreement or consensus and second on disagreement between coalition parties.

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[8] Powlick and Katz have used the definition of Gamson and Modigliani 1987: 143: "central organizing idea or story line…the frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue".

[9] Factionalism implies several different groups formed of party members, who act as independent small parties within the party (Midford 2011: 22). A detailed explanation and special emphasis on factionalism in Japan will be given in chapter 3.

*2.3.3. Opinion coalition-building abilities*

There have been several theoretical approaches implying that when a policy-maker has to interact with the public, opinion coalition-building appears suitable. Collective interests of an opinion coalition against the central government, (Hughes 2006a; Holsti 1996: 205; Risse-Kappen 1991) can condition how important public opinion may be for the decision-making process. Hinckley (1992) further suggested that policymakers have to be "attentive" to the majority coalitions among the public, and that it is necessary to form coalitions "issue by issue and policy by policy" (Hinckley 1992: 139).

Midford and Scott (2008) state that the degree to which a Diet[10] opposition unites against a policy of the ruling parties and at the same time has the support of a stable opinion majority, can force decisions to be altered (Midford and Scott 2008: 128). In other words, if opposition parties from the political elite and public opinion share the same opinion against the ruling political elites, the decision-maker is most likely to follow or consider public opinion and a change of course.

For the analysis of this study I describe such a process as an *opinion-coalition building* and assume that if opposing opinion against the ruling elite is able to form a coalition against the decision-maker, then public opinion is most likely to be a determining variable in the decision-making process. This means that it depends on the coalition-building activities of all opposition opinions against the central decision-maker, whether an opposition opinion can compel the decision-maker to follow or to compromise. At the same time the opinion-coalition building condition can be extended, as for example, in the case that public opinion manages to form opinion coalitions with important members of the ruling elite, thus giving public opinion the possibility to impact the decision-making process by convincing individuals to alter their course in its favor.

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10 Diet is the Japanese Parliament (Kokkai). The Japanese National Diet is a bicameral legislature and is separated into the Lower House, which is the House of Representatives (Shugiin) and the, also called the House of Councillors (Sangiin). Each House is composed of elected members and has plenary sittings and committees. The Lower House consists of 400 members, 380 are elected from single seat constituencies and 180 members are elected from proportional representation. The Upper House consists of 242 members. 146 members are elected from plural-seat prefectural constituencies and 96 through proportional representation. Both Houses jointly exercise the power of the National Diet through passage of bills by both Houses. In case of opposite decisions on a bill, the Constitution of Japan recognizes the precedence of the Lower House under certain conditions. The Lower House can be dissolved, but not the Upper Houser. Both Housese have the power to elect presiding officers and standing committee chairpersons, establish special committees and have the right to conduct government investigations. Additionally, both Houses have the power to accept and vote on petitions. The Lower House has the unique right to pass a non-confidence resolution against the Cabinet
(The National Diet of Japan, Secretariat of the House of Representatives, 2010).

*2.3.4. Domestic incentives*

 "If important pieces of legislation, especially those in the same or a related area, are coming up for Diet consideration, coalition leaders have to worry about an opinion backlash derailing these other bills" (Midford and Scott 2008: 128). Put simply, public opinion is considered in decision-making, if the ruling elite plans other important bills or policies. These important bills can be in foreign policy, as suggested by Midford and Scott, but they can also be in domestic policy, such as important reform bills. Political elites appear to respond to public opposition by avoiding policies that are perceived as likely to create negative responses (Powlick 1991: 638).

In order to keep a stable support rate for other important decisions or plans, may it be foreign policy related or domestic policy related, decision-maker's consider public opinion in their actual decision-process. This may be the case when the ruling coalition is divided, as Midford and Scott suggested.

Not only pieces of legislation constitute an important domestic variable but also elections (Holsti 1992; Foyle 1999; Midford 2011). When an election term is near, decision-makers depend on keeping their support rates high. In such a case it is most likely that public opinion is considered in decision-making, so as not to be punished by losing votes (cf. Russett 1990: 110; Aldrich et. al. 2004). In this context, it has been common that policy options, which have been announced by decision-makers prior to the election campaign, remain unchanged in order not to lose credibility in front of the public, and as a consequence, votes (Lott and Davis 1992).

*2.3.5. Kūki (climate of opinion)*

Today, the media play a greater role in world politics than in the past, especially due to the wide distribution of social media. According to Benjamin I. Page the media "have created a globally integrated media space – a global public sphere", within which many diverse actors contest and represent their interests (Page 2000: 87).

There exist different theories in literature that try to define the media's role in relation to state and to society. One school of thought defines the media as having the role of "spectator", serving particular interests, but spreading and communicating information among the various actors in politics (Pharr 1996: 20). A second view is the definition of the media as a "watchdog", where the media "are an independent critical force on behalf of the

public" (Pharr 1996: 20). The third common approach is to define the media's role as "servant of the state". In this case the media serves the interest of the state by supporting the state's approaches and portraying political arrangements in a way to try to convince the public for support (Pharr 1996: 21). Finally Susan J. Pharr has introduced a novel approach by describing the media as "a trickster" (Pharr 1996).

The main characteristic of a trickster is "its unfixed social position" and "its duality and contradictory nature" (Pharr 1996: 25) Pharr argues that the media holds no clear social status in the established order. Media coverage in the sense of a trickster has different effects: it releases information and throws light on arrangements, evaluates issues and confronts or criticizes by utilizing instruments such as "agenda-setting" of an issue or "framing" an issue [11] (cf. Kegley and Wittkopf 1987: 327; Entman 1993: 52-53; Entman 2004; McCombs 2002;). Media as a trickster confronts the community with the consequences of existing arrangements. "This threat leads to reflection of the situation and finally makes the community bond and unite" (Pharr 1996: 27).

In the study of public opinion in decision-making processes, mass media becomes relevant since according to Powlick and Katz (1998) high media coverage of an issue activates public opinion. Pharr confirms this thought by arguing, that the media as trickster has the power to invite and engage members of the community, to participate and operate (Pharr 1996: 32) – the media is capable to *mobilize*. The aspect, which issues are covered by the media, and how big the amount of coverage is, and as a result the flow of information controlled, makes a considerable difference in how people view an issue (McCombs 2002).

In general, as long as the salience of an issue is held high through high media coverage, the impact on public opinion is bigger than when salience is low (Linley 2009: 38).

Therefore, if media coverage of an issue is high, public opinion is most likely to become aware of an issue and possibly become active. If public opinion becomes active or vocal, decision-maker's are most likely to be responsive to public opinion and consider it in the decision-making process. In other words, high media coverage is an implication for the existence of public opinion!

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[11] By continuously publishing a specific issue through "agenda-setting", the media has the ability to draw attention to that issue and make it an issue of discussion (Kegley and Wittkopf 1987: 327). Framing is a media tool that "makes a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences" (Entman 1993: 52-53). It is important to be aware of different media tools such as agenda-setting or framing, since these tools may help imfluence the attention of public opinion for an issue or may influence the attention of the government for an issue and can force both parties to act. Awareness of these possible media tools, highlights the importance of considering media when analyzing public opinion and governmental behavior.

In this study, media is only used as a part of the tripolar Kūki-model, which will be explained in the following, and not as a variable on its own. The mutual influence between public opinion and media as such, is not the object of this thesis and will be excluded from the analysis. Media can be a determinant in policy-making, offering wide research possibilities, however, here, high media coverage is only used as a necessary condition, for strengthening public opinion as a determinant.

The significance and strength of the combination media and public opinion for political decision-making are further conceptualized in the concept of Kūki first introduced by Yamamoto Shichihei (1977) and further expanded by Ito Youichi (1996, 2002). Kūki consisting of the signs "air" and "spirit" is a Japanese, Chinese and Korean concept that encompasses *the majority of opinion across three basic sectors*: the government (=the ruling parties), mass media and the general public, called the "tripolar-Kūki model" (cf. Ito 1996; 2002):

> *Kuuki refers to a Japanese (…) concept meaning a climate of opinion with strong political and social pressure requiring compliance* (Ito 2002: 266).
>
> *These social, political, and psychological pressures demand compliance to a certain specific opinion, policy, or group decision* (Ito 2002: 268).

Applying the concept of Kūki in this research, represents another possible model to discover under what conditions public opinion may determine decision-makers, in this case: in combination with mass media.

In contrast to many other concepts that discuss the climate of opinion (cf. Sobel 2001), Kūki always implies strong social pressure and has to be related to a specific opinion or policy decision (Ito 2002: 271, 272). "It makes people with minority opinions silent" (Ito 1996: 87). Unlike the theory of agenda-setting, the theory of Kūki focuses more on the directions of a content and not so much on the agenda itself. Whenever media content, for example, is heterogeneous, Kūki will not develop as a result of mass media (Ito 2002: 273). Kūki can be created from all three sectors (government, public opinion or mass media), however, these sectors do not have the ability to create Kūki on their own. They can only enforce and support Kūki together.

For example, if a tendency based on public opinion towards anti-war movements exists, and a newspaper supports and amplifies this opinion, then the mass media supported the public's opinion towards anti-war movements and helped to develop an anti-war Kūki, which can then influence the policy process on this issue. Media, which do not support this

trend are excluded from the Kūki process and had no impact (Ito 2002: 281). In that sense Kūki cannot be created by public opinion or mass media alone, but can only be created in partnership.

Ito has defined five criteria that have to be met for a situation to be called Kūki:

1. When a high degree of inter-media and inter-sector consonance regarding some specific opinion or policy exists. That means when media is homogeneous in opinion and shares the same opinion as the mass public.

2. The majority opinion accounts for the majority in more than two of the three sectors: government, mass media and the public. In other words, public opinion and the media have to share the same opinion to impact the government opinion.

3. The majority opinion accounts for the majority across all three sectors, which means a general agreement exists.

4. The majority opinion increases over time; Kūki in favor of the public's opinion can develop over time and has the possibility to alter the decision-making in later stages.

5. The intensity of the majority opinion escalates.

6. The subject matter tends to activate basic values and norms (Ito 2002: 290).

In this model, the dependent variable is the government's decision (here: Koizumi's decision) and the independent variables are opinions represented by mass public and mass media. As a result, Kūki is similar to the notion of climate of opinion only with a stronger ability for pressure. "The dominant Kūki is created and maintained when the share of the opinion or view including objection is larger than others and is strongly advocated and demonstrated by enthusiastic supporters or objectors" (Ito 1996: 87). The concept of Kūki eventually shows, what strength public opinion can have in connection with mass media, if opinions of both sectors coincide, and exemplifies another possible linkage condition for the analysis.


*2.3.7. Decision stage*

Graham (1989; 1994: 106), Powlick (1991), Foyle (1999) or Knecht and Weatherford (2006) have highlighted the importance of studying the decision-making process in stages. In their analysis, all researchers mentioned above concluded that public opinion does not necessarily have an equally strong impact on all stages of decision-making.

Graham has found out that the public's impact is at its highest at the beginning of a process, when an issue is put on the agenda, and at the end during the ratification process of legislation or decision (Graham 1994: 106). Foyle also came to the conclusion that public opinion generates the policy options of a decision and not automatically immediately in all stages (Foyle 1999: 8). Knecht and Weatherford believe the consideration of public opinion in respective decision stages varies in distinctive ways depending on the issue (Knecht and Weatherford 2006: 712). Powlick's (1991: 638) study showed that "officials are receptive to public opinion prior to the completion of a policy decision, but unresponsive if the public subsequently opposes the decision, preferring instead to educate […] citizenry". Alternatively, decision-makers try to lead public opinion when a policy decision has already been accomplished.

Ultimately, when observing the decision stages of a process, the variation in degrees of the decision-maker's autonomy between decision stages, can affect the quality of foreign policy. Public opinion may not always have a direct impact on the final outcome of a foreign policy, but definitely constrains the decision-process and may alter outcomes in between. Hence, public opinion in such a case is an important variable and has a constraining and indirect effect on the decision-making.


## 2.4. Summary and propositions

Foreign Policy Analysis as an actor-specific approach that tries to understand decisions taken by decision-makers in foreign policy, uses multifactorial and multidimensional tools to analyze the domestic sphere of a country in order to understand foreign policy-making. The explanatory variables in FPA are these multidimensional domestic factors that influence decision-making. One option is to look into public opinion and foreign policy-making, which is the focus of this study.

Public opinion is only one of many important determinants that have to be considered in foreign policy-making. However, studying public opinion with regard to foreign policy-making "contributes to a broader perspective of the political terrain in which policymakers operate", and helps constitute better policies in the future (Hinckley 1992: 134). Views on the impact of public opinion on foreign policy-making are split between realists, who deny an impact, and pluralist, who believe public opinion has an impact on policy-making. According to Public Opinion Research the decision-maker has four options to react to

public opinion: 1. to follow, 2. to ignore, 3. to lead/educate or 4. to compromise. Public opinion's impact depends on the mediating framework of variables, which are linked to the decision-maker.

The following propositions, derived from theoretical approaches discussed above, will guide the analysis and will be tested on three case studies. The aim is to test applicability and, further, to identify the strength of these theoretical derived explanatory variables, on the one hand, and expand the studies of the linkage process between public opinion and foreign policy decision-making by combining these variables on the other hand, in order to present a reasonable model of causes that facilitates the public's impact and determines the decision-maker's reaction. Moreover, to contribute to the comparative discussion of the elitist and the pluralist view in foreign policy analysis and public opinion research. The propositions derived are as follows:

1. When opinion majorities well over 50% exist, the decision-maker is most likely to at least consider public opinion in foreign policy-decision making. The higher the opinion magnitudes the more is public opinion followed by the decision-maker.

2. When disagreement between the decision-maker and his own party or the coalition parties on an issue or decision exists, public opinion becomes active. In such a case, when the opposing opinion members share the opinion of the public, then decision-makers are most likely to at least consider public opinion in foreign policy decision-making.

3. If opinion coalition-building abilities of all opposing opinions, including public opinion, against the decision-maker are high, the decision-maker is most likely to at least consider public opinion in foreign policy decision-making.

4. If domestic incentives for the decision-maker are high, such as the enforcement of domestic reform plan, new bills in domestic or foreign policy or elections, the decision-maker is most likely to try to keep his support rate high and try to lead or compromise with public opinion in foreign policy decision-making. This attitude is especially enhanced if the ruling coalition parties are divided on an issue.

5. If media coverage of an issue is high, public opinion is most likely to become aware of an issue and become active. As a result, if strong *Kūki* of public opinion and the media for an opinion exists, the decision-maker is pressured, and public opinion becomes an important variable for the foreign policy decision-making process. In such a case public opinion is most likely followed or compromised with.

6. If one or more of the above-mentioned criteria occurs in early decision-stages, the decision-maker is most likely to be responsive to public opinion than in later decision stages. If a decision-maker already made a decision, public opinion is most likely to be strategically important for the foreign policy-making process, and is most likely to be lead/educated than followed.

# 3. JAPANESE FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING: STATE, SOCIETY AND DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS

In today's research on foreign policy, a separation of domestic and foreign policy can easily lead to imprecise explanations of processes. Not only do domestic politics have an influence on foreign politics, but vice versa foreign policy decisions have a deep impact on domestic politics of a country as well (cf. Foyle 1999; Wilhelm 2006; Peters 2007; Hudson 2007). In order to determine public opinion in foreign policy-making Katzenstein (1978, 1985) and Rissen-Kappen (1991) have argued that a closer look has to be taken below the systemic level, and the "nature of the political system" and "structure of society" have to be understood. By clarifying how the executive power is organized, where power is concentrated, who controls the decision-making process and how the state-society relationship is structured, the complex nature of foreign policy decision-making becomes explicit. "Domestic structures seem to account for general features of foreign policies, the degree of stability as well as the level of activity and commitment" (Risse-Kappen 1991: 485). By highlighting the many different domestic voices of foreign policy-making, the nature and structure of Japan's political system and society shall be explained in the following.

Analyzing Japanese foreign policy, primarily from a domestic perspective, is an important focus in research for the following reasons: Hughes (2006: 455) argues that academia and policy practitioners have recently realized that Japan's own agendas as well as domestic political conditions have gained importance in determining foreign policy. "Japan's preoccupation with domestic political pressures has clearly impacted upon its flexibility […] in international strategies". He further notes that Japan's domestic pressures have a significant impact on Japan as an actor in international affairs (Hughes 2006a: 456).

The empirical record on Japanese foreign policy-making shows that problems are multi-faceted and primarily lie in Japan's policy-making process (Kohno 2007: 41)[12]. Calder describes Japan's political system as "a system which is in the throes of perpetual domestic conflict, driven by political cycles, interest-group pressures, and bureaucratic machinations in complex interrelationships with one another" (Drifte 1996: 20).

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[12] Further authors that share this argumentation are: Green (1997); Hook et al (2005).

In research, the characterization of Japanese foreign policy-making diverges most funda-mentally in two dimensions: "whether it is defended or criticized and the number of actors and influences deemed relevant to policy-making" (Hagström 2000: 3). Comparable to public opinion research, the two leading academic groups are represented by the realist view and the pluralist view. Key element of the realist view is that a network of elites, above all conservative party politicians of the ruling parties, business leaders and bureau-crats govern Japan. They are often described as the political and bureaucratic legs of the "iron triangle" as already discussed in chapter one (cf. Watanabe 1978; Minor 1985; Hagström 2000; Berger et al 2007).

The alternative view is the thesis of pluralism. Pluralism implies that not only the Iron Triangle exclusively administers policy-making, but also several domestic actors, such as public opinion, grassroots organizations or the media are able to affect national policy-making. These scholars claim that a highly pluralistic system "has the virtue of giving societal actors influence in the domains that affect them the most" (Berger 2007a: 264). Furthermore, the exercise of power by some actors over others varies with issues. No single group controls the outcome across all issue areas (cf. Hagström 2000; Hook et al 2005; Berger et al 2007). For a long time the realist view has tended to predominate in Japan, but a similar trend could even be found in Western studies of Japanese politics.[13] However, a shift in the 1990s has emphasized more pluralist aspects in Japanese foreign policy-making.

In the following chapters the characteristics of the Japanese policy-making system relevant to foreign policy-making will be introduced. To discover linkages between public opinion and the decision-maker, domestic structures and changes as well as state-society relation-ship developments, options and obstacles will be highlighted and used as the groundwork for the analysis, and for generally understanding the Japanese foreign policy-making processes.

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[13] Cf. works of Hellmann (1969); Johnson (1995); Green (2001); Drifte (1996).

### 3.1. State and society - the 1955-system

*3.1.1. The institutional environment*

The 1955-system is a synonym for the genesis of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and for the government of Japan until the beginning of the 1990s. Characteristic for this time period is the multi-member district, single non-transferable vote electoral system that existed in Japan until 1993 and decisively helped the LDP stay in power. A voter had just one vote but more than one person was elected, because one could choose to vote for one of three to five candidates per constituency. The candidates with the most votes, acquired the seats. Therefore, competition between candidates was often present within one and the same party (Pekkanen and Krauss 2005: 433). This electoral system contributed to the dominance of the LDP because the party was large enough to field more than one candidate per district.

The LDP is divided in many powerful informal party groupings called factions (*habatsu*), each headed by a powerful party member. These factions reinforced the party's strength, because competition among the LDP members for voter loyalty rose. Since the factions slightly varied in the opinions they represented, the voters desire for a choice between different views and options was provided, without causing them to vote for another party (Green 2001: 36).

The LDP was supported by influential bureaucracy, which used effective formal and informal operational options (Green 2001: 36). The bureaucracy's strong autonomy of ministries and strong dominance of protecting their own interests, delayed the process of consultation or consensus-building, especially in foreign affairs. Since the ministries traditionally enjoyed high independence, the behavior of both the LDP and the bureaucracy in policy-making was fragmented. Van Wolferen (1993: 58) describes the power of the bureaucracy during this time period best, by saying that "Japanese ministries come closer to being states unto themselves than any other government institutions […] besides their responsibilities for administration, they also monopolize the lawmaking capacities and jurisdiction within their own bailiwicks". Bureaucracy had remarkable control over policy advice, initiation, formulation and implementation of policies (Mulgan 2004: 12). What kept the bureaucracy's external profile positive was that bureaucrats never challenged the LDP's political path publicly, although bureaucracy has been an elite institution that in parts dominated policy-making. Sato and Matsuzaki (1986: 153-172 in: Nakano 1998: 292)

describe the political condition very well by arguing, that the roles of LDP politicians and bureaucrats were combined in that sense, that both actors shared similar power in policy-making. Politicians did not dominate the process. The same characteristics were visible regarding the relationship between voters and politicians, which was mainly shaped by the ruling LDP and their policy-making style. Supporters of these informal power practices gained access to party and government posts, as for example members of important interest groups, thus enabling lobbying and partisanship (Kabashima and Steel 2010: 15). Ever since, factionalism, bureaucracy and decentralized policy-making have been formative elements of Japan's traditional political system and policy-making during LDP governments (Mishima 2007: 728).

*3.1.2. Decision-making Japanese-style*

"Policy-making in Japan means accommodation" (Watanabe 1978: 75). Parties in power generally refrained from exercising their majority power, either towards opposition parties or towards majority opinions of society. The power to compromise or to make people compromise has been the main principle in political decision-making. Thereby, mediation and conciliation are significant methods found in practice (Hosoya 1974; Watanabe 1978: 75-76). The importance of consensus building lies in the nature of Japan's political system as well as in the nature of the Japanese society. Since in prewar Japan the country lacked unitary leadership[14], efforts to act in agreement with all parties involved were necessary (Hosoya 1974: 366). Given this traditional emphasis, the ideal policy-making for Japanese is one where "as many people as possible are duly consulted (*hanashiai*), and where not a single dissentient voice remains at the time of the final decision (*ayumiyori*)" (Watanabe 1978: 80). For this reason, the Japanese policy-making process has often been characterized by group-order. Group involvement, group maintenance and group-decisions dominate legal forms of individual behavior (Rohlen 1989: 17). Group-order and the habit of accommodation have traditionally led to many informal behaviors within the Japanese policy-making process, which many times has given the impression that there exists no

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[14]After the fall of the Ashikaga Shôgunate through the Ōnin War (1467-1477), the county decomposed into 66 provinces that were ruled by autonomous *daimyō* fighting against each other. This era was called "the warring states period (*sengoku jidai*)". The country was eventually united in 1603, initiated by the "three unifiers" Nobunaga Oda, Hideyoshi Toyotomi, and finally Ieyasu Tokugawa who completed the unification. With Ieyasu hegemony was firmly established with a new Shôgunate government, which managed to keep freedom for more than 250 years (cf. Beasley 1999: 116-133).

single or permanent central structure that stands for Japanese policy-making. Traditionally, informal aspects of decision-making have been dominating formal procedures. Rohlen (1989: 15) has argued that the crucial point in Japan's behavioral patterns is that the center has never been properly appointed and that behavior varies according to the structural circumstances that presently exist. He further states, a good example for this changing behavior is the strict approval routings (*ringi)* in the bureaucracy, on the one hand, and sometimes extreme or rapid decisions made by leaders, on the other hand. Rohlen, therefore, believes that the state has never acted above society but rather in ways that are normal to social processes in Japan (Rohlen 1989: 12, 15).

Since accommodation implies prior consultation in policy-making, there is an attempt to resolve opposition in informal negotiations, and considerable efforts are made to find a common ground that serves the interest of all. "Group maintenance consequently takes precedence over the use of rules/law" (Rohlen 1989: 14). As a result, through informal arrangements, power is distributed to all political levels and leads to the conclusion that "authority and power are not synonymous" (Rohlen 1989: 17). Hence, in indirect rule of group-consultation and accommodation of the most powerful is the one with the most delegation capabilities of interests.

In addition, policy decision-making in Japan depends on the level of controversy over an issue and the urgency for a decision (cf. Hook et al 2005: 77; Minor 1985). Minor (1985) distinguishes between "routine decisions", that involve non-controversial situations with little political significance, "political decisions", that are politically sensitive and controversial, and finally "crisis situations". In his opinion this is the reason why there exists no unitary foreign policy decision-making process in Japan (Minor 1985: 1240)

All considered, difficulties arise, because for consensus building all legitimate participants, and even the opposition, have to be consulted in any case. Thereby, the power of the political leader is impeded and the policy-making process automatically delayed. Consequently, "the policy-making model of Japan is often seen as being dominated by one participant over the other" (Hook et al 2005: 45).

In summary, Japanese traditional decision-making process is mainly characterized by responsibility shifts in the executive, group-decision-making and the maintenance of balance among the groups involved in the process through informal channels. As the main goal is agreement of all political and societal opponents, the decision-making process is

often delayed as a result of battles between different actors over influence, that cannot be prevented.


### 3.1.3. Citizens and elites

The term civil society, in the modern understanding of a phenomenon that "describes a society in which citizens from all walks of life cooperate and help each other for the good of the public", was not introduced in Japan as such until the 1990s, although there had been several societal movements before (Tsujinaka et al 2009: 9).

Traditionally, the Japanese public refrained from challenging authority, and it was rather expected that the public interest was automatically protected by the government (Kotler and Hillman 2000). Yoshida (1999: 13) argues that during the LDP-rule a "public-equals-official society" way of thinking existed. It meant, that the central government and the bureaucracy automatically ruled and determined over the public interest. This phenomenon can be explained by the "people's traditional obedience, submerged in the depths of the popular consciousness, to the public interest formulated for and imposed on them by officialdom" (Yoshida 1999: 20). Leading key term in this context is the word *sunao* meaning acceptance (of a situation) and docility. It means not separating one's will from the will of the authority. The government traditionally assumed the initiative in acting single-handedly and defining public interest (Yoshida 1999: 20).

From a historical perspective this characteristic is not unusual. When analyzing the Japanese characters for public interest (*kōeki*), Yoshida (1999) argues that it has a threefold meaning, and contains the notion of "government", "ruling authority" as well as "public". The concept *kou* became synonymous with the government, and especially the government's bureaucracy that dominated policy-making (Yoshida 1999: 24, 25). It has been anchored in Japan's mentality that the government should decide for the public, and "that which the government controls, *is* the public domain" (Yoshida 1999: 26).

However, this does not mean that there has never existed societal protest, political activity or doubts over the definition of public interest in Japan in the past. The political situation after World War II and in the course of the Cold War made leaders and citizens struggle over their political ideology. Public opinion was split (*kokuron no bunseki*) (Okada 2005). According to Tadokoro Masayuki, Professor at Keio University, (Interview 21.07.2010) the Japanese public was long polarized over their foreign and domestic political preferences

and a sharp ideological division between left and right tendencies existed. The party system, which was composed of the single-ruling conservative Liberal Democractic Party (LDP) on the one side, and the opposition parties Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) and Japanese Communist Party (JCP) on the other side, mirrored this ideological split strongly.

The ideological separation among the public was distinctive and became visible in the field of security policy, which finally led to the first big politically motivated societal protests and movements in the 1960s over the first extension of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty (MST) (*anpo nichibei anzen hoshō*) (Kabashima and Steel 2010: 15). The public and opposition parties advocated for a 'peace state' rather then for an extension of a security treaty. Public protests were so intense that President Eisenhower's official visit to Japan was cancelled, and Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke was heavily constrained in enacting the new draft of the new MST. The extension of the treaty was only possible through authoritarian tactics (Hook et al 2005: 148). These foreign and security related movements were accompanied by environmental movements as well as labor movements and represented a balance against the dominating bureaucracy or one-party rule of the LDP (Vosse 1999: 31). As opinion polls of that time show, 73-80% of the public was convinced that their activities were effective on policy-making. 71% believed that "politics are moved by our general power" (Vosse 1999: 40). During the 1960s, increased politicization, political activity and critical awareness were present among the Japanese public, and leftists fought against conservatives and anti-reformist ideology that were distinctive for the 1955-system (Okada 2005: 150).

During the 1970s political participation known as the '68s movements continued. New social movements developed, especially from the radical left, which were not comparable to the 'anpo-movements' of the past. Additionally, a new middle class emerged as political actors (grassrouts) that was established out of anxiety about the future and because of the failure of the radicals and militants in earlier years. "These groups were fighting against capitalist control over the economy, environmental issues and community issues that led to the establishment of neighborhood associations" (He 2010: 277). The existing system started to become criticized, however, no efforts were made to change the system. Instead, opposition groups used the present structures, especially the Iron Triangle, for their cause. Avenell (2009: 249) denotes this activism as "a proposal-style (*teian-gata*) social activism". That means presenting alternatives, but acting within given orders without challenging the order as such. Protests were, therefore, acting within existing networks and affiliations of

the political business conglomerates (*zaibatsu*) that dominated the protest scene to a large extent, and, consequently, superseded any possibilities for the development of new movements (Steinhoff 1989: 178). Hence, existing elites and bureaucracy, who became aware of the new civic participation, engaged with this new activity for their own advantage and to preserve their interests.

Moreover, most of the criticism that came from the public was to a large extent against bureaucratic decisions rather than legislative decisions. Consequently, there were few possibilities for the public to protest, apart from going to court (Steinhoff 1989: 176). As a result, since the 1970s the fraction of the public which believed that public activity was effective gradually declined (Vosse 1999: 41).

Societal campaigning and neighborhood movements active in the 1960s and 1970s, stagnated during the 1980s (Mifune 2008: 327). Economic wealth, that came along with the prospering of the Bubble Economy, finally gave rise to a new 'consumer society' and a 'de-politicizing' of the youth. Critical awareness faded and was not as visible as during the protests of the 1960s anymore. As Flanagan (1982 in Vosse 1999: 37) noted, "authoritarian and group-centered ideals changed towards libertarian values".

Activities of the former '68s movements faded away and were existent only in few parts of Japan (e.g. Kyoto), while the role of the reform ideology weakened (Mifune 2008: 328). Political activity was only present when ideological commitment was not necessary, such as signing petitions or donating money, whereas active commitment in form of participating at demonstrations or protests was rare until the mid-1990s (Vosse 1999: 39). Instead, non-commitment to associations or political orientations came to the fore.

### 3.2. Changing the institutional and decision-making environment

The collapse of the Bubble Economy in 1989 symbolizes a turning point in Japan's institutional environment as well as in the relationship between state and society.

The 'Bubble Crash' created an increased awareness within the central government, that other policy-making instruments, going beyond economic policies are necessary to contribute internationally (Berger 2007a: 270). Along came the unfortunate handling of several crises by the government, such as the Great Hanshin Earthquake in 1995, the Aum Shinrikyo sarin attacks in 1995, and the oil spill in the Sea of Japan in 1997 that were treated as critical issues in Japan within the political elites and for society. Against the background of having an ineffective and slow crisis management and decision-making process, a new awareness for the need for transformation of policies and institutions developed, which led to an overall decade of "political realignment" (Green 2001, Pyle 2007, Kawashima 2003). Between 1994 and 2001 four major political changes were established to strengthen and change leadership and the policy-making process: the new electoral system which was introduced in 1994, the Information Disclosure Law in 1998, the Diet and government reform of 1999 and the Administrative Reform effective in 2001. Through the Electoral Reform Act of 1994 Japan's electoral and party systems fundamentally changed from what prevailed until 1993. The new electoral system replaced the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), and combined plurality voting in single-member districts (for 300 seats) with regional, closed-list proportional representation (PR) for the remaining 180 seats. Under the old system party candidates campaigned against each other in most constituencies. Since they could not compete on a policy basis, they were forced to campaign less on a party-identification level rather than on a more personal level, which critics contend led to corruption, partisan politics and incentives for high campaign spending. Moreover, factional competence was very strong (Klein 2006: 257-259). The new electoral system changed personal intraparty competence into an overall party competence. One of the objectives of reform was to weaken the power of factions and eliminate factional competition in the general election. In addition, through this reform public visibility of party leaders and party-agendas became in general stronger, and public relations strategies for elections gained in importance (Interview Tadokoro Masayuki: 2010.07.21). The voters' attention was focused on the party and on the national level rather than on the

local level as before, and automatically strengthened the voters' control over the government (Shinoda 2000: 211, 212).

With the new electoral system, party endorsement was a precondition to win reelection. The new plurality and PR list seats were completely separate and there was no party list compensation for the results of the 300 single-member district races. This meant that the new electoral system had a strong element of "majoritarianism" (Lundberg 1995). As a result, the largest, best organized parties were likely to gain the most seats at the expense of the smaller parties. Therefore, smaller parties either had to merge into one party or formed coalitions with larger parties and supported one and the same party candidate (*ainori*) (Lundberg 1995).

During the postwar period Japanese voters had become accustomed to the single-party dominance of the LDP, who benefited from the SNTV-system, partly believing there was no alternative. With the new electoral system this *status quo* changed, the LDP was punished immediately by the public and lost its single rule in 1993 after all. This led to a cooperation of the Japan Socialist Party, JSP (now the Social Democratic Party, Shakai Minshutō) and the LDP, headed by the Socialist Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi and marked the end of the 1955-system (Green 2001: 40, 41).

Although the new electoral law weakened some functions of LDP factions, it did not eliminate them entirely. Factions still exist within the LDP and remain decisive for the governing administration and the selection of the prime minister until today. This still remains a major obstacle for strong leadership (Shinoda 2000: 213). What the reform actually changed was the new role and power of civil society in elections.

In 1996 major reforms started to emerge when Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998) formed the Administrative Reform Council (ARC) (Kyōsei Kaikaku Kaigi) to reinforce the authority of the Cabinet and of the prime minister (Mishima 1998: 970). One of Hashimoto's motivations to form the ARC was bureaucracy and its bad image.

Bureaucrats shared strong resistance against administrative reforms, but so did the LDP. Because of the amalgated relation between the two actors, mutual support for interests was guaranteed. For example, bureaucrats did not disturb the LDP's political goals. Incentives to change this relationship were, therefore, low from both sides (Lin 2006: 71-73). The opposition parties supported administrative reforms in order to weaken the close relationship of bureaucracy with the LDP, and to prevent policies which were only in line with LDP ideologies and not in their own interest (Lin 2006: 74).

The relationship between the public and bureaucracy changed as well. Bureaucracy was long believed to be trustworthy and of high privileged standard. In the 1990s, mostly due to policy misconducts of the LDP, corruption scandals involving the Ministries of Finance (MOF), International Trade and Industry (MITI) and Health and Welfare (MHW), the mismanagement of the financial system and other scandals, this view changed. Against this loss of image and the strong partisan competition within the LDP during that time, all major parties, including the LDP, made their call for reforming bureaucracy to improve their political standing with respect to the public. "Party competition has made bureaucracy-bashing in vogue" (Mishima 1998: 969, 982). With the strong public criticism, bureaucracy became susceptible to political pressure and accepted the inevitability of reforms, although they still sought to minimize damage of their interests (Mishima 1998: 981-983).

The related bills (the Law to Amend the Cabinet Law and the Law to Establish the Cabinet Office) that passed in 1999, by and large reordered the bureaucratic apparatus and gave the prime minister and the Cabinet more power. Japan's Central Government Reform became effective in January 2001. "The four main objectives of the reform are to strengthen the function of the Cabinet, to reorganize the Central Government, to make the administration more transparent, and to streamline the government" (Kantei: Central Government Reform of Japan 2001).

With the new laws, the number of Ministers of State was reduced from 20 to 17. Autonomy of bureaucracy declined whereas the power of elected politicians, and particularly politicians in the executive branch, rose. Significant institutional changes took place, and the Cabinet Secretariat (Naikaku Kanbō) gained a new and enhanced role.

**Figure 3.1: Kantei organization after 2001:**
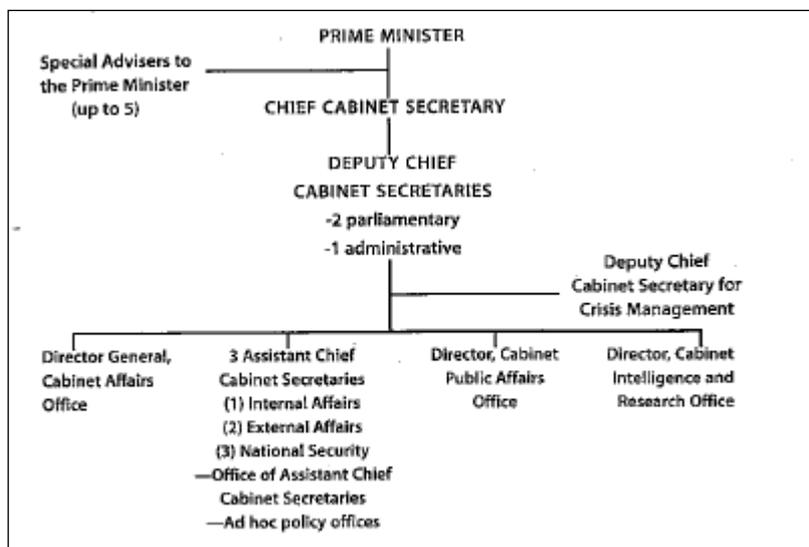
The amended Cabinet Law clarifies that "the Cabinet Secretariat takes charge of planning and drafting, in addition to comprehensive coordination of matters stipulated in the existing Law" (Kantei: Central Government Reform of Japan 2001). To strengthen the Cabinet Secretariat's function in planning and drafting and comprehensive coordination, new positions in the Cabinet Secretariat were introduced. To coordinate policy among the ministries and prevent flexibility in policy-making, *ad hoc* offices for specific political areas were created (Shinoda 2007: 75).

To empower the functions of the Cabinet, the Cabinet Office (Sōrifu), headed by the prime minister, was established. The Kantei is supposed to have "a strong coordinating function by providing prior proposals for policy directions rather than posterior coordination" (Kantei: Central Government Reform of Japan 2001). Since the Kantei plays a more innovative role in policy-making, the ministries sent more competent officers and consequently their quality improved (Shinoda 2005: 812). Besides organizational changes, the institutional authority of the prime minister was extended.

The revision of the Cabinet Law "allows the Kantei to initiate policies by clearly providing the authority to plan and draft concrete proposals under the direction of the cabinet and the prime minister". It further defines the Cabinet Secretariat as the "highest and final organ for policy strategically and proactively" (Kantei: Central Government Reform of

Japan 2001). Furthermore, Ministers for Special Missions were appointed, new politically appointed positions, as the State Secretary and the Parliamentary Secretary within each ministry, were introduced and councils of important policies were established.

This development represented a clear change in the relation between the prime minister, bureaucracy and the members of the Diet, since the prime minister was now capable of planning and drafting policy initiatives in matters that used to be under the jurisdiction of bureaucracy (Shinoda 2005: 813; Shinoda 2007: 77).

The power of individual LDP leaders, including the faction leaders, was reduced as the prime minister and the Cabinet officially gained strength in policy-making (Pempel 2007: 112; Shinoda 2005).

The new structure of the Kantei allowed the prime minister to conduct the country's foreign affairs more independently according to his views. Shinoda (2007: 143) believes that this centralized policy process may, therefore, automatically create shifts in Japan's foreign affairs, when a new national leader comes to power.

Nonetheless, the institutional base of foreign policy-making in Japan is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). MOFA is supposed to coordinate drafts and policies and manage negotiations between all relevant actors of the process.

The key actors in the bureaucratic process of foreign policy making are the department chiefs (*kacho*), who serve as the center where activities accumulate. The formal process of coordinating and drafting agendas would be that MOFA sends the drafts to agencies and agencies discuss these issue drafts in meetings through open position papers. However, most of the time informality rules the process, and responses to issue drafts have already been discussed behind the scenes without a formal open communication procedure (Ahn 1998: 47). To obtain power, the informal communication processes between all involved policy-makers take a long time to be resolved, the prime minister has the legal authority to decide over the drafts, however, practically this is still often not the case (Interview Mizutani Akira: 2010.08.06).

With its organizational strength for a concerted action and with its superior access to information and expertise, the MOFA-bureaucracy can make coordinated efforts to persuade key politicians to support its policy plan. In the end, inter-ministry coordination can become very politicized and resolving the differences may become impossible or may lead to policy paralysis (Ahn 1998: 57). Despite the time frame available for a decision, the decision-making process always sticks to the above described practices and negotiations.

They automatically delay and complicate the procedure (Interview Mizutani Akira: 2010.08.06).

Since the Administrative Reform of the Central Government in 2001, there seems to be a shift in power from MOFA (bureaucratic policy) to the Diet (leader driven policy). However, Cooney (2007: 76-77) asserts, that these internal shifts remarked no political reorientation, but rather a change in sources of influence of the foreign policy elites. Mizutani emphasizes, that it depends on the leadership quality of the prime minister to be capable to keep his legal authority over power in decision-making, because the process as such has still not changed. He further claims that the process becomes especially difficult if consensus has to be reached between many strong political leaders with gridlocked opinions (Interview Mizutani Akira: 2010.08.06).

Change in the relationship between policy-makers and bureaucrats have also evolved through a generational shift of lawmakers in the Diet. According to Cooney (2007: 76-77), this shift is characterized by a generation that desires to see Japanese politics and policy reflect the elected leadership rather than bureaucratic leadership.

What additionally changed the relationship between bureaucracy and politicians was the Information Disclosure Law of 1998, which will be elaborated more closely in the upcoming chapters. The new law required disclosure of official documents by the government, and provided citizens with better information access to governmental documents. The Information Disclosure Law changed responsibilities in so far, as bureaucracy and the advisory councils (*shingikai*), which formerly gathered information, were now supported by non-political council members, in other words, by outsiders who are mostly non-bureaucrats and non-politicians (often from big business and from academia with two representatives each). These council members and supporters take minutes of the meetings and draft their own reports that are available to the public on the internet (Interview Iio Jun 2010.09.01; Kabashima and Steel 2010: 107). Information disclosure is, therefore, not exclusively the work of bureaucracy anymore.

The new developments led to a different balance among political institutions and individual policy-makers (Pempel 2007: 109), and implemented the possibility for a more "top-down-leadership"-style. Many of the institutional protections and informal constellations that historically had hindered Japanese policy-making were slowly being reduced (Berger 2007: 272), and the new efforts, at least legally, strengthened the Prime Minister (Kantei) and the Cabinet Secretariat (Naikakukanbō) (Green 2001: 71, 72; Pempel 2007: 112).

Köllner (2006: 294) and Shinoda (2007: 168) assert, that the trend is slowly moving away from a 'bureaucratic leadership structure' (*kanryō shudō taisei*) towards a 'party leadership structure' (*tō shudō taisei*) and a 'Kantei Diplomacy' (*kantei gaikō*)[15] or *kantei shudō*.

The whole reorganization of the Central Government was well received by the Japanese public, which paid close attention to the new developments (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Yoron-chousabu 2002: 73-83). A reduction of ministries was assumed to diminish bureaucracy and enhance policy coordination for faster reactions on significant political issues, such as earth quake rescue systems etc. The concentration of power within the Prime Minister's Office was well supported, and believed to enhance the influence over the bureaucracy (Lin 2006: 81). People felt more comfortable in believing the decision-making power was concentrated on one person who was officially elected, than on the non-elected bureaucracy.

Although there is greater fluidity in Japanese policy-making than was true in the past, and the Japanese state has proven capable of instituting gradual reforms, it has been stressed by many scholars that if a country is politically realigning, this also implicates a clear exercise in good leadership (Green 2001: 37; Shinoda 2007). Despite much institutional progress to rearrange power in policy-making there are still top-level bureaucrats who continue to play a crucial role in planning, formulating and implementing Japan's foreign policy even after institutional realignments (e.g. Hagström 2005; 71; Shinoda 2005: 821; Pyle 2007: 360). The administrative reforms legally changed and improved lots of instruments, but did not manage to eliminate bureaucracy and informal processes altogether.

Even though policy mechanisms have changed, which made researchers describe Japanese policy-making with the "top-down-leadership model" more often, it does not automatically guarantee stronger leadership. Struggles of party system and leadership positions due to the change of the electoral system are still present. The institutional environment has improved, but the prime minister still needs "to depend on his informal sources of power to gain support within the government, the ruling party, the public and opposition parties" (Shinoda 2000: 218).

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[15] With the term ‚Kantei Diplomacy' Shinoda Tomohito refers to „the phenomenon in which the Cabinet Secretariat proactively supports the prime minister in making political decisions and carries out policy coordination that MOFA is unequipped to handle" (Shinoda 2007: 21).

## 3.3. The Japanese prime minister

### 3.3.1. Institutional power of the prime minister before the administrative reform

Until the Administrative Reform became effective in 2001, Japan's policy-making system of Japan existed in the Cabinet and in the ruling party LDP (cf. Shinoda 2007). For the most part, the Japanese prime minister's power was shared and had to be coordinated with the different factions and coalition parties (Green 2001: 70).

In the pre-war era, the prime minister's position was that of an assistant to the emperor not even being able to discharge one of his cabinet ministers. "Resignation of one minister meant resignation of the entire cabinet" (Nakasone 1995: 8). In the post-war era under the new Constitution of Japan, the prime minister was invested with supreme command over the armed forces and the power to dismiss ministers. Due to LDP majority in parliament, the LDP prime minister controlled the Diet as well (Nakasone 1995: 8-9).

While the prime minister had the power per constitution, his authority over the executive was still limited (Green 2001: 71; Shinoda 2000: 45). At the same time, he faced strong constraints that came from issue-specific frictions between the government, the ruling party, and factionalism (Shinoda 2008: 536) or the intra-factional competition within the LDP, that influenced significantly the possibilities of political leaders. The crucial part for prime ministers was to mediate the relationship between the office of the prime minister his own party, and the coalition parties. Furthermore, the close relationship of a government bureaucracy with a political party's internal decision-making process as practiced during the 1955-system, made mediation more difficult (Krauss 1989: 51-52). The continued dependence on non-elected bureaucrats for policy know-how hindered the power of the prime minister, and policy decisions were made by non-elected bureaucrats, rather than by the prime minister (Nakasone 1995: 10).

In terms of Foreign Affairs, Article 73 of Japan's Constitution provides the Cabinet with the authority to be in charge of foreign affairs.[16] The prime minister is the head of the Cabinet. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has a minister, but it requires the prime minister's agreement in decisions on foreign policy issues. The prime minister, supported by the Cabinet Secretariat, makes political decisions, whereas MOFA is supposed to

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[16] The Prime Minister's Official Residence (*Kantei*): The Constitution of Japan:
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html (10.12.2009).

provide the necessary assistance (Shinoda 2007: 18-21). The prime minister provides policy directions and instructs the related cabinet minister. The latter in turn gives, instructions to his vice minister, the bureau chief and the director of the related department. During this instruction chain, interest-led sabotage was not uncommon and policies often did not survive (Shinoda 2007: 23). The LDP's strong factions constrain prime ministers from being capable of acting decisively and precipitate foreign policy directions (Green 2001: 37). The bottom-up style process also exists within the LDP. On the one hand, the LDP cabinets allowed two party organs, the General Council (Somukai) and the Policy Affairs Research Council (PARC) (Seimu Chosakai) to examine and approve bills prior to deliberations in the Diet. PARC is the LDP's policy-making body and is structured parallel to the government's structure. Proposals formulated by PARC are then approved as formal party policies. On the other hand, the party heavily relies on informal groupings of "senior and middle-level LDP politicians (*zoku giin*) with abundant knowledge and experience who specialize in particular policy areas" (Mishima 2007: 729). These parliamentarians revise proposals prepared by ministries if necessary.[17] As a result, also in terms of foreign policy-making the prime minister struggled with the interaction of party organs, bureaucracy and mid-level politicians.

After the introduction of administrative reforms and the new functions of the Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office as described earlier, the prime minister's authority, as the head of the Cabinet Office, was clearly defined as the legal authority for proposing policies or advise ministries (Lin 2006: 87). Also, the support system of the prime minister was increased by strengthening the Cabinet Secretariat, and by allowing the prime minister to appoint up to five special advisors (before it was only three). Leadership of the prime minister was, therefore, strengthened institutionally but it did not automatically mean that strong leadership was a matter of fact.

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[17] Until 1993, *zoku* politicians were mediators and experts of specific political issues and had great political influence. *Zoku* were present in all policy committees of the ruling party. It was not uncommon for bureaucracy to ask the *zoku* for approval for admitting policy proposals to the Cabinet (Shinoda 1998: 703-704).

*3.3.2. Informal resources*

Although the prime minister suffers many different political constraints, Shinoda (2000) notes that he is nevertheless able to play a greater role in the outcome of Japan's decision-making process than expected. Informal sources give him the power to effectively utilize the power options possible through institutional realignments. Informal sources of power can be the degree of support from within the political circle, the degree of control over the bureaucracy, the relationship with the opposition parties and the degree of popularity, public relations as well as the support from the business community and the United States. The effectiveness of each prime minister, however, varies and depends on each leader's background, experience, political skill and personality (Shinoda 2000: 89-122). „With limited legal authority, the prime minister must depend on informal sources of power to shape his leadership style and to determine the effectiveness of his effort" (Shinoda 2000: 211). Shinoda (2000) distinguishes four different leadership styles in Japan, each of them relying on different types of informal resources: *the political insider, the grandstander, the kamikaze fighter and the peace lover.* The *political insider* is defined as a leader who has strong internal sources of power through stable support within the ruling party, and close ties with the bureaucracy and the opposition parties. A strong status as faction leader mostly from the largest LDP faction, further helps to regulate factionalism. The other three leadership styles do not share the same amount of internal resources.

The *grandstander* is described as a leader who seeks external support from the public and the media because of the lack of internal support. With limited inner-party and bureaucratic support and a small faction, such prime ministers seek public support for their policies. Grandstanders, as for example Nakasone Yasuhiro or Yoshida Shigeru, knew how to use media and public support well, and were thereby able to suppress sectionalism within the government and the ruling party. Grandstanders often have a clear political vision and directly communicate it to the public. Although party conflict often exists and many party members oppose the policies suggested, with the grandstander's strategy the opposition is afraid to block initiatives that are supported by the public.

The *kamikaze fighter* tries to achieve political goals by sacrificing his political leadership role. In cases a prime minister has limited internal resources and no external support, his efforts can be disadvantageous to the fight against fractions within the government and the ruling party. Fierce interfactional struggles can, therefore, lead to sacrifice the political career as prime minister.

The *peace lover* is characterized by failing to achieve controversial policy goals, because he tries to compromise with all parties (Shinoda 2000: 205- 211). The peace lover represents the traditional characteristic of 'consensus-building' in Japanese decision-making. Political successes fail if the prime minister sacrifices support of one party in order to gain support for the opposing party. In these cases public support has been often sacrificed for internal party support.

Informal sources are, therefore, still important and the differences in sources of power a prime minister uses, explain variations in leadership capabilities and the ability to effect policy-making (cf. Shinoda 2000; Mulgan 2002).

### 3.3.3. The prime minister and the public

The degree of visibility of the prime minister by the public has been expanded compared to the times of the 1955-system. An increased perception of the prime minister by the public developed due to Electoral Reforms in 1994, the Administrative Reforms in 2001 and the new LDP election rules in 2001, through which the party's presidential election became independent of Diet members, and presidents were now selected by party members (cf. Krauss and Nyblade 2005). Before that time, the prime ministers' role did not stand out from the role of the ruling party. The LDP and PARC were the center of the policy-making process. When trying to contact the decision-making elite, bureaucracy and interest groups or the public referred to party organs. The party then interacted with the prime minister and the Cabinet. The most visible actor for the public was, therefore, the political party (Lin 2006: 146).

With the Administrative Reform, the focus of bureaucracy, interest groups and the public shifted from party organs to the prime minister, and helped to enhance direct interaction between public and prime minister (cf. Krauss and Nyblade 2005; Lin 2006: 149). In his work on "prime ministerial power and party politics in Japan", Lin (2006) has shown that the dynamics of interaction have changed since the Koizumi administration, and a direct link was established between public and the prime minister without the party being necessarily in between. These changes in interaction between the prime minister and the public are graphically depicted in the following two figures 3.2 and 3.3:

**Figure 3.2: Pre-Koizumi dynamics**
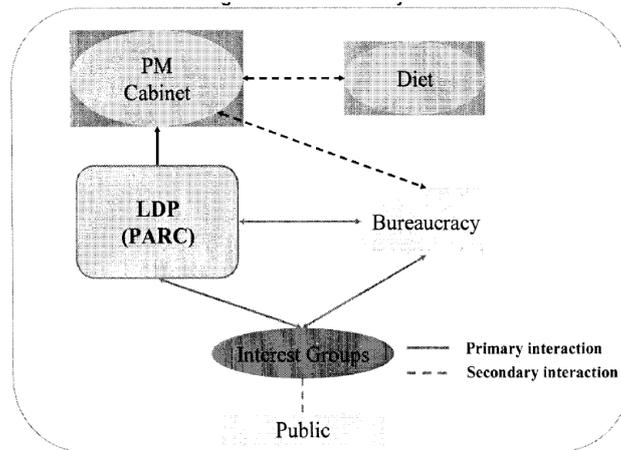


Source: Lin 2006: 146.

**Figure 3.3: Dynamics under the Koizumi Cabinet**
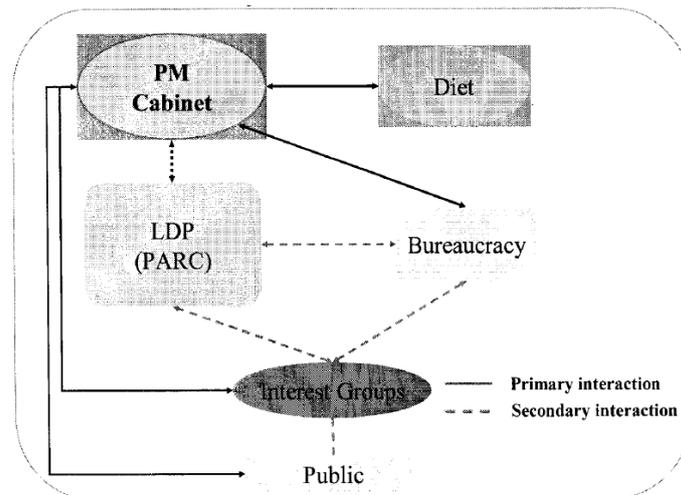


Source: Lin 2006: 149.

As a consequence of these changes in interaction, the evaluation of the prime minister by the public became very important for the survival of a prime minister's career. Popularity can help prime ministers to follow their political views, whereas low popularity ratings may force them out of office even if they have a stable power base within their party (Shinoda 2000: 99). Thus, "outside prestige can be translated into inside influence" (King 1985: 109 in: Shinoda 2000: 99). High popularity adds votes, whereas a low level of public support may lead to a prime minister's resignation. "The awareness of public opinion by the prime

minister is very strong. Polls are mandated all the time" (Interview Anonymous G: 2010.08.03).

The prime minister is the most visible political figure, therefore, political parties cannot afford to choose a political lightweight for prime minister and rely on factional balances anymore. The public's possible preferences in one person have to be taken into consideration when choosing the next party leader. His degree of popularity affects the popularity of his party and members of his administration. Although popularity does not automatically mean good leadership, it can positively affect his political influence and standing within the party and the cabinet (Shinoda 2000: 204).

Public support has been also important in policy areas. When there is strong opposition within the party, policies can be blocked easily if the public agrees with the opposition. However, if opposition parties, big business, interest groups and public opinion support the basic direction of the policy recommended, the prime minister can take advantage of the positive climate and successfully implement his policy (Shinoda 2000: 100).

The use and relevance of public opinion for policies further becomes clear through informal rules of parties: There used to exist an informal rule within the LDP, by means of which the support of an issue by the public and the party had to result to a total of 100%. In cases in which party support rate for an issue was 30%, then the rest 70% had to be supplied by public support. However, if party support was high, for example 65%, for an issue, then only 35% of public support was necessary (Interview Anonymous F: 2010.06.10). Moreover, a high-level bureaucrat indicated in an interview by the author, that public opinion is of utmost relevance to a prime minister, especially when the candidate comes from a weak party faction, and the possibility exists that the other factions want to overthrow him. In such cases high public support rates have been advantageous for the prime minister's political standing (Interview Anonymous A: 2010.07.28). Popularity can help enhance a prime minister's leadership and give him stability within his own party, especially when he has weak party control. It cannot enforce policies, but it depends on how a prime minister uses his popularity and converts it into political power over his party opponents (Shinoda 2000: 106).

Popularity and public support, therefore, give the prime minister strength in pursuing his policies. Nakasone Yasuhirou was a prime minister who was well aware of this power. Moreover, all prime ministers after Yoshida Shigeru (prime minister from 1946-1947 and from 1948-1954) expanded their domestic visibility and increased television presence, in an

attempt to persuade voters of the importance of their decisions, and to show more democratic characteristics (Mendel 1961: 40). This can be explained by the fact that "people do not normally give their active support to a policy unless they are persuaded" (Tucker 1981: 62 in Shinoda 2000: 101). Therefore, communication with the public and the media becomes an important factor (Shinoda 2000: 101). Especially in sensitive issues, such as foreign and security policy, the prime minister's performance, contribution and negotiation capabilities are important. Through the use of media, the public's attention to foreign policy has sharpened (Nakasone 1995: 10). "Public support ratings have greater impact on the prime minister's ability to carry out key policies" (Nakasone 1995: 10). Therefore, the media, as a means of measuring public support, can play a very important role. In Nakasone's view, high support rates enable the prime minister to ignore demands of party bosses (Nakasone 1995: 10). Shinoda (2008: 536) agrees, by saying that the resources used by each prime minister characterize leadership. These may be the connections within his own party or to other parties, the connections with bureaucracy, and above all the usage of media and public support. Consequently, prime ministers reinforce their engagement in public relations activities.

## 3.4. Changing state-society relationship

In the course of economic downturns and a variety of scandals and incidents involving government officials, the public's attitudes towards the political elites and towards political rights of civil society changed dramatically in the mid-1990s. People showed the will for change and started finding political ways to express their dissatisfaction which at the same time led to an increase in the volunteer sector (Vosse 1999: 40; Mifune 2008).

This is especially related with the image fall of Japan's government and bureaucrats. Bureaucrats have been held responsible for the crash of the economic bubble which led to a long recession from which Japan did not recovered easily (Kingston 2004: 96). Moreover, many political scandals were featured regularly by the media, which automatically led to a loss of credibility of the government and its bureaucrats among the public. The traditional myth of a "clean government" started to fade. As Kingston (2004) notes "the term *yaku-gai* (harm caused by government officials) gained currency from 1996, reflecting the anger and disbelief of the public", and symbolizes the change in relations between state and citizens

(Kingston 2004: 98), which led to "a growing shift in the way people perceive and interact with those who lead Japan and the institutions that govern the nation" (Kingston 2005: 3). This change in relation between the public and the elites will be elaborated in the following section.


*3.4.1. Changing citizens - development of value orientations and political participation in Japan*

In the chapters before we have seen that the first big politically oriented movements were against the Japan-US Mutual Security Treaty, followed by environmental-, labor- women's and peace movements that reflected the political activism in the 1960s until the 1970s. However, between the 1970s and the 1990s, political participation slowed down and political ideology faded. One reason is, that economic wealth during the Bubble Economy turned the public more consumer oriented than politically and ideologically active. A political apathy was visible after the 1970s (Interview Anonymous E: 2010.08.02). A second wave of societal activism began in the mid-1990s, which was metaphorically described as the 'lost decade'. The 1990s distinguish themselves not only through institutional changes and a 'political realignment', as described in section 3.2, but also through an increase in civic participation or in volunteerism to the political process, founded in the public's dissatisfaction with crisis management and policy-making of the elites (Mifune 2008: 128-133). This phenomenon is like a social reconstruction or societal realignment, and became effective through the formation of various voluntary organizations as can be seen in figure 3.4. These civic organizations grew from approximately 5% in the mid-1990s to about 10% in 2000-2008, and signalized a move toward "greater participation and pluralism" (cf. Scott 2008: 187; Tsujinka et al 2009: 13). Some of this new political interaction originated in form of grassroots organizations (Non Profit Organizations (NPO) and Associations), which tried to challenge the central government. Between 1960 and 1990 the numbers of interest groups tripled. This includes not only business associations but also labor-, political-, and academic associations (Scott 2008: 187). The increased establishment of non-profit and nongovernmental organizations and societal activity symbolizes the gradual political and social reconstruction of Japan (Kotler and Hillman 2000: 2) and filled the gap in the relationship between the Japanese civil society and government (Scott 2008: 192).

The obstacles having their roots in bureaucracy did not change during this reconstruction period. In many cases government discouraged or neglected the civil movements'

policy proposals. Because citizens' interest in political participation rose again compared to the time period after the 1970s, and their actions became "much more assertive, bureaucrats were forced to engage with citizens" (Campbell 1989: 123). Despite this, many of these civic movements used existing institutions and tried to work within the routines of bureaucracy to achieve their goals (Avenell 2009: 249). On the other hand, many civic advocates tried to fight the trend of having to work within existing orders, because in their view it only hindered the establishment of societal activity. They believed societal activity did not match with the present system, instead, new regulations were required (Avenell 2009: 250). As a result, Avenell (2009: 281) has argued that there still existed "disagreement on the issue of civic group autonomy" between society and the state that could not be resolved.

Along with new catch-phrases such as *shimin* (citizen) and *borontia* (volunteer) that appeared during this time period, the Japanese print media also became aware of these new civic activities. They started referring increasingly to them in their articles, and revealed to the public the possibilities of NPOs, which enhanced public attention to the new developing phenomenon (Avenell 2009: 256).

**Figure 3.4: Association building (neighborhood associations, social associations, NPOs) in Japan**
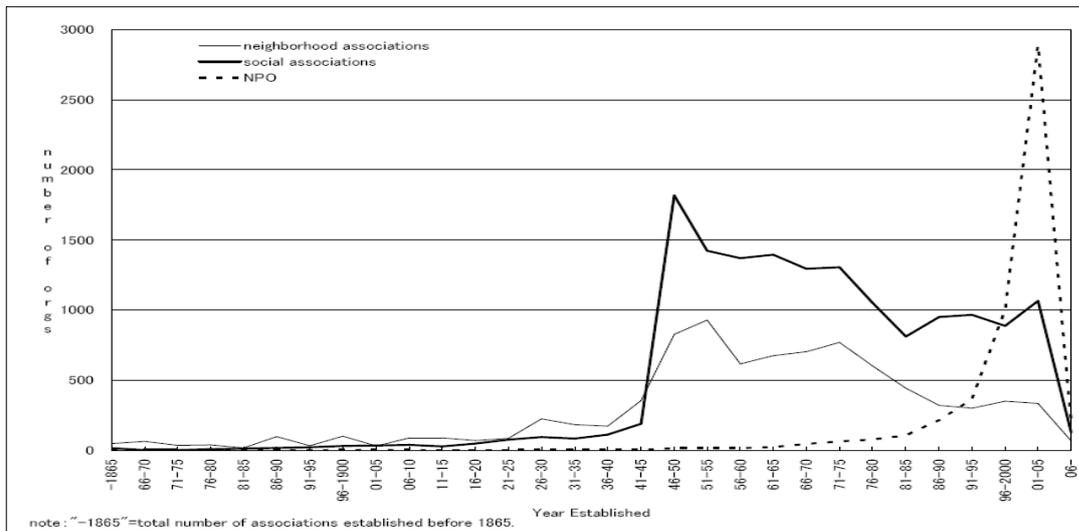


Source: Tsujinaka et al 2009: 14.

Societal activism was common more on the local level than on the national level. The most common type of activity of civil society organizations was politically oriented (56%), followed by overall lobbying (43%), lobbying of local or national governments through politicians (38%), lobbying central bureaucracy through politicians (31%), public enlightenment (27%), lobbying local government through politicians (27%), contact mass media (16%), election campaigning (15%) and mobilizing members for voting (11%) (Tsujinaka and Pekkanen 2007: 429).

Above this, societal organizations provide alternative information on issues and propose alternative policies (Scott 2008: 192). Often these propositions are discussed in cooperation with government or the bureaucracy. By critically monitoring the process of policy-making, Hasegawa (2002: 7) concluded that the civic sector functions as a non-institutional opposition or counter power. Results further show that Diet members were contacted the most, and those who had indirect contact with political parties tended to employ politicians (Diet members) to promote their own interests (Tsujinaka and Pekkanen 2007: 433).

Apart from the organized issue oriented public, increasing willingness for political participation has also been visible in the overall "general public" or "mass public". Throughout the 1980s and up until 2008, the attitude to "elect competent politicians and leave them to act on behalf of our representatives" was estimated to be approximately 60%, and represented the dominant result (Kono et al 2008: 20). Whereas "sustained activities",

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which means to "try to achieve our goals through sustained activities that boost our preferred party or group", were supported more until the early 1990s, the activity to appeal to politicians "when a specific issue arises and ask the politicians we support to reflect our views on the matter in the political arena" increased from 12% in 1973 to 17% in the 1990s, 19% in 2003 and finally to 20% in 2008 (Kono 2005: 20).

Although the amount of activity and political participation is still low compared to other western democracies (between 13% and 17% from 1973-2003), these trends in Figure 3.5 show that despite the fact that the majority prefers to leave political matters in the hands of political representatives, an increase in the willingness to express opinions and act in favor of expressing them, is visible in Japanese society since the mid-1990s (Kono 2005: 19).

**Figure 3.5: Political association and activism (1973-2003)**
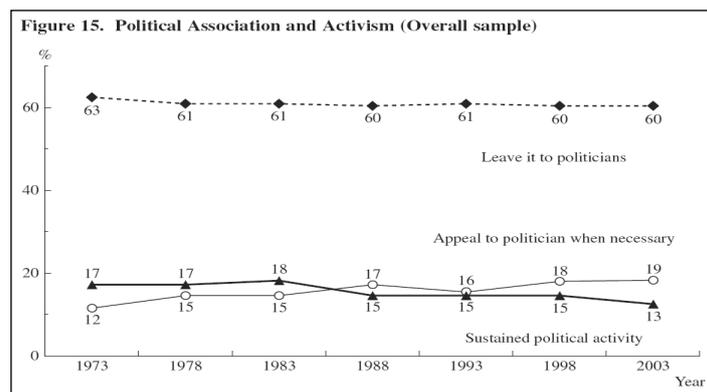


Source: Kono 2005: 19.

The most frequent political activity that has been exercised by the general public, and is perceived to be the most effective activity evaluated, is voting, followed by signing letters of protests or petitions, taking actions through organizations or contacting media and/or politicians directly (cf. Kono et al 2008).

   The younger generation is generally more convinced than older generations that citizen action may have an effect on politics, and they initiated the establishment of new forms of movements were established (Kono et al 2008: 31). In particular in 2003 new forms of political protest made their appearance in Japan. Since 2003 "rave demo protests" have been very popular among the younger Japanese public. Rave demos are a new form of anti-war and anti-globalization protests directed against the War in Iraq and the "neoliberal economic policies of Prime Minister Koizumi and Tokyo Governor Ishihara" (Hayashi and

McKnight 2005: 90). Rave demos differ from other antiwar protests. They use music and media as a tool. "They try to mobilize the political potential of the crowds by reintroducing elements of the pleasure principle of mass culture into ideologized political protest, particularly by using mediated musical forms…" (Hayashi and McKnight 2005: 89). Protesters of these movements range mainly from teenagers to late thirties. They aim to send their message by dancing, DJ-ing and rave-music, and try to get people to join in the protest "by using the power of spectacle in the form of sound trucks" (Hayashi and McKnight 2005: 91).

Compared to the student protests of the 1960s and 1970s that were strongly ideologically split and in parts violent, these protests represent a different form of activism and combine art and activism in public spaces of Tokyo and Kyoto. Their purpose is "to mobilize the political potential of the crowd differently" than political parties or other citizens movements do (Hayashi and McKnight 2005: 88-89). New characteristics of these movements are the combination of political protest and local well known neighborhood culture not organized by well known activist organizations, but from freelance workers, music writers, artists etc. (Hayashi and McKnight 2005: 90, 96).

On the one side, this form of protest that developed on the occasion of the War in Iraq undoubtedly represents a new and challenging societal political activity for the Japanese government, which had difficulties to assess and properly deal with these kinds of movements. Officials had difficulties to evaluate the effects and influences of such movements that had not existed before. On the other side, it once again shows the willingness and interest of the younger Japanese public to express opinions and participate in policy-making.

Although the willingness for activity is present, political orientations have changed compared to the 1960s and 1970s and ideological differences are not as clear as they used to be. The average of non-committed voters rose to 52% in 1998, further increased to 57% in 2003, and was 46% in 2008 (Figure 3.6). These results once again reflect the ambivalent view of the public on the relationship between state and society (Vosse 1999: 42). This trend has continuously dominated the polls since 1983 as the following table shows:

**Figure 3.6: Political party support rates**
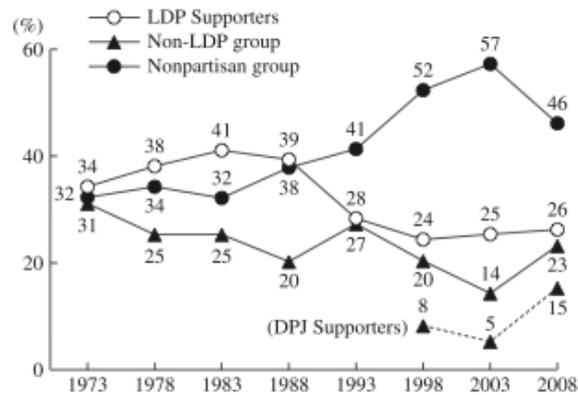


Source: Kono et al 2008: 34.

As is clearly seen in Figure 3.6 support for nonpartisan groups has steadily increased up to 2003, while a drop was recorded in 2008. Political non-commitment of the Japanese public is closely related to the increased dissatisfaction with government, leadership and non-confidence in these institutions, on the one side, and the perceived weak reflection of the public's views and aspirations in policy-making, on the other side.

Surveys have shown that the average Japanese has little trust in the national government, in political parties or in parliament (Figure 3.7). Generally speaking, confidence in information resources, such as the press or television, and in societal organizations or NGOs is much higher than in political parties, the government or parliament:

**Figure 3.7: Lack of confidence in political institutions**
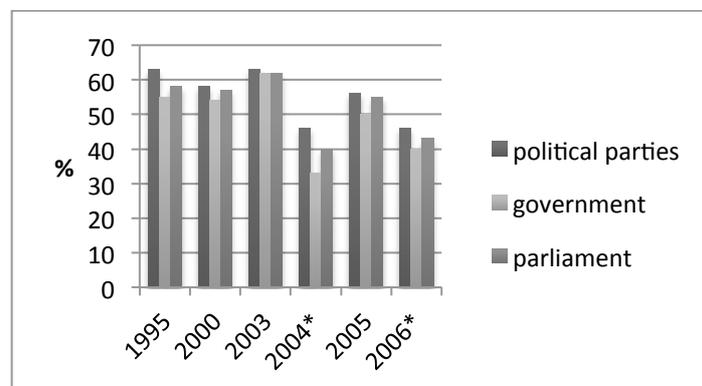


Source: The World Values Survey Association: 1995, 2000, 2005; The East Asian Barometer 2001-2003 Official Data File, Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007.

Confidence in these three instances is low because people believe politicians act in their own interest even if society disagrees (Yomiuri Shinbun Yoronchousabu 2002: 279; The East Asian Barometer 2001-2003). The public believes that "some people or groups have such an enormous power of influence that they tend to ignore the interests of the majority of people" (1995: 79,8%, 2000: 83,6%), (The World Values Survey 1995, 2000; Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007). Local governments however are perceived as trustworthy (2003: 53,7%), (The East Asian Barometer 2001-2003). Responses from 1995 until 2005 have further shown, that the people wish the government would take more responsibility. The overall view exists, that corruption in national government dominates policy-making. The Japanese public expects from the elected political leadership to tolerate the views of those who challenge their political ideas (2003: 45,5% somehow agree), and that the leaders of political parties should be willing to cooperate with other groups even if it means compromising (56,7%) (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004).

**Figure 3.8: Does Japan move towards a positive or negative direction?**
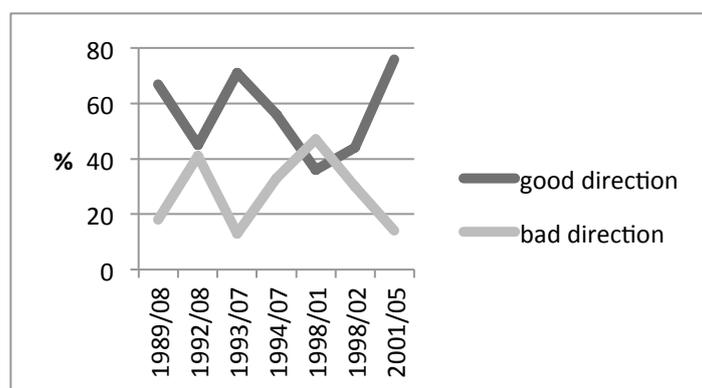


Source: Yomiuri Shinbunsha Yoronchousabu 2002: 67.

These views are reflected in Figure 3.8 where we see, that dissatisfaction with the political situation in Japan rose extremely from 1993 until 1998 during the same time period as institutional realignments were contrived and civil society started to become more active. When people were questioned which actor was perceived as the most powerful one in policy-making, the following ranking resulted (Figure 3.9):

**Figure 3.9: The most powerful actor in policy-making (2001 and 2005):**
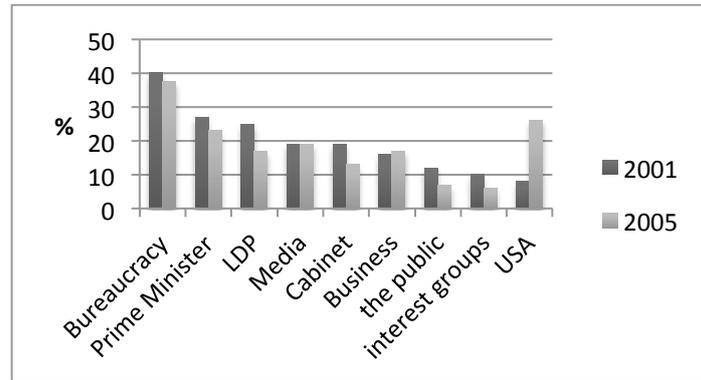


Source: Yomiuri Shinbun Yoronchōsabu 2002: 278; Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.24.

This table confirms the traditional view of a powerful bureaucracy. Although people have lost confidence in it and its reputation is questionable, they still believe that bureaucracy is the strongest power in policy-making, followed by the Prime Minister. However, when asked what influences politics and if one feels favorable towards the named actor, the majority of the respondents showed strong unfavorable feelings towards the congressional representatives and the bureaucracy, but favorable feelings towards the current prime minister and the government (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007). The fact that the USA was ranked second in 2005, is a result of the international political situation due to the terrorist attacks of September 2001, and the wars following thereafter in Iraq and Afghanistan.[18]

The media and the LDP have been perceived as powerful actors of the policy-making process as well, ranking at position 3 and 4, whereas from 2001 until 2005 the power of the media has remained the same, and only the LDP's power decreased.

Closely connected, is the perceived weak interest by the public of its own views and aspirations in political affairs. Surveys of the Cabinet Office and of NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute have shown that the majority of the Japanese public believes their interests are not reflected adequately in policy-making (Figure 3.10):

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[18] Japan was a member of the coalition of the willing

**Figure 3.10: Sense of political efficacy: reflection of public opinion**
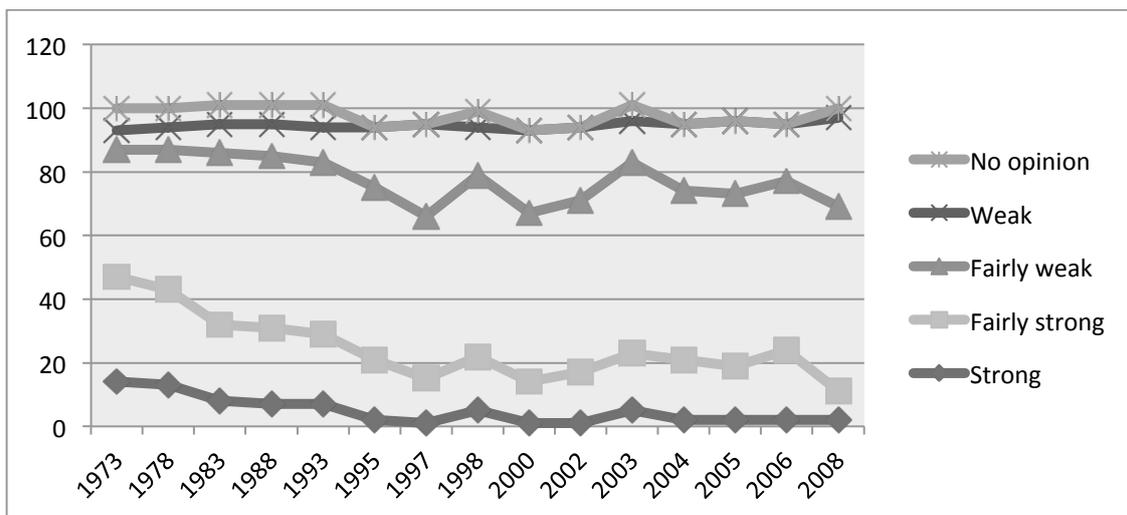
Both surveys show the same results. The public perceives that its opinions are only somewhat reflected in politics.

Although people recognize that public opinion does not have sufficient impact on politics, the overall view that direct action generally does have an impact has increased (Kono et al 2008: 28) (Figure 3.11). Especially between the years 2003 and 2008 improved efficacy has been observed compared to the years 1983 and 2003, when efficacy was determined to be fairly weak. A Keio University 21COE-CCC survey from 2004 to 2007 (the Koizumi era) confirms the NHK survey results, and reveals a small increase in the public's perception of being accepted and listened to by the governing elites. Approximately 40 percent of the public believed they could affect policy decisions to a certain extent (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007).

**Figure 3.11: Sense of political efficacy (direct action)**

| | Strong | Fairly strong | | Fairly weak | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2008 | 7 | 21 | 55 | 13 | 4 |
| 2003 | 5 | 18 | 60 | 13 | 5 |
| 1998 | 5 | 17 | 57 | 15 | 5 |
| 1993 | 7 | 22 | 54 | 11 | 7 |
| 1988 | 7 | 24 | 54 | 10 | 6 |
| 1983 | 8 | 24 | 54 | 9 | 6 |
| 1978 | 13 | 30 | 44 | 7 | 6 |
| 1973 | 14 | 33 | 40 | 6 | 7 |
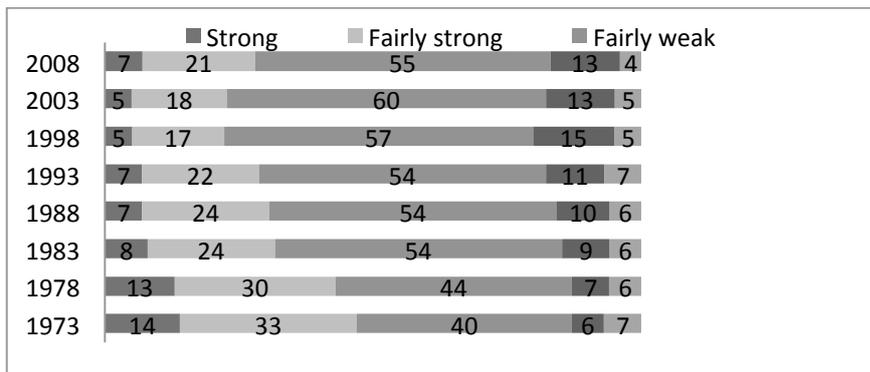
Source: Kono 2005: 12 and NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2008: 19.

Nevertheless, in 35 years of value orientation research of the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute, elections have been determined as the most powerful impact of the public in politics, followed by direct action and at last public opinion (Kono et al 2008: 28-29).

*3.4.2. Legislative changes*

Traditionally, rather than using the law to control society, the Japanese government preferred administrative means, particularly informal conciliations based on the integration of bureaucracy with society (Rohlen 1989: 14).

This form of behavior has changed during the 1990s when the Diet introduced several initiatives that laid the foundation for a new form of civic activity. Not only reforms and studies on administrative and financial issues were implemented as described earlier, but also non-state sponsored non-profit organizations (NPOs) were finally allowed to become legal (Kotler and Hillman 2000: 15).

The rising waves of demand for a more enabling environment for civil society reflected the concerns of civil society leaders in Japan over the many governmental constraints against societal efforts. As described in the previous chapter, government interventions in affairs of civil society, especially from bureaucracy, have been very strong in Japan, which is symbolic of the traditional state-centered governance of the past (Yamamoto 1999: 107). Pekkanen (2003) argues that "state institutions shape civil society in Japan both directly and indirectly", meaning regulations of groups' legal status or activities through tax benefits, directing financial flows, such as grants or contracts, influence civil society directly.

Indirectly, he believes they are influenced by "Japan's institutional structure". The traditionally policy-making system with the strong bureaucracy and the weak politicians had automatically shaped the groundwork for how to operate or whom to cooperate with, in order to be effective (Pekkanen 2003: 119). Conclusively, political structure has, therefore, a big impact on how civil society can develop.

Today, legal status is a necessity for independent groups to become large. Two legal reforms, the 1998 Law for Promotion of Specified Nonprofit Activities, NPO Law (*tokutei hieiri katsudō sokushinhō*), and the 2001 granting of tax privileges, have improved the environment for civil society formation. Since the law was introduced, an increase at about 70 percent in the establishment of NPOs was registered in Japan (cf. Yamamoto 1999; Schwartz and Pharr 2003; Pekkanen 2005; Kingston 2005; Tsujinaka et. al 2009: 14).

As Japanese NPOs played a bigger role in society and became more conscious of the need to improve their infrastructures and enhance their possibilities, they became constantly aware of factors restraining their work, and showed higher motivation to remove the barriers that hindered the development of the NPO sector in Japan (Yamamoto 1999: 100).

Before legislative changes were introduced, the government relied on Article 34 of the Japanese Civil Code (Minpō). According to this article, legal status (*hōjinka*) for NPOs was critical. Under the Civil Code law, only a limited number of groups could gain legal status as nonprofit public interest legal persons. It was left up to the bureaucracy to determine whether an organization contributed to the public interest or not. Acquiring the legal status required permission by the bureaucrats. This situation led to a pattern of bureaucratic control over the public interest corporations, and forced the then called "independent organizations" to associate themselves with the government ministries to become legal (Yamamoto 1999: 108). After the enactment of the new laws, the administrative supremacy of the bureaucracy in granting legal and official statuses to societal groups was limited.

Despite the possibilities that could have opened up through supporting the work of NPOs, which could have improved policy-making and close the gap between the public and the political elites, it was still difficult for NPOs to become effective partners with government organizations (Kingston 2004: 119). Although the legal introduction for improvement of NPOs had been accomplished, bureaucracy first made just minimal adjustments. Only after the political parties and politicians that had depended on the bureaucracy for so long also began distancing themselves from existing practices, the bureaucracy started to adjust their work according to the new NPO Law. For political

parties the new 'public interest' was necessary to win elections, on the one hand, but also to survive the fierce realignment struggle among parties, on the other hand. Therefore, "politicians have begun advocating civil rights and civil interests which are new symbols of the public interest vis-à-vis the official" (Yoshida 1999: 39, 40).

In an effort to restore confidence in government and regain public trust, the government tried to become more open to the public. This was realized through the implementation of the Information Disclosure Law in 2001 (*jōhō kōkaihō*), whereby practices of the bureaucrats had to be transparent (Kingston 2004: 104, 107). With this law, policy-making in general became more transparent, and the media used the law extensively to provide information to the public that otherwise would not have been available to them. As Kingston (2004: 117) notes, "the bureaucrats' business is becoming the public's business and, as information about the workings of government becomes public knowledge, this is having an impact on how officials conduct themselves". Citizens in Japan now legally have more possibilities to form NPOs and societal organizations, and at the same time have more access to political information sources than in the past. As a result, he notes, although bureaucracy still possesses great power in policy-making even after new legislation, the government is forced to adjust its political behavior along the expectations of the public because transparency and the rule of law reinforced new trends (Kingston 2004: 119).

## 3.5. The Japanese media

The media are a very powerful actor in policy-making in Japan and an important determinant of understanding state-society relationship. According to *Yomiuri Shinbun* Opinion polls in 2001 and 2005, the mass media are perceived to be among the top four most powerful actors because of their strong distribution and high credibility (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.24). Newspapers, radio, and television are the primary sources of news information for the majority of the Japanese public (Yomiuri publishers polling Institute 2002: 282; World Values Survey 2000 and 2005 Official Data File), and approximately 75% uses them on a daily basis (World Values Survey 2000; The East Asian Barometer 2000-2003). From 1995 until 2005 54-64% of the surveyed public had an interest in politics (World Values Survey 1995, 2000, 2005; The East Asian Barometer 2003). According to a *Yomiuri* survey in 2001, 87% of the respondents believed the overall news coverage was

trustworthy, and 56% believed that news coverage in newspapers was relatively neutral. By 2001 82% used newspapers as the primary information source (Yomiuri Shimunsha Yoronchousabu 2002: 282). Therefore, society was very responsive to the signs and symbols given by the media. Regarding international news and foreign affairs, the majority of the public in the year 2001 used newspapers and NHK TV (Yomiuri Shinbunsha Yoronchousabu 2002: 314-316) as information sources. Figure 3.12. depicts the confidence in the media from 1995 until 2005:

**Figure 3.12: Confidence in the media**
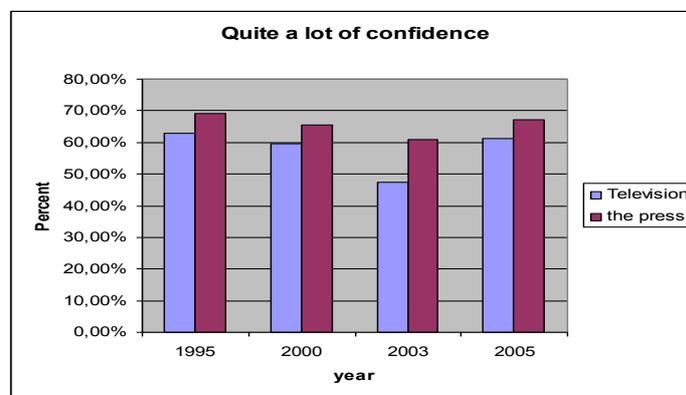


Source of Data: The World Values Survey Association: 1995, 2000, 2005 Official Data Files; The East Asian Barometer 2001-2003 Official Data File.

The newspaper readership in Japan is very stable. The total daily newspaper circulation is high, reaching 71.5 million, whereby each household has subscribed to approximately 1,2 newspapers, a higher subscription average than that of the United Kingdom (UK) or the US (Nakayama 2008: 19). Newspapers are commonly linked to television stations and publishing houses. The newspapers *Asahi* and *Mainichi,* with their weekly magazines *Shukan Asahi* and *Sunday Mainichi,* are supposed to lean more towards the liberal left wing, the *Yomiuri, Nikkei* and *Sankei,* with their weekly magazines *Shukan Yomiuri* and *Spa!,* assume a more conservative stance (Hook et al 2005: 68; Legewie 2006: 279).

The Japanese media is a powerful actor because of its multifaceted role, as for example making issues salient for the public, functioning as a trickster or as a determinant in measuring Kūki, which enables them to exert influence or push channels in policy-making in different ways. One of the great characteristics has been the Press Club System (*kisha kurabu seido*). This is a system where only selected newspaper and TV journalists are allowed

to become members and participate in press briefings. Each ministry or institution, such as the Prime Minister's Office, the Diet etc., has established its own press-club (Legewie 2010: 6). "Members usually consist of Japan's two news agencies, its four national and four regional newspapers, the business daily Nikkei, NHK and the five national commercial TV stations, but also sports and evening newspapers or weekly magazines and high-quality specialty newspapers and magazines and foreign press are represented." (Legewie 2010: 5). Membership in these press clubs allows highly privileged access to news sources. The bigger the media institutions, as for example the *Yomiuri Shinbun* or the *Asahi Shinbun*, the more journalists are represented within each press club. The press clubs are very powerful because members have more access to relevant news and, furthermore, can decide on their own who can join the club. It is not the institutions who decide memberships but the press clubs themselves.

What has to be kept in mind when considering the Japanese media is, that on the one hand, Japan has a multifaceted media where the public "appears to be exceedingly diverse, independent, and accessible to many social groups and voices."(Kelly et al 2002: 267). On the other hand, the disadvantage of the press club system is that news coverage becomes unilateral because every journalist of the club receives the same information.

However, journalists have found their ways to deal with this system and guarantee a great dissemination of information. One example is the system, in which reporters are assigned to cover a particular politician in order to receive the latest information (*ban kisha seido*). Almost every journalist of an important newspaper or broadcasting agency who covers the political section has friendly relationships with a politician. These journalists sometimes spend their whole day with a politician and gain insider information of the daily political life. Due to the close relations they have with politicians they are indirectly obliged not to distribute openly delicate information they receive from politicians. In cases in which a political journalist is unable to cover a delicate story, but feels obliged before the public to publish it, he hands over his information to the journalist who covers societal news, who then in turn releases the story for him (Interview Anonymous C: 2010.08.25). Friendly relationships of journalists with officials are well accounted for, both within the political sphere but also within society. The fact that information is exchanged between journalists of one and the same newspaper, is also known by politicians, however, it has never been openly criticized (Interview Anonymous C: 2010.08.25). Legally, the Japanese mass media is free from restrictions (Harari 1997: 29). Nonetheless, the long-term and close relation-

ship of media and government relying on the press club system, and the close personal connections between journalists and politicians, result in an allegiance system in which media and government influence each other.

This state of fact shows that dealing with media and handling media coverage is a twofold game, whereby all actors involved are aware of possible implications. Decision-makers are aware of the media's importance and at the same time rank the social power it might have, very high (Kabashima and Broadbent 1986: 330).

*Changes in the media sphere*

Together with societal changes, that occurred during the 1990s, and a growing interest in policy-making, as described in the previous chapters, the Japanese media accompanied this trend and changed its news coverage style as well (cf. Tanifuji 2005; Taniguchi 2007).

The "basic media", such as newspapers and television, are still the primary information sources until today. An NHK Survey of 2004 on the structure of trust in the mass media has shown, however, that "subsidiary media", such as the Internet, entertainment magazines and social media, have gained prominence in Japan as well, and are more often used as information tools by the media institutions (Yokoyama and Yonekura 2004: 157).

The analysis of news and events changed entirely in style since the mid-1990s. Serious news coverage became more entertaining and TV broadcasts more serious and politically informed than in the years before. Politics had now become an issue not only in traditional political shows but also in "soft TV shows" or "infotainment shows", which have received great prominence among the Japanese public, because people used to have difficulties in understanding serious news coverage before (Tanifuji 2005: 51; Kabashima and Steel 2010: 61-68). The Japanese media landscape, therefore, enlarged its political information scope and introduced a mixture of serious political shows paired with entertainment wide shows, whereby the Japanese public was permanently confronted with actual political events that were discussed. Kabashima and Steel (2010: 62-63) note, that this combination of "hard news" and "soft news" introduced a new media strategy in Japan.

The development of the new media strategy can be traced back to the Electoral Reform of 1994, when individual politicians became automatically more visible to the voter. The media developed into a more significant public relation tool for politicians than it was already, and media assumed a new role and responsibility towards the public (Kabashima

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and Steel 2010: 69). As print media were being the primary information resource of the Japanese public and enjoyed high subscription rates, they were encouraged to cover all political conflicts within the LDP during election years, and likewise represented the public's desire for change. At the same time TV appearances of politicians grew steadily. Due to the new "infotainment" strategy of the media, in which "wide shows" changed their character and became "politicized", politicians appeared on televisions more often. This establishment is called "entertainer-ized politicians with smart comments and sound bites" (Taniguchi 2007: 154). Sound bites were very relevant, because the politicians' messages were communicated with easy and short cut sentences. From then on, media was widely used for diplomacy and for bringing individual policies to the people. The following graphic shows how media appearances increased since 1998, and reached their highest peak during the Koizumi administration:

**Figure 3.13: Prime minister's television appearances**
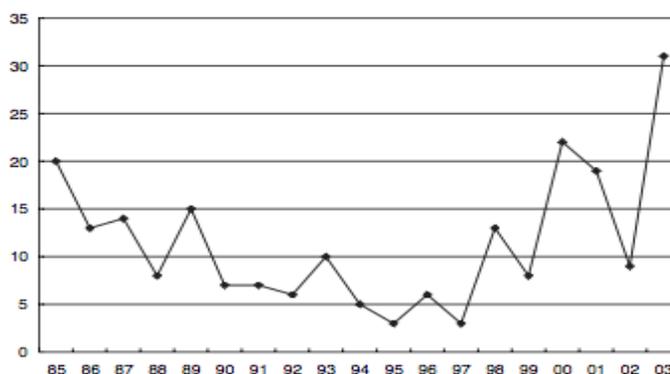


Source: Taniguchi 2007: 155.

Particularly members of the opposition or Diet members, who were seldom listened to in parliamentary debates, used the media to issue their policies (Taniguchi 2007: 160).

Additionally, changes of the media strategy influenced party organization. In the past, the relationship between media and politicians was marked by information exchanges, but now it was dependant on the politicians' media appearance (Taniguchi 2007: 162). If a politician was telegenic, and, therefore, had many opportunities to appear in public, he easily gained popularity among the Japanese public, which in turn, helped him to be appointed for a high post within the party. As Taniguchi (2007: 162) has noted "if a person is appointed to the

position of secretary general for his administrative skills, another telegenic person will be the deputy secretary general".

Politicians were fast to react to the changing media environment and realized that traditional means of mobilizing voters were limited, and were, thus, automatically forced to use new media resources to gain voters (Kabashima and Steel 2010: 63). The media became an important tool for parties and politicians, on the one side, and for the public on the other side, as both heavily relied on the dissemination of information by the media.

These broad new media strategies contributed to a change in the way politicians confronted media. Prime Minister Koizumi was, for example, the first prime minister who benefited from this development and responded to societal interest and media strategy changes to his advantage, by using a different media strategy than his predecessors. This strategy will be dealt with in detail in chapter four. Sasaki (2008), however, also observed that the new use of "soft media" together with serious information analysis had also led to a manifold but superficial media environment.

## 3.6. Summary

The traditional 1955-system that ruled until the 1990s distinguished itself by a strong bureaucracy, weak politicians and informal decision-making processes, such as consensus-building despite legal power or authority and group decision-making. Power and responsibility shifts ruled decision-making processes during that time period. State authority was not challenged, the bureaucracy and the central government ruled over the public interest. Societal movements occurred due to ideological splits that arose in the 1950s until the 1970s. The 1970s up to the mid-1990s were characterized by economic downturns, a weak government along with weak political interest by the public.

With institutional and societal reconstructions beginning in the mid-1990s, new forms of policy-making became possible. Four major reforms were introduced that rearranged the political structure and power of politicians and the prime minister. More authority was given to the prime minister and the Cabinet, which changed the links between the public and decision-makers. At the same time there was an attempt to weaken bureaucracy as well as other incapacitating informal mechanisms. Policy-making became more transparent to the public.

The effects of globalization and the government's failure to respond to the publics needs, led to a growing activity by the public to fulfill their needs by themselves together with an increase in volunteer sector. Public interest was not defined by political elites anymore, but rather the public started to define their interests on their own. The demand for more transparency and possibilities to participate in policy-making rose again, and so did the willingness of the public to express opinions. Although people generally believed direct actions had an effect on policy-making, public opinion's efficiency in policy-making was still evaluated weak. The public still had difficulties to incorporate itself in the policy-making structures and interact with policy-making actors. The years 2004 to 2007 revealed an exception since the public's perception of being accepted and listened to increased during this time. However, confidence in the government was still very low, which was especially visible in the growing amount of non-committed voters.

### 3.7. General principles of Japan's foreign and security policy

The previous sections on domestic actors and institutions gave an overview of policy decision-making mechanisms, institutional developments and state-society relationship. In this section, the leading political, legal and normative principles of Japan's foreign and security policy will be introduced.

To begin with, a general overview on the developments of Japan's foreign and security policy, and of relevant determinants that have defined its foreign policy behavior until today, will be given. Second, a short overview of its relations towards China, North and South Korea will be presented. The third part of this chapter, introduces public opinion trends in all parts of foreign affairs that have previously been described. All three sections, together with the previous domestic sections, set the context for the three case studies to follow. Given this background information, comprehension of public opinion and elite reaction in all three cases will be better guaranteed.

*3.7.1. Principles of Japan's foreign and security policy and the Japanese Constitution*

Since its defeat in World War II Japan has not pursued a fully independent foreign and security policy. The foundation of national foreign policy is the Yoshida Doctrine, named after Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1948-1954). The first and main pillar of the Yoshida Doctrine was economic recovery, growth and development. National development was the leading premise, which stood above all other parameters. The second pillar was the establishment of a minimal defense policy, including light rearmament in cooperation with the US (Hook et al 2005: 151).

The Japanese Constitution was put into effect on May 3, 1947 and was initiated by the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP) (Rengōgun Sōshireikan) with only little input from the Japanese government. The Meiji Constitution of 1890 preceded the postwar Constitution of 1947. The main characteristics of the Meiji Constitution were the recognition of imperial sovereignty and the embodiment of centralized nationalism and constitutionalism (Nishikawa 2009: 52). The new postwar Constitution of 1947 abolished imperial sovereignty, and instead included sovereignty of the people as an act to introduce democratic structures in Japan. Although the Japanese Emperor was still the head of the state, he

had only symbolic power and was not able to interfere in state affairs without Cabinet consent.

In addition, Japan's feudal system was abandoned as well as war as a sovereign right. Instead the war renunciation clause, represented by Article 9 of the Constitution, was included, which prohibited Japan any possibility of conducting war or use military capacities. Article 9 proclaims the following:

> *[…] the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained* (National Diet Library, The Constitution of Japan, 1946, Article 9*).*

Due to Japan's World War II experiences, a full-scale rearmament was not possible. Pacifism, symbolized by Article 9, is the leading foreign policy norm in Japan in terms of military and security policy until today.

Since then, security issues and military defense lay in the responsibility sphere of the US. The US-Japan Alliance established in 1951, together with the US-Japan Security Treaty (*nichibei anzen hoshō jōyaku*), is the security-political complement of the economy oriented Yoshida Doctrine. The Security Treaty provides the US with the right to use and construct bases in Japan for an indefinite period of time. To ensure Japan's domestic security, the US have the right to intervene militarily (Hook et al 2012: 15). Japan, therefore, relied on the security protection of the US, and was thus able to concentrate on its economic development. In the course of the light rearmament-concept of the Yoshida Doctrine, the Japan Defense Agency and the Self Defense Law for the Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF) (*nihon jietitai*) was established in 1954, based on Art. 51 of the UN Charta, in which, the right for self defense was authorized (Derichs 2003: 171).

A very restrictive defense policy was, therefore, pursued (*senshu bōei*) which allowed only the minimum necessary for self-defense (*jiei no tame no hitsuyō gendo*), for Japan should not become a military power ever again (*gunji taikoku to naranai koto).* Moreover, the right for collective self-defense was prohibited (Hughes 2004a: 136).

With the signing of the Mutual Security Treaty (MST) (*sōgo anzen hoshō jōyaku*) on January 19, 1960, the initial Security Treaty was revised for the first time. In 1970 it was once more extended for an indefinite time period. The MST provides Japan with US-military defense in case of an attack. Moreover, the JSDFs role was constrained to the sole protection and defense of national territory.

Another important pillar of Japan's foreign and security principles is its anti-nuclear policy. In 1968, Japan's three anti-nuclear principles (*hikaku sangensoku*) were introduced by Prime Minister Satō Eisaku. These principles prohibit the introduction, production or possession of nuclear weapons. Instead, Japan relies on the protection of the US nuclear umbrella, as for example in cases of a nuclear missile attack by North Korea. In 1976 Japan entered the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and has been actively engaged in its strengthening until today (MOFA: On the three Non-nuclear Principles, 1967.12.11).

In 1976, during the administration of Prime Minister Miki Takeo, the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) (*bōei keikaku taikō*) was introduced as well as the provision that defense expenses were not supposed to exceed 1% of the Gross National Product (GNP) (Hughes 2004b: 35). The NDPO assigned the JSDF the responsibility to protect Japan in case of an attack. With the US-Japan Defense Guidelines (*nichibei bōei kyōryoku no tame no shishin*) introduced in 1978, coordination and cooperation of the US military and the JSDF were defined (Hughes 2004a: 145, 146).

Whereas the pre-war era was marked by the slogan "staying in Asia", the post-war era stood out with measures trying to keep up with western democracies and "to get out of Asia" (Kawashima 2003: 4). Up to the 1990s Japan's foreign policy was characterized by its commitment for "economy first", and a very defensive security policy shadowing the US. Through its economic power Japan became incorporated as an important member into the major industrial democracies. It was a member of the G7 as the sole East Asian country. In terms of security, its policies were strongly linked to the interests of the US, which was especially visible in Japan's support of US strategies during the Cold War or the Vietnam War. The US-Japan Alliance and their bilateral relations were, and still are, the strongest determinants of its foreign and security policy.

A change in Japan's foreign and security political orientation was introduced in 1990/1991. After the collapse of the "Economic Bubble" in 1989, the country experienced decades of deflation and realized that only employing economic measures did not contribute enough to its security. The East Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 further revealed how vulnerable Japan's economy had become (Mochizuki 2007: 5). As already described in previous chapters, this lead to the introduction of several domestic institutional reforms, with the aim to better manage policy-making processes in accordance with the new political circumstances.

Moreover, over the course of the first Gulf War (1990/91), Japan was accused to only pursue "a checkbook diplomacy", and merely engage economically in international foreign policy issues instead of militarily or by sending personnel. Although military support was required during the Gulf War, it was decided to provide only financial support, because of the strong pacifist norm in terms of security policy. This led to negative responses of its international community and its US alliance partner, who blamed Japan for not making any active international commitments which go beyond financial contribution. These experiences gave rise to great concern in the Japanese government and encouraged a turn in foreign and security policy, first made apparent through the enactment of the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations Law (UNPKOL) (*kokusai rengō heiwa iji katsudō ni tai suru kyōryoku ni kan suru hōritsu*) in 1992, which resulted in Japan's distancing itself from its singular economic diplomacy. Japan is a member of the United Nations (UN) since 1956. Up to the present day, supporting the norms and values of the UN and the engagement in UN activities is another very important pillar of Japan's foreign policy. UN peacekeeping missions became a part of the JSDFs area of responsibility with the UNPKO Law. To retain the pacifist norm of its military, the JSDFs oversea missions were restricted to humanitarian activities, logistics and transport (UNPKO Law 1992, Art.3).

In the course of a changing security architecture and new foreign threat perceptions surrounding Japan, such as the North Korean nuclear crisis of 1994 and the large-scale military exercises of China in the Taiwan Strait (1996), Japan redefined its NDPO with the US in 1996, adjusting it to new security concepts and "situations surrounding Japan" (*nihon no shūhen*). Beyond that, the SDFs role was expanded to multilateral levels, and enhanced security dialogues as well as enhanced participation in UNPKO missions were defined as a requirement (National Defense Program Outline: 1995). Additionally, in 1996, the redefinition of the security alliance was completed with the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security (*nichibei anzen hoshō kyōdōsengen, 21seiki ni mukete no dōmei*), negotiated between Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutarou and President Bill Clinton. The new declaration put bilateral cooperation to the next higher level and reassured bilateral cooperation:

> *Situations in areas surrounding Japan will have an important influence on Japan's peace and security. The concept, situations in areas surrounding Japan, is not geographic but situational. The two Governments will make every effort, including diplomatic efforts, to prevent such situations from occurring. When the two Governments reach a common assessment of the state of each situation, they will effectively coordinate their activities. In responding to such situations, measures taken may differ depending on circumstances.* (The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, 1996, Article 5).

The redefinition of the Security Alliance required three new legislation initiatives. First, the law concerning areas surrounding Japan, second, the revision of the JSDF Law, and third, the ratification of the revised U.S.-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Serving Agreement (ACSA), which awards the SDF the mandate to support US troops logistically. The support encompasses the areas of training, mutual operations, PKOs and humanitarian missions (Giarra and Nagashima 1999: 100). The Japanese government ratified all three laws in 1999.

As a result, Japan gradually expanded its foreign policy capabilities beyond economic measures since 1990/1991. These new changes further developed the country's foreign policy capabilities compared to the centuries before, however, US strategies were more or less complemented rather than new foreign policy ideologies and strategies defined (cf. Polymeropoulos et al 2011). Nevertheless, despite changes, economic measures still played a stronger role in Japan's international diplomacy, because the SDF's newly defined areas of responsibility were still very restricted. Therefore, in light of the East Asian Financial Crisis, an attempt was made to develop several economic models, especially for the East Asian region, such as the "flying geese model" (Japan-led regional economic order in Asia)[19], which eventually was of little avail. Leading key determinants of foreign policy were still the bilateral alliance with the U.S., economic strength, pacifism, the principles of the UN and regional stability.

With these principles dominating foreign policy, Japan entered a third phase of change in 2001, right at the beginning of the first tenure of Prime Minister Koizumi. Under Koizumi's leadership, Japan took the step of putting its focus on security political contributions rather than merely economic commitments. It, therefore, provided military personnel support for US operations and operations of other international troops against Afghanistan and Iraq. Japan's participation at *Operation Enduring Freedom* was legitimated by the PKO Law of 1992 after the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) asked for humanitarian support for Afghanistan (Asai 2004: 215). On October 29, 2001 the Japanese government introduced the Anti Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML) (*tero taisaku sochihō*). Marine Self Defense Forces (MSDF) and Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) were dispatched to the Indian Ocean and to Afghanistan to logistically support the alliance partner USA and other partners. According to the new law, Japan was allowed to send SDF

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[19] For further information see: Kojima, Kiyoshi (2000): The 'flying geese' model of Asian economic development: origin, theoretical extensions, and regional policy implications. In Journal of Asian Economics 11, pp.375-401.

units overseas for supporting humanitarian missions without a UN Resolution (Art. 3, ATSML) and to render background support (*kōhō shien*) for military troops. Moreover, the geographic sphere of action was greatly expanded.

In the course of the ATSML in 2001, the PKO Law was revised as well and the SDF's permission for action was expanded for the peacekeeping sector, whereby constraints for action that made international contribution more difficult were loosened. Finally, in 2003 and 2004 SDF were also dispatched to Iraq. Therefore, the Bill Concerning the Special Measures on the Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance Activities and Security Support in Iraq (*iraku jindō fukkō shien tokubetsu sochihō*) was enacted on the basis of UN Resolution 1483, which invited all member states to provide humanitarian assistance to Iraq. Additionally, a Basic Plan (*iraku jindō fukkō shien tokubetsu sochihō ni motozuku taiō sochi ni kan suru kihon keikaku*) for the dispatch of SDF was appended to the Iraq Law. SDF were dispatched only for humanitarian, logistical and transport activities. Although their areas of responsibility were officially in "non combat zones" (*hisentō chiiki*), it was domestically criticized that Japan's SDF were dispatched to a country in which combat still took place.

On the one hand, the enactment of the ATSML, the Iraq Law and the SDFs dispatch symbolized a novelty for Japan, and were often described as a breaking point or redefinition of Japan's security policy. Nabers (2005b: 31), for example, has argued that with this mission Japan overthrew its pacifist principles in favor of support of a "collective identity"[20] with the USA. On the other hand, it was criticized that for enacting the new legislation, Japan used UN-resolutions as legitimacy to allow a SDF dispatch, at the same time, however, several escape clauses were included in order to be able to avoid participation in conflicts that were not supported by an UN-mandate (Hughes 2004c: 436). What made these laws unique for Japan's foreign and security policy was that for the first time it allowed background support of JSDF in areas of belligerence.

Due to the incurrence of these new security political developments, discussion arose in the 1990s on a constitutional revision to simplify military reaction and the conception of new bills for international cooperation, which intensified in the 2000s and reached its peak during the Koizumi administration.

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[20] Here, collective identity means that social actors put their own welfare at the same level as the welfare of other actors. Interests are, therefore, decided not on an individual level but rather on a collective basis of a group (Nabers 2005: 31).

The trends for or against revision of the constitution could be divided into three groups. The first group represented the people who stood for an overall revision, the second group supported only a partial revision and the third group was against a revision.

The first group, also called the "reactionary revisionists" (*fukkoteki kaikenronja*) mainly consisted of nationalists, who believed the existing Constitution did not represent the traditional values of Japan. Instead, it was a Constitution imposed by foreigners. In their view, the Japanese Constitution should be rewritten entirely by the Japanese public according to national norms, traditions and values (Nishikawa 2009: 65). In addition, reactionary revisionists stood for the abolition of the war renunciation clause in Article 9. They argued, Japan should return to being a "normal country" (*futsu no kuni*).

The second group, mostly consisting of the mainstream conservative pragmatists within the LDP, believed, the Japanese Constitution should be partially revised (*kakenron*), since some articles were outdated and did not suit present national and global circumstances or did not meet present social needs. In regard of Article 9, it should be modified as such, as a clear role and definition of the Self Defense Forces of Japan shall be determined (Nishikawa 2009: 66). However, members of this group also saw advantages in the limits of the constitution as an excuse towards the Alliance partner U.S., for limiting commitments in military activities (Hughes 2006b: 2).

The last group was against any kind of revision (*gokenron*). This group was mostly represented by people of the leftist political orientations, such as the Social Democratic Party (SDP) or the Japan Communist Party (JCP). The anti-revisionist group was against the revision of Article 9. They believed the norm of pacifism (*heiwa shugi no kokka*) had to be protected, and international contribution in form of non-military humanitarian aid and peace-keeping assistance was sufficient.

The willingness of the Japanese government since the 1990s, to increasingly dispatch the SDF to foreign countries, once again gave rise to national debates on clarifying the constitutionality of SDF-deployments. All of the major political parties held constitutional research teams to make propositions for revisions. These propositions mainly covered Art.9, including Japan's possible right to fully engage in combat mission, the issue of the right of collective self-defense or the issue of dispatching SDF in non-UN missions. The latter question had been unclear since the US-Joint Declaration on Security of 1996, which stated that military involvement of both states was allowed in "areas surrounding Japan" (Hughes 2006b: 2).

The LDP, had advocated constitutional revision for many years and made a proposal in 2005 which was acknowledged by the Upper House, that Art. 9 should be revised to clearly define Japan's right of self-defense and its constitutionality. However, the Upper House failed to agree on this proposal. Although the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) introduced some proposals for revision in 2004, unlike the LDP they had difficulties to reach party-consensus on the extent of revision (Hughes 2006b: 2). As expected, left oriented parties, such as the Japan Communist Party (JCOP) and the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) were against any kind of severe revision of the constitution, and denied the commission the power to introduce constitutional changes that would alter the pacifist spirit (Klein 2006: 24-25).

Nevertheless, the Japanese Constitution has been created in such a way that the final amendment of a revision has to be supported by two-third of all the members of both Houses, and finally be submitted to the Japanese public for ratification (National Diet Library, The Constitution of Japan, Art. 96). In that sense, the government can draft revisions, but the final power lies in the hands of the people. Since all proposals have not been supported by both Houses, any revision attempts have not been successful so far. Public opinion has increasingly responded in favor of constitutional revision and has characterized it a "realistic matter" (Nishikawa 2009: 74). However, the majority still expresses uncertainty in revising Art. 9[21] although uncertainty has slowly decreased over the years (Hughes 2006b: 15, 16).

Until today, Japan's politicians have managed to enact bills relating to the SDF by using various "reinterpretations" of the constitution to circumvent constitutional revision. Since constitutional revision has not succeeded so far, new bills and missions described above were thus enabled under the pretext of flexible interpretation and different labels.

### 3.7.2. Japan's foreign policy towards East Asia

Japan's diplomatic relations towards its East Asian neighbors China, North and South Korea are difficult and often confrontational. Cooperation and friendly neighborhood policies are still confronted in the light of the countries' struggling to come to terms with their war past. In the following section the main features of their relations together with

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[21] Public Opinion Survey on the Constitution Conducted by the *Asahi Shinbun,* April 19-20, 2008, in: Nishikawa 2009: 74.

their areas of conflict and cooperation will be highlighted, providing relevant background information for understanding the case study analysis to be followed.

China and Japan look back to a long history of several wars against each other, such as the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895), the second Sino-Japanese/Pacific War war (1937–1945), Japanese colonialism of Manchuria and Taiwan, and Japan's militarism.

Ever since, their relationship is defined by an enduring hegemonic rivalry in political and economic terms. Due to the bipolar structure of the Cold War, during which Japan supported its alliance partner the US, the two countries held no diplomatic relations until 1972, at which time they signed a normalization agreement of bilateral diplomatic relations (*nichū kyōdō seimei*). Japan had to accept China's following three demands: 1. to accept the People's Republic of China (PRC) as sole government of China, 2. to accept Taiwan as a province of China, and 3. no official diplomatic ties to and the abandonment of the peace treaty with Taiwan.

In 1978 Japan and China signed the trade agreement Treaty of Peace and Friendship (*nichū heiwa yūkou jōyaku*). Since then, Japanese and Chinese relations have been characterized by deepening economic and political relations, supported by the beginning of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China in 1979 (Hook et al 2012: 170). Japan is a major ODA donor to China until today, although government opinions for the need to review Japan's ODA plan towards China have been increasing and first reductions of ODA have been accomplished (MOFA: 2012.03.22). Moreover, the ODA White Paper 2011 states as follows:

> *China has developed economically, and has seen an increase in its technological level, so aid to China through ODA has already fulfilled its role to a certain degree. In light of these circumstances, implementation of purely exchange projects through ODA will stop, and future ODA for China will be limited to the promotion of mutual understanding at the grassroots level and to efforts to deal with shared challenges faced by both countries* (ODA White Paper 2011, Section 3, No.1, East Asia).

Sino-Japanese relations are mainly characterized through *seirei keinetsu* meaning "cold politics, hot economics" (Hook et al 2012: 177). The areas of conflict can be divided into first, historical issues, and second, political-economical rivalries. Historical conflicts comprise controversies over Japanese history textbooks that started in 1982. Since then revisionist history schoolbooks have been published and accepted by the Ministry of Education as official schoolbooks. These books are criticized because they downplay or

not even mention wartime atrocities by Japan's military during World War II. Furthermore, China blames Japan for not having sufficiently apologized for its war crimes in East Asia during the Pacific War. China takes the publications of these controversial textbooks as proof and reason that Japan has not sincerely accepted its war crimes. Controversies over history textbooks have existed for 30 years and are still an unresolved problem in Sino-Japanese relations until today.

A second area of conflict, are visits of government officials, especially the prime minister, to the Yasukuni Shrine. The Yasukuni Shrine enshrines Japanese soldiers that died in several wars between 1868 and 1945. Controversial has been the enshrinement of World War II Class A War criminals. For this reason China and South Korea perceive it as disrespectful when Japanese officials visit the Shrine, and, in their view, mourn over war criminals who have caused China and South Korea to suffer during World War II. Especially the annual visits of Prime Minister Koizumi from 2001 until 2006 raised severe conflicts between China and Japan, and gave rise to several heavy anti-Japanese mass protests that had not occurred to such an extent before.

Political and economic controversies comprise territorial issues such as the fight over sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai-Islands, and controversy over sea territory in the region of the East China Sea. Although Japan and China both signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, in which Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) are determined, both countries still fight over 900 nautical square miles which are claimed by China but are controlled by Japan. Controversies arise every time Chinese ships enter the EEZ claimed by Japan.

China is and remains a priority in Japan's diplomacy. Cooperation in forums, such as the ASEAN+3 or the North Korean nuclear issue in terms of the Six Party Talks, are relevant for their relations (Hook et al 2012: 175). However, China's economic growth and growing regional strength have led to a continuous political competition between the two countries. Therefore, they are tempted to look very closely into economic and military developments of the opposite side, and easily declare one another as a possible threat. One example is the Taiwan Strait incident in 1996, which enhanced skepticism in Japan about China's military growth and possible use thereof (Hook et al 2012: 175), and made diplomatic relations more complicated. Moreover, Japan's security alliance with the US, and its tendency to follow US policies in the Asia-Pacific region, further disturb Sino-Japanese relations, especially from the mid-1990s onwards, and particularly since 2001, when the George W.

Bush administration defined China as a "strategic competitor". Although both countries intensified bilateral trade relations and tried to enhance diplomatic cooperation, regional competition together with constant suspicion due to experiences of the past, dominated and eventually still define their relationship.

Japan's relations to the Korean Peninsula have been critical as well. From 1910 until 1945 the Korean Peninsula was under colonization by Japan. At the end of World War II the Korean Peninsula was divided. The North was under Russian control and the South under control of the U.S. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) were established in 1948. In 1965 Japan normalized its relations with the ROK, which implied an end of Japan's colonization of the South (Kawashima 2003: 76). Japan and the DPRK have no official diplomatic relationship until today.

Both North and South Korea suffered from Japan's colonial rule, and share the same worries as China, since relations with Japan have always been disturbed by suspicions over historical issues. The fact, that Japan supported the US-containment strategy against the "communist bloc" during the Cold War, further complicated relations with North Korea (Hook et al 2012: 184).

Efforts to engage North Korea economically after its security guarantors, the Soviet Union and China, normalized relations with South Korea - which turned into a significant economic setback for North Korea - were made by nongovernmental actors during the 1980s, thus bringing about a slight improvement in their relations. However, improvement was halted after North Korea was unable to repay debts, and also, after it was inferred that North Korea was involved in the abductions of Japanese citizens (*rachi jiken*), and the bombing of a South Korean airliner. Eventually in 1990, a joint declaration on Japanese-North Korean relations was issued on a party-to-party level between the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the Social Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) and the Korean Worker's Party (KWP). Obligations discussed in this declaration, such as compensation payments for the colonial and wartime past, were not accepted on an official government-level by Japan. They were only willing to offer compensation on the terms determined in a Basic Treaty, which led on to the failure of party-to-party agreements and the cessation of the negotiation process (Hook et al 2012: 196).

What makes North-Korean-Japanese relations even more difficult is North Korea's nuclear development program, and the possible production of weapons of mass destruc-

tion (WMD). The 1994 and 2002 nuclear crisis, when North Korea refused inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), its declaration in 2003 that it would withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the test-firing of missiles (Taepodong missiles) over Japanese air space into the Sea of Japan in 1998 and 2003, further worsened relations. On top of this, suspected spy North Korean ships entered Japanese territorial waters disguised as Japanese fishing boats in 1999 and 2001. All this rendered North Korea a major threat concern for Japan (cf. Nanto 2003). In the Six Party Talks (China, Japan, South Korea, North Korea, Russia and the US) that are being hosted by China since 2003, multilateral attempts were made to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue in a mutual agreement. However, no fruitful results have been reached until today, despite several talks in six rounds, the last one being in 2007.

In 2000 an attempted rapprochement with North Korea during the Clinton-administration, forced the Japanese government indirectly to resume negotiation efforts as well. In April 2000 it was agreed that government level negotiations would proceed again. Japan would continue to provide food aid to North Korea, while North Korea in turn agreed to investigate on the "missing Japanese persons" (later called the abduction issue). With the involvement of the Koizumi administration, negotiations reached their most successful but also their most disastrous levels. Two Japanese-North Korean summits were held in 2002 and 2004. In 2001 both countries agreed on the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration for normalization of bilateral relations. At the same time, the summit resulted in the official disclosure by North Korea that kidnappings of Japanese citizens had actually occurred. Since the official apology, and the fact that eight out of thirteen persons had died, the abduction issue became the most confrontational question between the countries. Ever since, the abduction issue, together with the problematic nature of the nuclear development program have prevented any renewal of negotiations or normalization of relations down to the present day.

Japanese-South Korean relations are perceived to be the best among all three countries described. With the Treaty of Basic Relations in 1965, Japan recognized the South Korean government as the only government on the Korean Peninsula (Hook et al 2005: 204). With this treaty bilateral cooperation in economic and political terms was activated. The main pillars of Japanese-South Korean relations are intensive trade relations, common security threats, and enhanced cultural integration between the sole two democracies in East Asia.

In the post-Cold War era, South Korea struggled over Japan's efforts to normalize relations with North Korea, out of concern that relations between Japan and the North would improve before the North and the South settled their disputes. Since both Japan and South Korea share security alliances with the US as well as greater political interests than Japan and North Korea, they are strategically intertwined, which made Japan stress that it would not normalize relations with North Korea unless the North-South dialogue progress was taken into consideration (Hook et al 2005: 208). The nuclear threat from North Korea constitutes a shared major threat perception for both countries, and has served as another reason to prioritize a strengthened relationship with South Korea. These shared strategic security interests have led to numerous bilateral high-level meetings on a regular basis. The US-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) exists since 1999, in which policies towards North Korea are coordinated among the three states. In 1998 another joint declaration was signed between the two countries in order to enhance political and security cooperation with regard to North Korea. What made a strategic cooperation between South Korea and Japan more difficult was the George W. Bush US administration's containment policy towards North Korea in 2002, which was discordant to South Korea's engagement policy. Since both countries followed a continued security political dependency on the US, it was difficult to coordinate bilateral relations at the same time, since the Bush administration followed other interests than the ROK in dealing with North Korea.

What constitutes bilateral relations, however, is the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. Japan and South Korea agreed to cooperate economically to avert further risks of the East Asian financial crisis, and to coordinate their policies in international fora, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) or the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) or the East Asian Summit (EAS) (Hook et al 2005: 210). The highest peak in economic relations was reached in 2005 when Japan and the ROK agreed on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

In terms of cultural interaction, the increased people-to-people contact, enhanced through the so called "Korea wave" that emerged in Japan through the great popularity of Korean TV-dramas, improved bilateral understanding and facilitated political and economic cooperation. The co-hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2002, further improved people-to-people relations (Rozman and Lee 2006: 762).

As with China, areas of conflict in bilateral relations are history issues that regularly disturb bilateral relations until today. One important topic is the legacy of colonialism, especially the question on comfort women (*ianfu*), and the concomitant demands of South Korea for compensations from Japan. Another issue is the territorial disagreement over sovereignty of the Takeshima/Dokdo Islands. Moreover, disagreement exists on the naming of the Sea of Japan, whereby South Korea claims the right, based on historical maps, that the Sea should be named Sea of Korea. The History textbook controversy and the visits of Japanese prime ministers to Yasukuni Shrine do not pose only a controversial subject with China, but with South Korea as well, which strongly opposes the publication of these books or the shrine visits. As China, South Korea demands adequate apologies from Japan's government for its aggressive wartime behavior. In 1998 history issues were at rest due to the agreement by President Kim Dae-jung, to put history controversies aside. Conflicts rekindled in 2005 with the Dokdo/Takeshima issue over the "Takeshima Day"[22], and the visits of Prime Minister Koizumi to Yasukuni Shrine. These issues let debates grow emotionally, and resulted in nation-wide anti-Japanese demonstrations in South Korea.

Despite these disagreements on the history issue and the war past, Japan and South Korea still share great interest in cooperation and elevated relations to the next higher level by holding first talks on joint military training at the defense ministerial level in 2011 (Polymeropoulos et al 2011: 32).

In spite of the difficult and controversial relations, efforts for improvement were made even in a trilateral approach between Japan-China and the ROK. Starting with informal government-level meetings in 1999, the three countries signed a Joint Declaration on the Promotion of Tripartite Cooperation among Japan, China and South Korea on October 7, 2003. The tripartite cooperation was conceived in order to advance cooperation in economy and trade, information, environmental protection, human resources and culture. The main goal was to promote bilateral relations between each of the three countries and to enhance stability in East Asia (MOFA: 2008.12.13). The Tripartite Cooperation Declaration

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[22] On March 16, 2005 the Shimane Prefecture in Japan declared February 22 as the official *Takeshima Day*. This act was perceived as another attempt to gain sovereignity over the islands. The text of the ordinance notes: „Takeshima Day shall be instituted in order to promote a movement by the citizens of the prefecture, its cities, towns and villages united as one aimed at establishment of territorial rights on Takeshima (Dokdo) at an early date and at enlightening the opinions of the nation with respect to the issue of Takeshima. The prefecture shall strive to implement measures and policies necessary to promote undertakings befitting the purposes and objectives of Takeshima Day" (China Daily online, 2005.03.16).

was augmented by the Action Strategy on Trilateral Cooperation conceptualized in 2004, and agreed upon in 2007. Since 2008 trilateral summits are held, independent of meetings at the sidelines of multilateral fora, and compared to prior meetings clearly indicate political willingness and a new form of cooperation to advance relations for the future (MOFA: 2008.12.13).

### 3.7.3. Public opinion trends in foreign affairs

This section examines Japanese public opinion surveys[23] conducted on foreign policy trends from the mid-1990s until 2007.

Based on theoretical predictions of Page and Shapiro (1994), who have argued that public opinion is rational and stable and only changes if issues and information occur that force it to change, Linley (2009) has confirmed with his study that the Japanese public is generally rational when it comes to public perceptions of foreign nations. Over the long-term, attitudes are stable, and change only for a particular reason. Furthermore, he notes that "public opinion towards countries that are geographically nearby are less stable than towards countries that are farther away and that opinions do change abruptly, whenever exogenous issues or threats occur on a short-term bases" (Linley 2009: 197). In the same way, if the Japanese public has a negative image for a country, the long-term trend does not change. Opinions do not permanently vary between positive and negative degree of favorability for a country (Linley 2009: 227). If opinions change, he assumes that they are "temporary opinion dynamics" (Linley 2009: 229). Based on these findings, this study considers Japanese public opinion concerning foreign nations and foreign policies to be stable, coherent, and does not change substantially over time.

### 3.7.3.1. General principles

According to public opinion polls on foreign policy and diplomacy conducted by the Cabinet Office (Naikakufu), the majority of the Japanese public receives its information on foreign policy issues through television and newspapers and is most interested in news on

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[23] Surveys used here are: Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy and diplomacy, annual; The East Asian Barometer 2001-2003 Official Data File; Yomiuri Shinbun Yoronchôsabu 2002; Cabinet Office: public opinion polls on social awareness 1995-2006; MOFA, public opinion poll on Sino-Japanese relations, 2006.02.01; World Values Survey Association: 1995, 2000, 2005 Official Data File; Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007.

international politics and governments, the international political environment, and economy of countries (Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, annual).

One outstanding characteristic of Japanese public opinion on foreign policy issues is the strong support of pacifism (approx. 80%) since the end of the Second World War. In general, the Japanese are fully satisfied with the groundwork of collective security action with the United States within the framework of the US-Japan Security Alliance and refuse the use of military force in its foreign policies (Agakimi 2006). The Japanese public favors the US-Japanese Security Alliance, believes the Alliance is one of the major reasons why Japan lives in peace and security, and supports the actual state of the security treaty (42%). Only 24.9% wish a more autonomous stance for Japan (MOFA 2006.02.01b).

On the other side, the Japanese public is very patriotic and proud of their nationality (2000: 22.8% very proud, 35.9% quite proud; 2005: 22.2% very proud; 38.8% quite proud) (World Values Survey 2000 and 2005). Respect for their country's history and tradition as well as maintaining and promoting international peace and security are essential attributes for the Japanese (Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, annual). When asked what makes them proud about Japan, the most frequent answers are the long history, its nature and culture (Agakimi 2006).

The Japanese public fully supports democracy and the principles of the United Nations (UN), and believes that through the UN the country can best contribute internationally (DiFilippo 2002: 23). When asked who should decide international Peace Keeping Operations (PKO), the most frequent answer has been the UN (World Values Survey 2000 and 2005). The numbers that are in favor of an active Japanese role in PKOs and humanitarian or environmental missions are relatively high (>50%), (Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy: 2000-2006).

To maintain peace and stability in Japan and in the Asia-Pacific region, the public believes Japan's priorities should be to enhance its efforts to strengthen peaceful and friendly cooperation with its direct East Asian neighbors (55.6%), and to help avoid the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction (51.8%), (MOFA 2006.02.01b).

3.7.3.2. Military and deployment of SDF

The Japanese public is ambivalent concerning offensive military force, and tends to accept it only in terms of national defense. As written in the Japanese NDPO the only case in which 78% of the Japanese public accepts military force or war, is the case of an attack by a foreign aggressor (Midford 2011: 32).

In terms of combating terrorism, the Japanese public once again doubts the effectiveness of military force (57.4%), and believes most success is achieved through the UN (64.4%) and with diplomatic means (39%) (Midford 2011: 35).

The majority of the public has a generally good impression of the SDF as can be seen by the increasing positive perception in Figure 3.14:

**Figure 3.14: General impression of the SDF**
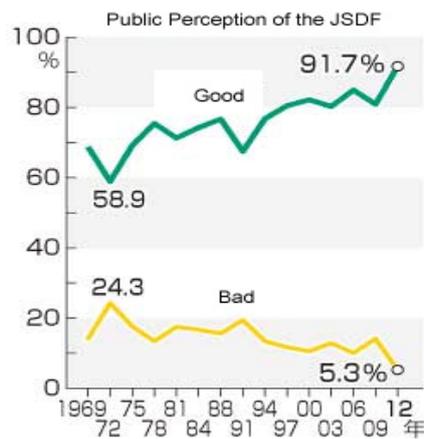


Source: JIJI Press: 2012.03.10.

The only bigger drops in positive view of the SDF were recorded when a lot of public protest existed and public debate on the SDF took place. This was during the extension of the US-Japan Mutual Security Treaty processes (1970), during the first Gulf War (1991), and in 2003 when the Iraq Law was enacted.

Similar results can be seen in the Figure 3.15, in polls regarding interest/concern over defense and the SDF. Interest rose to a peak in 1991 when the Japanese government started to take military means for international contribution into account, then fell until 1995, and grew gradually again from 2003 until 2007:

**Figure 3.15: Interest/ concern in SDF and defense**

**Interest/Concern in SDF and Defense**
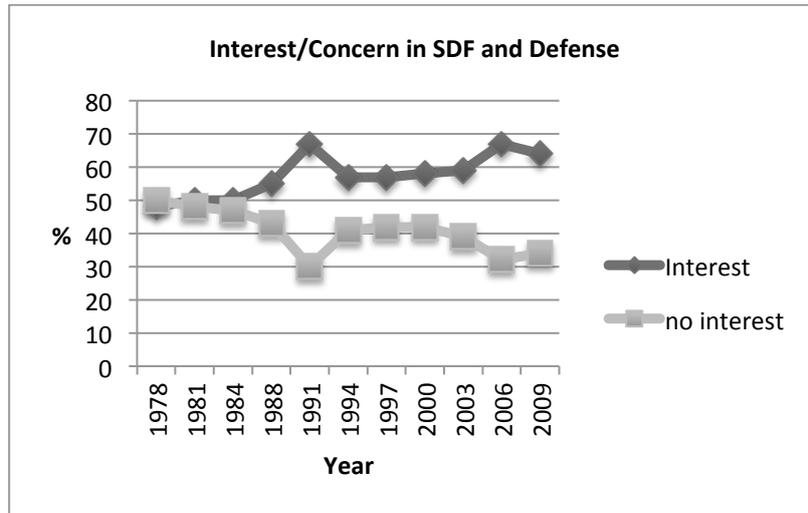


Source: Cabinet Office 2009: Public Opinion poll on SDF and self defense.

Even before UNPKO missions, the majority of the Japanese public believed the primary tasks of the SDF were solely for humanitarian purposes, such as disaster relief and reconstruction (2003: 71.8%; 2006: 75.3% and 2009: 78.4%), followed by protecting Japan's security (2003: 68.6%; 2006; 69.4%; 2009: 70%). Contribution to PKO missions only ranks third (2003: 35.3%; 2006: 41.8%; 2009: 48.6%) (Cabinet Office 2009: Public Opinion poll on SDF and self defense). Moreover, there was opposition to SDF engagement in combat despite a UN mandate (Midford 2011: 39). As a result, it can be summarized that the Japanese supported the SDF, but mostly under the condition that fire arms were not involved. This also suggests a reason why the majority of the public believes the SDF's strength should stay at current levels, as depicted in Figure 3.16:

**Figure 3.16: Strengthening of the SDF**

**Should Japan's SDF be increased or reduced?**

(Chart showing survey results by year: 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009. Vertical axis scale 0–80. Legend: should be increased, should stay as it is, should be reduced, don't know.)
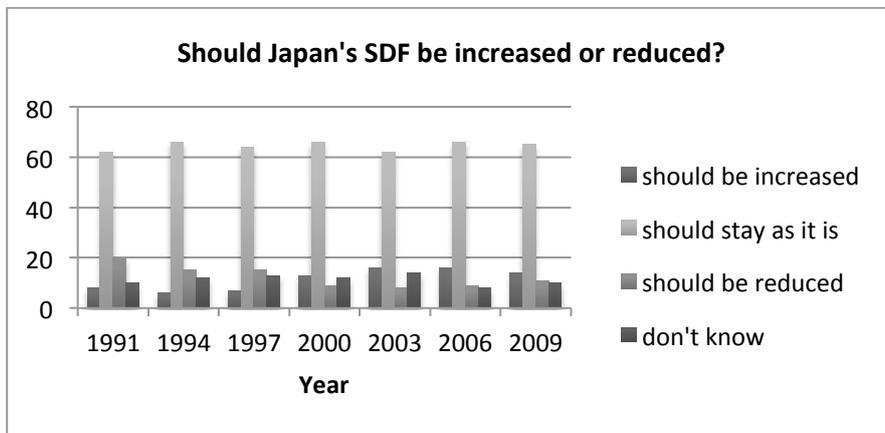
Source: Cabinet Office 2009: Public Opinion poll on SDF and self defense.

The majority of the public is satisfied with current levels of activity of their Self-Defense Forces. However, one can see that the trend to increase the SDFs capabilities markedly rose since 2000, and more so since 2003, when discussion on combating terrorism, in the light of the Anti Terrorism Special Measures Law (ATSML) and dispatching SDF to Iraq with the enactment of the Iraq Law, was at its peak.

### 3.7.3.3. USA

The data of the Cabinet Office in Figure 3.17 show, that the general Japanese public has great affinity towards its alliance partner the United States:

**Figure 3.17: Japanese affinity towards the USA (1977-2008)**

**Affinity towards the USA**

(Line chart with vertical axis % scale 0–100, horizontal axis years 1977 to 2005. Legend: Affinity, No Affinity.)

Source: Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, annual.

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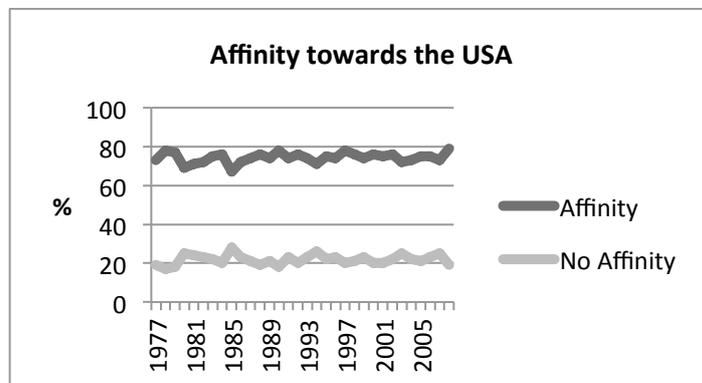
While affinity towards the US is high, opinions on bilateral relationships are more variable as can be seen in Figure 3.18. The positive view still dominates over the negative view from 2000 until 2010. However, considering the time frame of the Koizumi administration (2001-2006), a larger drop in positive opinions was observed in 2003. This may also result as a consequence of Japan's cooperation and SDF-missions in the U.S. led war in Iraq. The public was opposed to such cooperation. Midford (2011: 41) has argued, that these kinds of drops in perception are affiliated with the fear of entrapment in US-led foreign policy missions, which are by and large not supported by the Japanese public.

**Figure 3.18: Perceptions of Japan-US relations (2000-2011)**
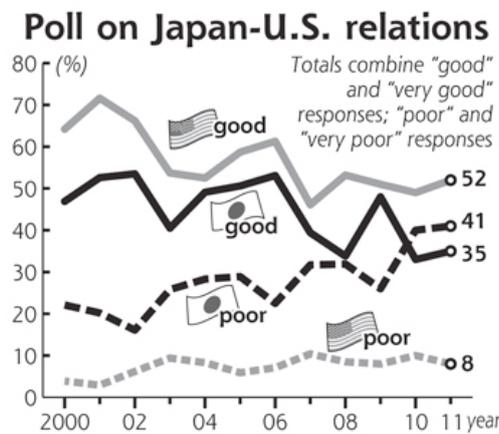


Source: Daily Yomiuri: 2011.12.19.

Referring to the US-Japan Security Treaty the majority of the public believed it was very useful (1978-1991: 63-71%; 1991-2009: 63-76%). The only points in time when dissatisfaction rose was in 1991 and 2006, when 18% and 17% respectively, believed the treaty was not useful (1978: 11%). Nevertheless, when asked which is the best method to protect Japan, a clear majority responded it was the US-Japan Security Treaty together with the actual state of activity of the SDF (Cabinet Office 2009: Public Opinion poll on SDF and self defense).

3.7.3.4 Opinions towards East Asia

Japanese opinion trends vary with regard to its direct neighbors China, North and South Korea.

According to a Dong-A Ilbo Opinion Poll in 2005, the public is most interested in the politics and diplomacy of its neighboring countries, followed by economic and historic issues. When asked what areas are most important for developing interdependence among East Asian countries, "security" was mentioned most frequently (51.4%). This may result from the belief that the Korean Peninsula (43.1%), territorial disputes (36%) and terrorism (31.7%) posed the major threatening factors for peace and stability in East Asia at that point in time (Dong-A Ilbo Opinion Poll: 2005.04.26).

*China*

During the Koizumi administration Sino-Japanese relations were at their worst since the 1970s. Although economic relations between the two countries were strong, diplomatic relations were cold. Figure 3.19 shows, that positive attitudes towards China declined annually since the 1990s and reached their lowest level in 2005, when 63.4% of the Japanese public declared they had "no affinity" towards China. 2005 shows even lower affinity towards China (32.4%) than in 1989, after the Tian'anmen Square incident, when still 51.6% maintained friendly feelings towards China (Figure 3.19):

**Figure 3.19: Japanese affinity towards China (1978-2006)**
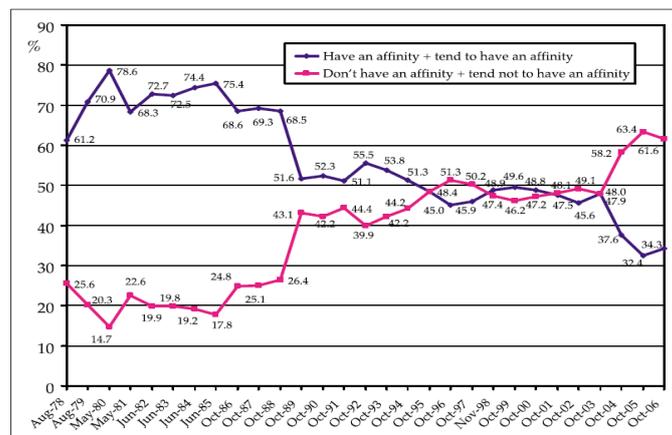


Source: Cabinet Office, *gaikō ni kan suru yoron chōsa* (public opinion poll on foreign policy and diplomacy), annual, In: Kotler et al 2007: 96.

Looking closer at polls of the U.S. Government during the period of the 1990s, when Japanese affinity towards China started to decline dramatically, the years 1996 and 2001 revealed that approximately 50% of the Japanese public viewed China "unfavorably" (Figure 3.20). In the period between 2001 to 2003, trends became more positive, and in 2003, 64% of the Japanese public showed favorable views of China. Attitudes worsened dramatically in 2004, when unfavorable views on China went up to 47%, and grew annually to 52% in November 2004 and 66% in September 2005. This trend indicates that anti-Japanese demonstrations in China in 2004 and 2005, protesting against the Yasukuni Shrine visits of Koizumi, and the publication of a new history textbook, had a negative influence on Japanese public opinion. As a result, 76% of the public believed a strong anti-Japan sentiment existed in China (Gallup 2005).

**Figure 3.20: Trend of Japanese opinion on China**
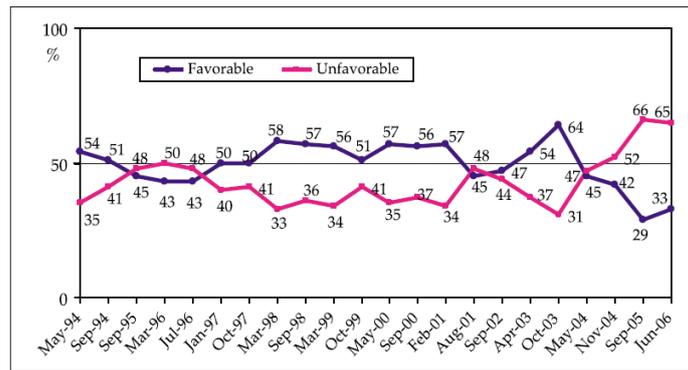


Source: U.S. Department of State: *Japanese Views of China Stuck on Negative,* (M-53-06), July 10, 2006. In: Kotler et al 2007: 98.

According to a Genron-NPO Study, Japanese characterize the Chinese as unfriendly (29.5%, no opinion 53.4%) and egoistic (49.7%), un-conciliatory (44%, no opinion 45.1%), dishonest (44%, no opinion 44.4%), and stubborn/ inflexible (57.9%) as well as belliger-ent/militant (44,2%), (Kudō 2008: 45-52).

Looking closer at the period of Koizumi's administration in Figure 3.21, we observe that although the Japanese public never showed full certainty that the Sino-Japanese relations were good, they perceived the relationship between Japan and China to be at its worst from 2004 until 2006:

**Figure 3.21: Views on relationship between Japan and China (2001-2006)**



**Views of relations**
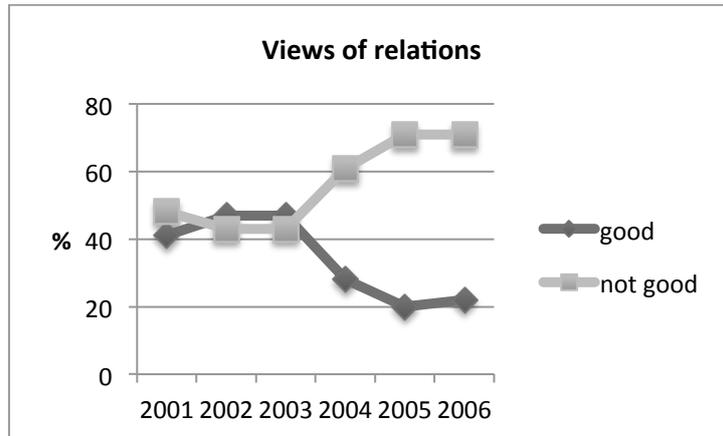
Source: Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, annual.

Historical issues are ranked first by the Japanese public as major problems of Sino-Japanese relations (the Yasukuni Shrine visits, the Schoolbook debate), followed by problems of mutual acceptance, mutual distrust of international policies, the East China Sea issue and economic issues (MOFA 2006.02.01a). The main reasons for mutual distrust were the perceived strong anti-Japanese sentiment by the Chinese public (76%), changes in historical understanding (44.4%) and territorial disputes (34.4%) (Ito 2008: 8).

Moreover, the Japanese regard China as the second highest military threat in North East Asia (42,8%), right after North Korea. The main reasons for this viewpoint were the apparent expansion of the Chinese military (56.2%), the intrusion of Chinese ships into Japanese territorial waters (46%) as well as China's nuclear arsenal (44.9%) (Kudō 2008: 94, 97). Furthermore, when asked if China and Japan understood each other, 62.4% of the public responded negatively. Finally, 69% of the Japanese public showed no trust in China (Nikkei Regular Telephone Opinion Poll: 2005.12.27).

As far as the development of Sino-Japanese relations in twenty years from today were concerned, the Japanese public did not seem to be very confident. Although people saw a necessity for reforming and improving diplomatic relations with China (77%), and believed friendly relations with China were important for Japan (>40%) (Kudō 2008: 65), the majority believed that historical frictions will build up again, even if there was a trend indicating a favorable turn in mutual relations (MOFA 2006: Public Opinion Poll on Sino-Japanese Relations). For the Japanese the foremost historical issue that should have been primarily resolved were the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (60%), whereas the Chinese saw a

priority in Japan's acceptance of its wartime atrocities, such as the Nanjing Massacre (68%) (Kudō 2008: 71). Nonetheless, the majority of the Japanese public still believed (41%) that history issues will be difficult to solve in bilateral relations (Kudō 2008: 73)

Most confidence existed in the economic relations between Japan and China. 58% believed that Japan's economic relations with China have deepened from 2000 until 2005 (Dong-A Ilbo Opinion Poll: 2005.04.26). In 2007, 36,2% of the Japanese believed that through regular Sino-Japanese high-level summit talks, bilateral relations and mutual acceptance could be improved (Kudō 2008: 79).

*South Korea*

Diplomatic relations with South Korea have never been as bad as Sino-Japanese relations, although they deteriorated during the Koizumi administration because of the Yasukuni Shrine visits and the textbook controversy. The public has described the relationship between the countries as "close, but a far off country after all" (Okuno 2008: 155). According to public opinion polls on affinity towards South Korea depicted in Figure 3.22 we observe, that affinity has steadily increased from 1996 on, with a short exception in 2004 and 2005.

**Figure 3.22: Affinity towards South Korea (1978-2010)**
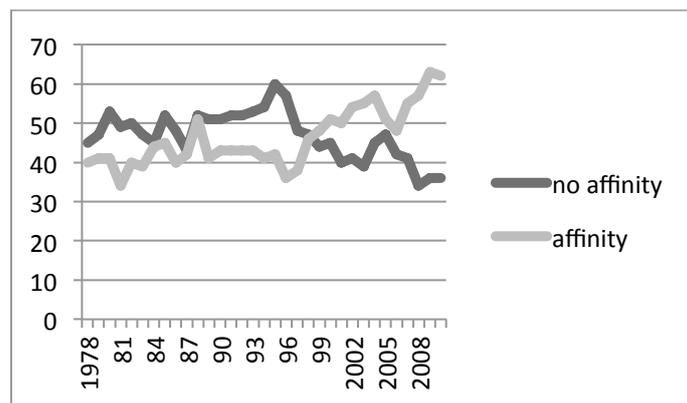


Source: Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, annual.

Figure 3.23, however, depicts that although affinity of the Japanese public towards South Korea rose since 1996, it was perceived that between 1984 and 1996 and between 2000 and

2005 bilateral relations were not going well. Nonetheless, the South Korean public has a much more negative view of bilateral relations with Japan than vice versa:

**Figure 3.23: Perceptions of relations**
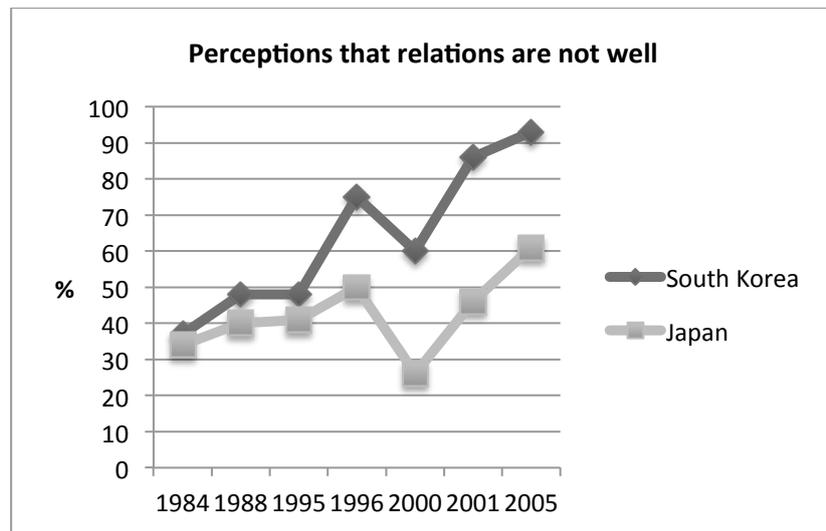


Source: Okuno 2008: 155.

Figure 3.23 makes clear, that there was a break in relations during the tenure of Prime Minister Koizumi.

When asked if Japanese-South Korean relations will change in the near future the majority of the respondents was either uncertain (27.8% in 2005 and 22.4% in 2007) or had the opinion that relations will not change in the future (30.7% in 2005 and 35.6% in 2007). Only 19.8% in 2005 and 27.1% in 2007 believed that relations would improve somehow (Gallup 2005 and Gallup International 2007). The overall view of the Japanese public was not very optimistic, but a slight improvement was visible after the end of the Koizumi administration.

The answer to the question of whether the public's impression towards South Korea had changed, reflect a similar result. In the years 2004 (46.1%) and 2006 (51.5%), the polls revealed that the feelings towards South Korea remained unchanged. Only 31.8% in 2004 and 27.9% in 2006 responded that their opinion towards South Korea had slightly improved (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007). The main reasons accounting for the improvement were the FIFA World Cup 2002 and the increased interest in South Korean

pop-culture. Concurrently, 49% replied that their opinion has not especially improved (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2004-2007). Albeit positive opinions were present with regard to Japanese-South Korean economic relationships: 58% believed Japan's economic relations with South Korea had deepened over the last five years (2000-2005) (Dong-A Ilbo Opinion Poll: 2005.04.26).

The main reasons responsible for the low affinity opinion towards South Korea were anti-Japanese sentiments in South Korea, followed by historical and territorial issues. In addition, the Japanese public had the impression that the attitude of the South Korean government towards Japan was somewhat unfriendly (39.6%). Interestingly enough, there was the impression that the attitudes of South Korean citizens towards Japan were positive, and 42% of the Japanese public believed these attitudes were somewhat friendly (Keio University 21COE-CCC: 2006).

The following graphical representation gives an overview of the reasons why the South Korean and Japanese public believe there is no affinity towards the other country (Figure 3.24):

**Figure 3.24: Main reasons for "no affinity" towards South Korea**
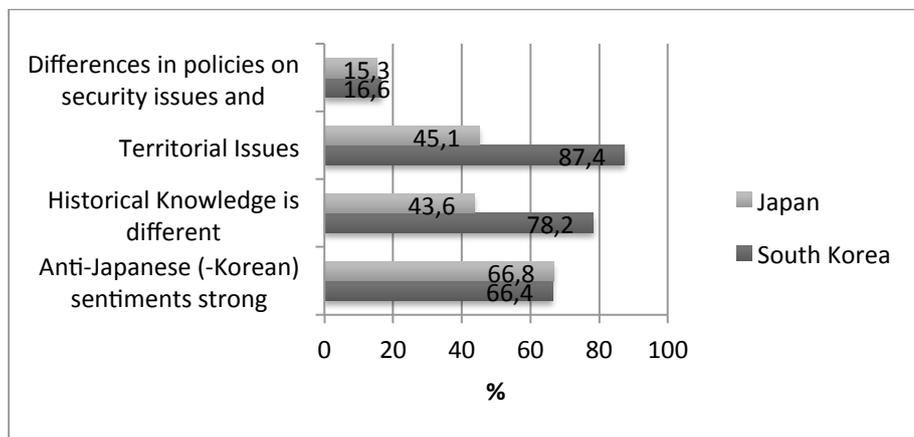


Source: Gallup 2005: international comparative poll on Japanese-South Korean Relations.

Generally speaking we can say that the public's perception towards South Korea was fairly good, with the tendency to swing towards a more positive or more negative perception, depending on the occurrence of historical issues. 75% of the Japanese public believed history issues with regard to South Korea and China were important and should be considered (Dong-A Ilbo Opinion Poll: 2005.04.26). Still, these issues are difficult to

resolve because of the different approach proposals for a solution. Whereas South Koreans believe the history issue could be resolved with an apology from Japan, the Japanese believe an increased people exchange would help settle the problems. In 2005 only 13% believed an apology from Japan could be a solution (Okuno 2008: 165). At the same time, 50% of the Japanese public believed historical issues could be solved on a long-term basis, whereas 67% of the Korean public did not think so (Okuno 2008: 165). On one point, however, there was agreement between the South Korean and Japanese public: the issue of compensation and reparations payments is thought to be unresolvable (Okuno 2008: 167).

*North Korea*

Diplomatic relations between Japan and North Korea do not exist, therefore, the general public opinion towards North Korea is relatively negative compared to public opinions towards China or South Korea. The difference in relationship can also be seen in the questioning mode employed in the Cabinet's Office public opinion polls regarding North Korea. Unlike the polls on China and South Korea, in which the public is directly asked about Sino-Japanese or South Korean-Japanese relations, such a question is not posed in the case of North Korea, and the public is merely asked to give the degree of concern/interest on issues regarding North Korea.

As can be seen in Figure 3.25 the majority of the Japanese public definitely dislikes North Korea, and this trend has increased steadily since the 1960s:

**Figure 3.25: Perceptions of North Korea**
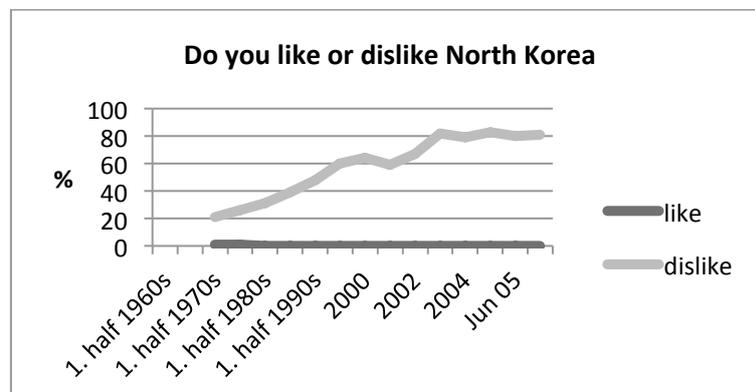


Source: Murotani 2005: *nihonjin no suki na kuni – kirai na kuni* (Japan's impression of foreign countries).

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In 1990, when the Japanese government made efforts to begin negotiations with North Korea, the majority of the Japanese public supported this step. However, at the same time 53% believed that relations with other countries should be considered as well (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute: 1990.10.28). The main reasons accounting for the hesitance and the negative view of North Korea were that 40-43% of the public believed that a fair amount of danger existed in the North Korean nuclear weapons development program (Shin Jouhou Center: 1991.11.06; Central Research Services: 1993.05.25). Since the public considered North Korea to be a threat to security, 46% believed in 1994 bilateral relations should be normalized on the long term, but saw no immediate need for normalization measures (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute: 1994.07.30). In June 1995 the trend to normalize diplomatic relations amounted to 52% (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 1995.06.28). In 1997, when Japan and North Korea agreed to resume negotiations, it was considered to start providing food aid to North Korea again. The Japanese public supported food aid provision, and 44% believed that Japan should provide food unconditionally to the people who suffer from severe food shortage. Only 27% believed food aid should be provided after issues on the "missing Japanese", a topic that came to the fore during this time period, were resolved[24] (Nikkei Shinbun Poll: 1997.09.14). On the whole, the Japanese public perceived North Korea as a security threat from 1990-2000, but still supported to a certain extent the resumption of bilateral negotiations for normalization. However, doubts on the effectiveness of the measures for success were present. In 1998, 48% believed that relations would remain the same despite negotiations (Shin Jouhou Center: 1998.01.11).

From 2000 until 2005 trends remained quite similar, although negative opinions towards North Korea increased, due to the exposure of the abduction issue and the nuclear program crisis. In 2001, 53% had a bad impression of North Korea (Yomiuiri Shinbun Yoronchousabu 2002: 349), and this trend worsened in 2005, when 79,4% had an unfavorable opinion towards the DPRK. The Japanese public considered North Korea as a major security threat to Japan (57%). The reasons justifying this behavior were the North Korean military activities and the nuclear missile tests that started in 1998 (Gallup: 2005).

In general, the major issues of concern between Japan and North Korea were the abduction issue, North Korean missile launches and the nuclear development program (Figure 3.26):

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[24] The issue oft he abductions will be discussed in detail in chapter 5.

**Figure 3.26: Matter of concern/interest regarding North Korea:**
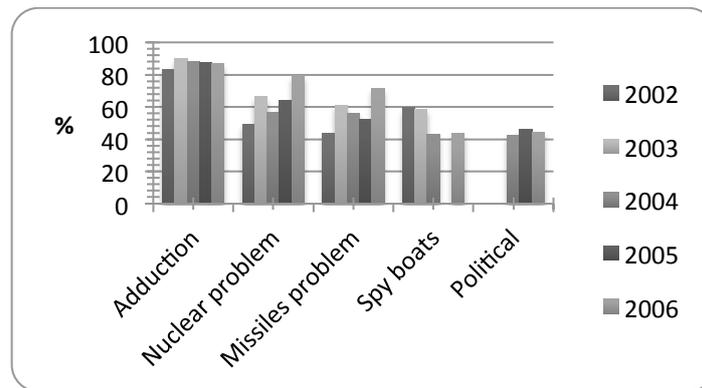


Source: Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy and diplomacy, annual.

In 2004, more than half of the respondents had an interest in positive developments regarding North Korea (Cabinet Office, public opinion poll on foreign policy, 2004), but compared to answers in the 2000s, 84% supported normalization with North Korea but only 32% felt it should be done "as quickly as possible" (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2004.03.26). This view has not changed until today.

### 3.7.4. Summary

Japan's foreign and security policy has undergone several waves of change and progression. Its initial core determinants pacifism, economic strength, a restrictive defense policy, the US-Japan Alliance and the principles of the UN prevail until today and form its main pillars of diplomacy. These principles are greatly supported by the Japanese public. What has changed over time is the manner of international contribution, on the one side, and the severe restrictions that have made contribution more difficult on the other side. The Japanese public's main objective is to support the maintenance of international peace and security, primarily through contribution to UN missions. Therefore, assistance especially in post disaster reconstruction missions is highly supported. However, fear of entrapment in missions that involve arms or combat prevails, and such missions are strictly denied by the public and still prohibited by the Japanese Constitution.

What has loosened the "restrictive" defense policy is, that political and legal measures have been introduced, which extend the area of activity for possible missions without

stressing the leading pacifist norm too much. In this sense, Japan has, thus, evolved on the one side, but is still trapped in postwar principles and obligations, on the other side.

Concerning its foreign policy towards East Asia, relations are best in terms of economic cooperation, with the exception of North Korea, where no bilateral relations exist at all. Political relations with China and South Korea are complicated with struggles over historical issues, regional rivalry and distrust. This perception is also prevalent among the Japanese public. Although all sides desire regional stability, military security concerns prevail - in view of China's and North Korea's military capabilities and especially the abduction issue with North Korea - and determine the public's attitudes and Japan's foreign policy behavior until today.

In summary, we can say that the core principles and opinions of Japan's foreign and security policy have not changed over time, and remain relatively stable and consistent. Regarding its East Asia policy, opinions and policies are disturbed by issues of history, resulting in political rivalries, a phenomenon that has been existent since World War II, and has not changed despite several improvements in relations that have been accomplished during the last decades.

# 4. PRIME MINISTER KOIZUMI JUNICHIRŌ AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

The degree to which elites, and especially competing elites, are aware of the multidimensional nature of public opinion is essential when deciding how to deal with or respond to public opinion. The adequate assessment of the public can be very useful and empower decision-makers in their positions on main issues (Graham 1994: 204; Entman 2004: 127). If a leader is well informed about the public's attitudes and majority preferences, political communication and strategies chosen to eventually persuade the public towards a different direction can be adapted accordingly. It depends on the ability of a leader to put together specific policies from within a range of options, which the majority public is to tolerate (Russet 1990: 118).

Because of the multidimensional character of public opinion, sufficient survey research has to be accomplished by the executive to give him the ability to determine how to "frame" his decisions or tactics toward the public and maximize its support. According to Thomas Graham (1994) "dramatic policy failures have usually occurred, when […] understandable pressures have led to the exclusion of informed public opinion considerations from the policy-making process". In such cases substantial political prices have been paid (Graham, 1994: 198, 199). Understanding the nature of public opinion represents a significant element to assess a right opinion-policy relationship.

Likewise, the policy makers' anticipation of future preferences of the public, influence and shape its decisions (Knecht and Weatherford 2006: 708; Foyle 1999). Decision-makers anticipate public reactions when thinking of alternative policy courses. Entman (2004) points to the fact that officials' anticipation, that a decision might raise opposition, exerts an influence on decision-making (Entman 2004: 127). One way to counteract this phenomenon is through historical experience, by estimating the "popularity" and "salience" of past policies (Knecht and Weatherford 2006: 708). Given this background, it is of importance to understand the decision-maker, his policies, strategies and his relation to the public.

In the following chapter a short overview of Prime Minister Koizumi and his administration will be given. Since this study examines the reaction of the prime minister to public opinion in foreign policy-making processes, it is important to know the main

features and characteristics of Koizumi's policy-making style. In a second step, a synoptic view of his relationship to public opinion will be outlined. Lastly, his main domestic policies will be introduced in order to set the context of the theoretical proposition, introduced in chapter 2, subsection 2.3.4, that domestic incentives determine a condition for the prime minister's reaction to public opinion in foreign policy-making.

Koizumi's strategies and characteristics in foreign affairs, will only be touched superficially, since they constitute the subject of the case studies to follow, and will be analyzed in detail in chapters five, six and seven.

## 4.1. Koizumi's policy-making-style

Koizumi Junichirō was appointed prime minister of Japan on April 26, 2001, and remained in office until September 26, 2006. After Prime Minister Sato Eisaku (1964-1972) and Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1946-1947 and 1948-1954), he held the third longest administration and has been one of Japan's most popular prime ministers. Prior to his tenure as prime minister, he acted as Parliamentary Vice Minister of Finance in 1979 and in 1988 as Minister of Health and Welfare under Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru (1987-1989). In 1992, he was Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in the Cabinet of Miyazawa Kiichi (1991-1993), and from 1996–1998 Minister of Health and Welfare in the Cabinet of Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998).

Prime Minister Koizumi entered office in an era in which he was strengthened by a different institutional environment than his predecessors. Koizumi was able to take full advantage of the new institutional developments and the greater authority given to the prime minister and the Cabinet Secretariat through the electoral reform of 1994, the institutional changes to the Cabinet Law in 1999, and the administrative reforms in 2001 introduced in chapter 3. More power was also given to the prime minister for agenda-setting and policy-making. According to Gaunder (2007: 123) "Koizumi was working in an altered 1955-system where some constraints are the same, some have lessened and some new ones have emerged".

Koizumi won a landslide victory in 2001 with a support rate of over 80%. It was an unexpected victory for lawmakers (Uchiyama 2010: 7). Koizumi came from the smaller and not very dominant Mori-faction of the LDP. In the same manner as during the old system,

where factional strength played a significant role in the election of the party president and the prime minister, it was expected this time, that Hashimoto with the strongest faction in the LDP would win the elections. Reality showed a different outcome with Koizumi's victory. However, even after Koizumi had won the Lower House elections, he was not expected to stay long in power, because he needed four attempts to run successfully for party presidency. Moreover, the Upper House elections were due to follow closely, and it was expected that he would at the latest lose these elections. Bessho Kourou, former Executive Assistant to Prime Minister Koizumi explained that this was the reason why Koizumi was not confronted with strong campaigning by his opponents at the beginning, because nobody believed he would last long enough in his position (Interview Bessho Kōrō: 2010.08.03).

Prime Minister Koizumi became popular with his "rhetoric of reform" (Lincoln 2002: 67). The basic philosophy of the Koizumi administration was to "change Japan and Japan's politics - in other words: to change the LDP" (Iijima 2006: 19). Iijima Isao, who was Koizumi's Private Secretary and his right-hand political aid for more than 30 years, asserts, that in order to launch change, Koizumi believed a change in policy and in the way of thinking of politicians was necessary. This, Koizumi believed, could only be achieved through structural reforms (*kōzōkaikaku*).  Although Prime Minister Koizumi was a member of the LDP, he can be described as a member of the conservatives (*hoshu*), but not of the LDP „old guard"-conservatives (*shukyū*) (Iijima 2006: 19). His aim was to introduce domestic reforms, which was only possible if he would change the 1955-system policy-making of the LDP represented by the „old guard", made up of the iron triangle relation-ships between bureaucracy, the LDP *zoku* politicians and big business (cf. section 3.3.1). Against this background, one of his election slogans was "to destroy the LDP" (*jimintō o bukkowasu*) (Uchiyama 2010: 3). Iijima (2006: 96) notes, that Koizumi was not only a person of tough words, but also he knew it was necessary to force the LDP to change, in order to introduce his reforms. With this approach, Koizumi reflected freshness and change to the public, in contrast to the old bureaucratic-led LDP guard that had fallen under heavy criticisms the years before. In summary, it was Koizumi's aim to create a small government by destabilizing the dominance of "interest group liberalism" (Hiwatari 2005: 42).

The change in policy-making was introduced immediately after Koizumi ignored factional politics in the establishment of his first cabinet in 2001, with the result that the traditional factional balance was not existent. According to Uchiyama (2010: 13) this was "a strong

signal of de-factionalization" (*datsu habatsu*), and was a first step in outweighing the old-guard politicians, who sought to protect the iron triangle relations. Moreover, he appointed five women in his cabinet, one of them being Tanaka Makiko, a very popular politician and close ally in his election campaign, who afterwards became Foreign Minister (Lincoln 2002: 2002). Furthermore, "he changed the traditional LDP-policy-making process that required bills to be considered by the LDPs Policy Affairs Research Councils (PARC) and the Executive Council before being submitted to the Cabinet" (Mishima 2007: 731). Koizumi instead, used many advisory committees and offices under his direct control. By 2006 there existed sixty different committees, whereby thirty of them were established directly after Koizumi's inauguration (Mishima 2007: 731). Another of his strategies was to try to reach agreements with his coalition partners first, before he proposed legislation to the LDP elite, and, consequently, weakened the PARCs traditional role in the policy-making process (Gaunder 2007: 124).

The institutional setting during the Koizumi administration was arranged in such a way that the prime minister's immediate circle gave directives to the ministries and government agencies. Conflicts between ministries and agency were handled case by case according to Koizumi's judgment. As a result, drafts were not discussed beforehand with LDP-party organs, such as the above mentioned PARC (Uchiyama 2010: 16).

The Koizumi administration was a three-party coalition (LDP, Koumeitou and New Conservative Party) until the Lower House Elections of November 2003. From 2003 on the administration consisted of only a coalition between the LDP and the New Koumeitou. The administration, therefore, enjoyed a solid majority in both the Upper and the Lower House. Once the coalition parties reached agreement, it was very difficult for individual LDP members to oppose the decision afterwards, especially when the Koizumi cabinet enjoyed high approval ratings (Shinoda 2007: 136). With the exception of areas in which Koizumi did not intervene, interactions between the ministries and the LDP *zoku* still prevailed (Mishima 2007: 730).

Koizumi's policy-making style was often described as a "top-down Kantei-directed policy-making " (*kantei shudō*), in comparison to the former "bottom-up style" where consensus-building among various interests of the iron triangle was the predominant norm (*chōbeigata naikaku*) (see Uchiyama 2010; Iijima 2006; Shinoda 2005). In Iijima's opinion the only way to fulfill structural reforms and introduce change was for Koizumi to undertake such a top-down leadership (Iijima 2006: 34). He, therefore, dominated the formulation of political

initiatives at early stages, and announced 12 more laws until 2005, whereby six laws were related to national security, and six to domestic and economic reforms[25] (Shinoda 2005: 815).

The top-down leadership in foreign affairs (*kantei gaikō*) was more complicated. According to Iijima, both Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Cabinet directive were important, since MOFA's tasks diverge from the tasks of the Kantei. However, the Koizumi administration believed that there was foreign policy that has to be conducted and decided by the prime minister, and there were tasks that were necessary to be administered only by MOFA. Since the prime minister had the political responsibility for the security of the whole state, foreign policy measures with comparable responsibility degree, for example the issue of combat or war, were to be decided by the prime minister (Iijima 2006: 35-38). Moreover, it was important for the Koizumi Cabinet that professionals with different background and areas of expertise were included in foreign affairs, such as specialists from academia, business and bureaucracy (Iijima 2006: 44). Iijima further notes, that it was on Prime Minister Koizumi's political agenda to conduct a *kantei gaikō*, however, it appeared difficult to realize this goal all the way (Iijima 2006: 38). Experts have said that, "Koizumi did not scheme his foreign policy agenda as strategically as his domestic agenda" (Interview Anonymous A: 28.07.2010), since "his interest in foreign policy was not as big as for internal affairs. In foreign affairs he acted insightfully but much more intuitively. He used foreign affairs to turn the tide for domestic politics" (Interview Michishita, Narushige: 2010.07.30).

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[25] Major Laws of the Koizumi administration were: the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (October29, 2001); the Emergency Law (June 13, 2003); the Iraq Special Measures Law (August 1, 2003); The Law to Protect People's Rights (June 18, 2004); The Law to Facilitate U.S. Military Actions (June 18, 2004); the Law on the Use of the Public Facilities (June 18, 2004); The Special Public Corporations Reform Basic Law (June 21, 2001); The Urban Renaissance Special Measures Law (April 6, 2002); The Basic Law on Intellectual Property (December 4, 2002); The Law on Special Zones for Structural Reform (December 18, 2002); the Law on e-Documentation (April 1, 2005); the Law to Revise Related Laws on e-Documentation (April 1, 2005).

## 4.2. What makes Prime Minister Koizumi special – "the Koizumi theatre"

New institutional settings do not always guarantee strong leadership. Uchiyama (2010: 17) and Gaunder (2007: 127), for example, remark that personality is important but also the way personal characteristics are combined with institutional resources available.

In all interviews conducted by the author on Prime Minister Koizumi it was stressed that he was a "special leader" with a particular character. He had several nicknames such as "lion heart"[26], "the odd man" (*henjin*, first named by Foreign Minister Tanaka), "the populist" (Ōtake 2006), "the prime minister of pathos" (Uchiyama 2007), "a dictator who conducts political terror" (Nakasone Yasuhirou in: Uesugi 2006: 10). His secretary Iijima described him as a "normal, ordinary" person. In his opinion this was exceptional for a politician, and what actually constituted a great politician (Tahara 2007: 104).

Many who worked with Koizumi have said that one of his major characteristics was, that he never changed his mind after making a decision. "He always said very clearly what he wanted to do, in a very radical, but clear cut way" (Interview Bessho Kōrō: 2010.08.03). Moreover, he was supposed to be "a very intuitive person with a tremendous insight" (Interview Michishita, Narushige: 2010.07.30). "When he had a certain goal and had made a decision, he rarely took more feedback advice from his political aids" (Tahara 2007: 61).

Iijima confirms these assessments by asserting, that to realize his vision it was necessary for Koizumi to have an appropriate attitude to politics and political position (*seijishisei*). For this purpose his aids developed two strategies that guided his policy-making: First, "a clear and precise leadership" (*meikaku na ridashippu*), which also implied emancipating himself from the traditional factional logic, and to try to become prime minister without factional support. This step meant that the prime minister would be freed from the constraints of factional and party logic, and would make the exercise of a resolute and tough leadership possible and effective (Iijima 2006: 20).

The second strategy was defining „a clear set of goals" (*meikai na mokuhyo settei*), which were indestructible, together with an unshakable will. These characteristics were necessary, in order to perform a Kantei-leadership with resolute decision-making (Iijima 2006: 20), and guided Koizumi's policy-making throughout his administration.

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[26] "The title is a reference to the Prime Minister's lion-like hairstyle and his unbending determination to advance structural reform" (Koizumi: 2001.06.29).

As a whole, his administration was often called the "Koizumi theatre" (*koizumi gekijō*) (Yoshida 2006), determined by Koizumi's strategies used in his policy-making. Since Koizumi was not a head of a faction, but instead announced he had to defeat his own party, he lacked solid Diet support and depended on other resources that would bring him popularity and political power. Therefore, he had to effect new strategies that would bring him the necessary support. According to Shinoda's classification of leaders introduced in chapter 2, Koizumi represented a classic grandstander. By adopting, as Ōtake (2006) notes, a populist strategy, he increased his interaction with the media so as his presence in front of the public, to reinforce his political power and win their support. As a result, Koizumi adopted an "entertain-ized policy-making" (Kabashima and Steel 2007b: 80) and played the part of a "political actor" (Interview Anonymous C: 2010.08.25). To fulfill this role, Koizumi used the media.

Koizumi understood the importance and necessity of the media very early and it was his decision to "go public" with his messages (Gaunder 2007: 126). He circumvented his party and communicated directly with the public through the media (Kabashima and Steel 2007a: 102). The motto of the Koizumi administration was "information disclosure" (*jōhō kaiji*). That meant that it was his first priority to reveal and release information (Tahara 2007: 96), because "what the Koizumi administration was extremely conscious of, was the public" (*ishiki suru no wa kokumin da*), plus it was very important for him that the public clearly understood his explanations and intentions (Iijima 2006: 33, 34).

Therefore, during the Koizumi administration not only legislative reforms took place, but also a change of media strategies. Traditionally, a "door-stepping coverage" (*bura shitagari shuzai*) was very common, whereby the prime minister commented in front of the media while he was entering the official residence. With this method, however, the real intention of his statements was diluted (Iijima 2006: 34). For this reason, the prime minister's interviews system was changed. Newspapers were allowed to record statements at midday and TV interviews were allowed only during the evenings.

Furthermore, Koizumi broadened the scope of media he used for information disclosure. Thus, he appeared regularly in "wide shows" and chat shows, and gave interviews beyond the newspapers of the press club system, such as youth magazines, women's magazines and sports magazines (Sera 2009: 110). Additionally, he introduced a personal email-magazine (*Koizumi naikaku mēru magajin*), where Koizumi as "lionheart" (*raionhāto – Koizumi sōri no mesēji*), together with some Cabinet ministers, sent a personal message to the

public and informed about the cabinet's policies and decisions made. The email-magazine had more than two million subscribers.

Beyond his internet-, print media- and TV presence, he also appeared on a monthly radio show for ten minutes called "Prime Minister Koizumi speaks on the radio" (*Koizumi sōri – rajio de kataru*). His radio performance started only in 2003 and was aired every third Saturday of a month (Iijima 2006: 35). With this technique he was visible in all possible media and was able to reach all strata of society and get close with the public.

Furthermore, Uesugi Takashi, a Japanese journalist, pointed out that not only did Koizumi use the media very cleverly, but the media at the same time also failed to properly deal with Koizumi (cf. Uesugi 2006). The reason for this was the failure of the Japanese media, including Uesugi himself, to correctly cover Koizumi's political agendas and take his media strategy seriously. Instead, party and personnel struggles surrounding his policies became the focus of attention in articles rather then the essence of his policies. In his view, only after Koizumi's tenure as prime minister had ended, did the Japanese media realized, that Koizumi completely changed the traditional relationship between the government and the press (Uesugi 2006: 9-18).

The messages he delivered to the public were special as well, since they presented an adept rhetoric. His strategy was to delineate political issues, foremost his reform plans, as matters of good against evil, and issued ultimata to either support him and his plan for change or be against these plans (Sera 2009: 103). For example, anyone in the political sphere who was against his plans was described as a "force of resistance", and the public's wishes for change meant, "it will hurt", because there was "only pain for gain" (cf. Kabashima and Steel 2007a). "He portrayed himself as someone who was against entrenched powers, anti-wealth and anti-elite, and as someone who was engaged in a "civil war" with the anti-reformists, and who distanced himself from his own party" (Kabashima and Steel 2007a: 97).

His messages were delivered with a "one phrase politics strategy" (*wanfurēzu poritikusu*) to cope with media and reach public attention (Sera 2009: 102). As Iijima, who was also in charge of Koizumi's media strategy explained, everything depended on the "one cut" or the one "soundbite" of his interview, that would be continuously repeated by the media, and by this means, it was avoided that comments would be falsely "trimmed" in argumentation (Iijima 2006: 34).

This dramatized spectacle was widely covered, as this was just what the media was waiting for. For example the *Asahi Shinbun* quoted in 2001 one of Koizumi's catchphrases 422 times (Kabashima and Steel 2007a: 107), and automatically delivered the best promotion for his messages.

## 4.3. Koizumi and public opinion

Koizumi had an "outsider status" (Uriu 2003: 80) both as prime minister and within his own party, because he was less attached to LDP factionalism but rather tried to fight the party structure than to support it. Simply put, he had fewer supporting ties within his own party. Gaunder has argued, "leaders can overcome institutional constraints, but this is easier when the political environment the leader is working in favors the policy change the leader is advocating" (Gaunder 2007: 143). In the case of Koizumi, he was facing very strong constraints in his political environment regarding his policies, which did not favor changes that Koizumi tried to introduce. This in turn meant that he had to use other tactical means to overcome opposition. One of his major and most important trump cards was public opinion.

As described in earlier chapters, the popularity of a prime minister is for many reasons a very important aspect in policy-making. A poor reputation in the political community can limit the political influence of a highly popular national leader (Shinoda 2007: 147). Good leadership and high popularity can enhance the prime minister's influence over members of the ruling parties and ministries, and enforce changes that otherwise would not have been able to be realized.

In terms of foreign affairs, the prime minister is in a much more favorable position than any MOFA official, to explain important foreign-policy decisions to the public. He is not only the nation's most visible political actor, but also the head of the Cabinet to which the people entrust executive power, including over foreign affairs. The prime minister is held accountable and is responsible for persuading the public. If he fails to do so, he bears political responsibility, as the voters will not support his party in the next general election.

For Koizumi, his relationship with the public was special since he could not rely on sufficient party support. This in turn made him fight for the challenge to be the first prime minister, to be in the first place supported by the Japanese public and second by political elites (Tahara 2007: 69). Not only was public opinion his political weapon to convince

opponents, but high support rates were also a necessity for him to survive politically. Public opinion was presumably an important for Prime Minister Koizumi, still he took his role as a leader very seriously. Koizumi believed that public opinion was important, but his credo was also that "public opinion swings left and right, but it's a politician's obligation to maintain consistent policy" (Midford and Scott 2008: 145). Furthermore, he also believed that it was sometimes necessary "to ignore public criticisms and press ahead with your policies" (Chan 2007).

What made his relation with the public exceptional was, that Koizumi was one of the few prime ministers that had a relatively high public support rate throughout his tenure, although his administration was plagued with many different domestic and foreign policy problems:

**Figure 4.1: Koizumi support rate (2001-2005)**
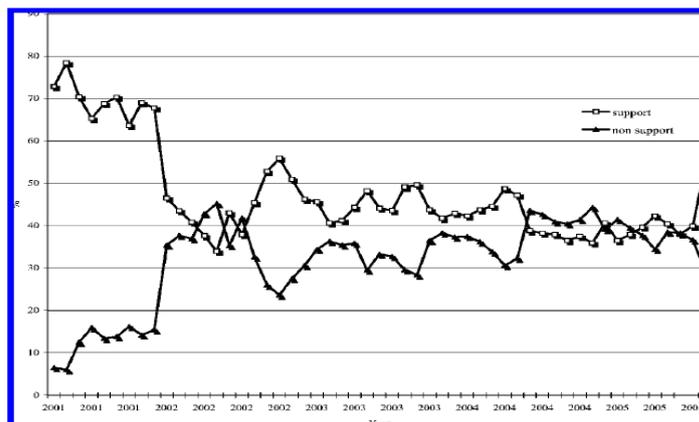


Source: Jiji Press, *Jiji yoron chōsa tokuhō* (Jiji public opinion survey special bulletins), in: Hiwatari 2006: 23.

As can be seen in the figure above, his support rate in 2001 reached 80%. A support rate of this extent was reached for the last time in 1993 by Prime Minister Hosokawa (1993-1994), when he introduced the Electoral Reform. Koizumi, instead, reached such high levels right at the beginning, after taking office. In comparison, prior to Koizumi's tenure, only Prime Minister Hosokawa, with 71%, and Prime Minister Hashimoto, with 61%, were the Prime Ministers with the highest support ratings when entering office (Yoshida 2006: 176).

„What the mass public understood was, that Koizumi could change things" (Interview Iio Jun: 2010.09.01). This was especially important to the public since they had experienced

a long time of economic recession and distrust in policy-makers. Moreover, „people chose him because he had a clear target and he presented himself as a leader" (Interview Bessho, Kōrō: 2010.08.03). This is also a reason, why Koizumi was successful in keeping his support rates uncommonly high during his whole tenure, most of the times well over 40%. Usually support rates of all popular Japanese prime ministers started falling the latest after 8 moths in office (Yoshida 2006: 177).

Besides having relatively high public opinion support results, there were also times when Koizumi had to suffer rapid losses in support. The most prominent case was the dismissal of the very popular Foreign Minister and close aid Makiko Tanaka on January 29, 2002. Koizumi's support rate dropped immediately from 72% to 49%. 69% of the public did not support the change of personnel and 59% replied that Koizumi's image worsened through this decision (Yoshida 2006: 177). Koizumi and his political aids had underestimated the effect of this change in personnel, for they did not expect it to have such an influence on public opinion support for the administration (Iijima 2006: 107-110).

A second exceptional characteristic were Koizumi's speeches and the language he used. They differed from former prime ministers, which made politics accessible for the average public. "His speeches make ordinary people feel that he is speaking directly to them" (Kitaoka 2001: 281). His language was easy and well understandable for every person. Together with his new media strategy targeting all stratum of society, he even caught the interest of younger people who had no interest in politics before, and 57% of the public admitted in 2005 that their interest in politics increased during the Koizumi administration (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.04.22-23). This was a very relevant fact for Koizumi, since it was of political importance for him to win the many swing voters and the undecided. Koizumi, therefore, was an approachable politician, who fought against entrenched interests, which were also condemned by the public. This is especially visible when comparing Koizumi's support rates with the support rates of the LDP in Figure 4.2. Although the LDP party support rates showed the same wave-like trends as Koizumi's approval ratings, they were indeed very low. The fact that Koizumi's support rates were higher than the party's, was additional evidence, that despite intraparty differences, Koizumi gained strength within his own party through high public support, because the party depended upon him.

**Figure 4.2: Popularity rating of Koizumi, the LDP and JDP 2001-2004**
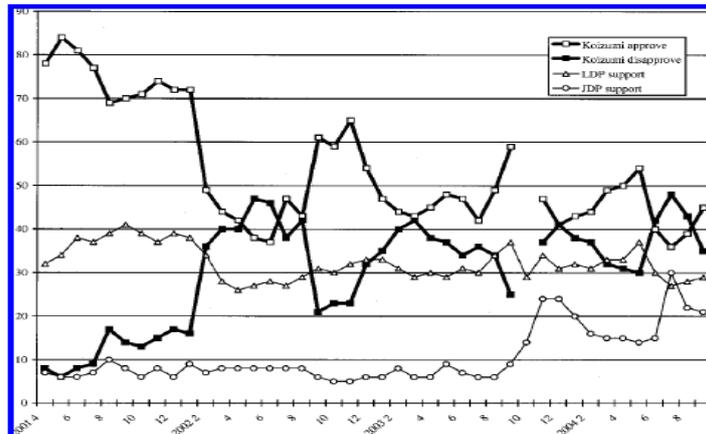


Source: Hiwatari 2005: 43.

In April 2006 the public evaluated in an *Asahi Shinbun* opinion poll the last five years of the Koizumi Cabinet accomplishments, 10 points being the highest. The results were as follows:

**Table 4.1: Accomplishments of the Koizumi Cabinet (Asahi Shinbun 2001-2006)**

| Topic | 0-4 points | 5 points | 6-10 points |
|---|---|---|---|
| Koizumi Cabinet's success as a whole | 21% | 32% | 46% |
| Economic policies | 28% | 33% | 36% |
| Administrative Reforms | 24% | 21% | 52% |
| Pensions and Social Security measures | 56% | 26% | 16% |
| Diplomacy | 46% | 24% | 27% |

Source: Asahi Shinbun poll 2006.04.22-23 and Yoshida 2006: 183.

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the Japanese public was overall satisfied with Koizumi's administration, however very unsatisfied with his diplomacy and pension and social security measures.

Furthermore, according to a *Yomiuri Shinbun* Opinion Poll in 2005, 49.7% somehow supported the last four years of the Koizumi administration, and 28.5% little. When asked if Koizumi had changed the political style of the LDP, 32.2% answered he did change it somewhat, 28% believed he did not change it very much, and 25% said he did not change

it at all (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.24). As a result, it can be said that the majority of the Japanese public believed that Koizumi did not succeed in changing the LDP after all. This result can also be inferred from the following poll results of the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, in which 58% believed that nothing had really changed in general during the last four years of the Koizumi administration compared to the situation before, and 25.5% even believed the domestic and international political situation in Japan had become a little more difficult (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.24).

Although Koizumi always had high support rates, and people thought he was popular and pleasant (67.5%), they still believed that he did not keep his promises, and did not have any success in his policies (56.8%). Further, the public was of the opinion that he delegated important decisions and policies to bureaucracy and the working committees (53.5%). Moreover, 63.2% believed he played with rhetoric and betrayed the public. After five years, only 38% thought he decided policies with a strong leadership ability (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.24).

When the public was asked what they found appealing about Prime Minister Koizumi, 30% had nothing particular in mind, 22% believed Koizumi was easy to understand, 19% thought he was easy to relate to, and 15% believed he did not waver (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.04.22-23).

The following Figure 4.3 shows that when the public was questioned if Prime Minister Koizumi acted as a politician according to the public's feelings and sentiments, people believed he acted in their favor from 2001 to 2003, but dissatisfaction was clearly evident from 2003 on:

**Figure 4.3: Does Koizumi as a politician act according to the public's feelings?**
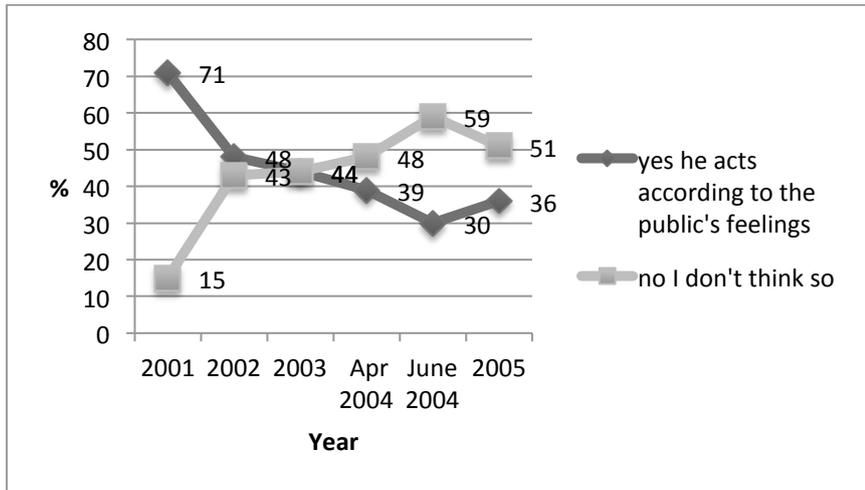


Source: Yoshida 2006: 184.

As a result, after three years in office Koizumi had lost the public's confidence regarding his credibility that his policies were close to the public's interests. This also explains the above mentioned poll results of the 2005 *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll, in which a clear majority of over 60% of the public believed, that he played with rhetoric and betrayed the public to achieve his policies. Nevertheless, since Prime Minister Koizumi depended on public opinion politically, he steadily tried to assess public opinion. In explaining Koizumi's relation with the public, Bessho remarked that, "Koizumi listened to public opinion trends all the time, and was aware of what public opinion discussed, but in the end it was he who had to take the burden of decision" (Interview Bessho, Kōrō: 2010.08.03).

In summary, we can say that the Japanese public's view of Prime Minister Koizumi is a mixture of support and appreciation paired with doubts over his political effectiveness and his sincerity in leadership. Still, Koizumi managed to keep the general support rate for his Cabinet high in most of the opinion polls taken.

### 4.4. Koizumi's domestic agenda

Since I argue that domestic incentives (Chapter 2, section 2.3.4) and consensus or disagreement among elites (Chapter 2, section 2.3.2) are conditions that determine the link between public opinion and decision-maker, it is important to give a short overview of the major domestic policies of the Koizumi administration in order to understand the coherence with decisions in foreign affairs analyzed in the case studies.

Prime Minister Koizumi's most important political agenda were structural reforms. In his email-magazines he introduced himself and his Cabinet as "the Cabinet determined to carry out reform" (Koizumi: 2001.05.29) or the "Reform Implementation Cabinet" (Koizumi: 2004.09.30). These statements testify the importance of his domestic agenda.

His plan was to restructure the system based on the strategies of "moving from the public to the private sector and from central to local level" (Köllner 2005: 20) or as Koizumi himself explained "leave to the private sector what it can do" and "leave to the localities what they can do" (cf. Koizumi: 2004.09.30). His reform plans included the following:

1. Financial reform and reduction of public works spending
2. The disposition of non-performing loans and financial revitalization
3. Reforms of the social security system, that is the pension and healthcare system
4. Reform of special public corporations. This included the privatization of the Japan National Oil Corporation, the Highway Public Corparation and the Postal Services.
5. The "Trinity Reform", which included reform of the tax finance system
6. And finally, regulatory reforms, which implied that various sectors should be opened to private corporations (From Uchiyama 2010: 21).

To implement his reform plans, Koizumi had to face tremendous intraparty opposition throughout all processes. It was criticized, that the prime minister set wrong priorities and his reform plans were too imprecise (Institut für Asienkunde 08/2001: 348). Furthermore, in the first half of 2002, Koizumi was confronted with a censure motion, which he successfully overcame (Pohl 2002: 22). This anti-Koizumi atmosphere was created by opponents within the LDP. 53 members of parliament, mainly representatives of the "old guard", established the "anti-Koizumi group" to present alternative reform plans (Institut für Asienkunde: 2/2002: 32). Besides the LDP led "anti-Koizumi group", the four opposition parties DPJ, LP, JCP and SDP agreed to work together to overthrow the Koizumi administration (Institut für Asienkunde: 4/2002: 122).

The strongest opposition among LDP lawmakers was with regard to privatization of public corporations. Only in 2002 opponents managed to prevent the privatization of eight corporations. Since the corporations under discussion, such as specially designated public corporations (*tokushu hōjin*) and public authorized corporations (*ninka hōjin*), served as great employment opportunities for former bureaucrats (*amakudari*), many supporters of the iron triangle fought against any changes of this system (Institut für Asienkunde: 6/2002: 258, 259).

As part of coping with opposition to his reforms, Koizumi reshuffled his Cabinet four times until 2004. Again, he ignored factional balances and claims for positions by his own party members, and only appointed ministers who supported his reform plans, with the result that further members of his own party turned against him. His argumentation was, that there "can be no growth without reform, therefore, there is no turning back on the reform track" (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2005: Koizumi Reforms).

However, the most prominent domestic reform and Koizumi's "heart of reforms" (Koizumi: 2004.08.05) was the postal privatization.

During the 162nd Parliamentary session in January 2005, Koizumi announced that with this session he wished to complete his reform plans on postal privatization, and at the same time did not allow any compromises on the bills. This turned opposition even more against him, with the result that 250 parliamentarians, the majority being members of the LDP, united in order to oppose the gradual implementation of postal privatization, which was planned to commence in 2007. The reasons for opposition were the fear by parliamentarians that a reform would decrease funding possibilities for the support of companies, which were active in constituencies or cut ties with unions of the Japanese post, which were of significance for some lawmakers connected to these unions for voter activation (Klein 2007: 39). In other words, the major concern of the opponents within the LDP was to lose funding possibilities and voters. Moreover, opposing the "heart of Koizumi's reform plans" symbolized another effort to destroy the Koizumi administration.

As a result, Prime Minister Koizumi had to postpone his plans to submit his draft bills until mid of March 2005. Moreover, public opinion was interested in postal privatization, on the one hand, but did not clearly support the reform plans, on the other hand. This gave the growing opposition to Koizumi's reform plans more power (Institut für Asienkunde: 2/2005: 49).

In consequence, Prime Minister Koizumi transformed his postal privatization bills into a confidence vote, and announced that he would dissolve the Diet if his bills were rejected. As a matter of fact this turned into reality. The bills just passed the Lower House, but failed the Upper House, with 22 LDP parliamentarians voted against the bill. Koizumi did not receive the necessary votes for his postal privatization and interpreted his party's opposition as a "no confidence vote against him" (Koizumi, speech of 2005.08.08). He, therefore, dissolved the Diet on August 08, 2005 and called for snap elections. At the same time, he prohibited the candidacy of those LDP members who had voted against his reform bills, and automatically forced them to run without party affiliation. Furthermore, Koizumi nominated well-selected pro-reform candidates for the constituencies of anti-reformists to enhance the chance of winning (Klein 2007: 39 and Koizumi, speech of 2005.08.08). Thus, Lower House elections of September 11, 2005 that were transformed into a "referendum for postal reform" (cf. Lin 2006: 133), since he challenged the public to either follow him on his reform track and in changing the LDP notion of the "old guard", or else he would resign (Koizumi, speech of 2005.08.08).

Koizumi won the elections with a landslide victory and for the first time in 15 years achieved a solid own majority for the LDP. Together with the coalition partner the New Koumeitou, Koizumi had at his command a two-third majority and was able to enforce any legislation. Within his party he reached as stable a standing as never before (FAZ.net: 2005.09.12). Consequently, between October 11 and 14, 2005 the Upper and Lower Houses passed the postal privatization bills (Neue Zürcher Zeitung: 2005.10.15).

Overall, not only were his postal privatization bills successful reforms, but Koizumi also succeeded in introducing several other reform plans. He successfully reinvigorated Japan's economy by resolving the problem of non-performing loans, and he passed bills for the privatization of all four public Highway Corporations in 2004, an issue comparably as controversial among the LDP as the discussions on postal privatization. Moreover, the public sector was strengthened by finding agreements on the reform of the pension system and healthcare system in 2002 and 2004. In 2004 the Koizumi administration also adopted the "three-in-one plan" (*san'i ippon kaikaku*) for fiscal decentralization (Köllner 2005: 21). Critics, however, have noted that all these measures described, were more or less extenuated results of Koizumi's original reform plan and constitute only "compromise settlements" (cf. Köllner 2005).

## 4.5. Summary

As graphically depicted in Figure 4.4, Koizumi was a successful prime minister, with very high support rates. Whenever his support dropped, he managed to find ways to increase his support again despite unpopular legislation or domestic occurrences.

**Figure 4.4: Support Rate of the Koizumi administration 2001-2006 (with issues)**
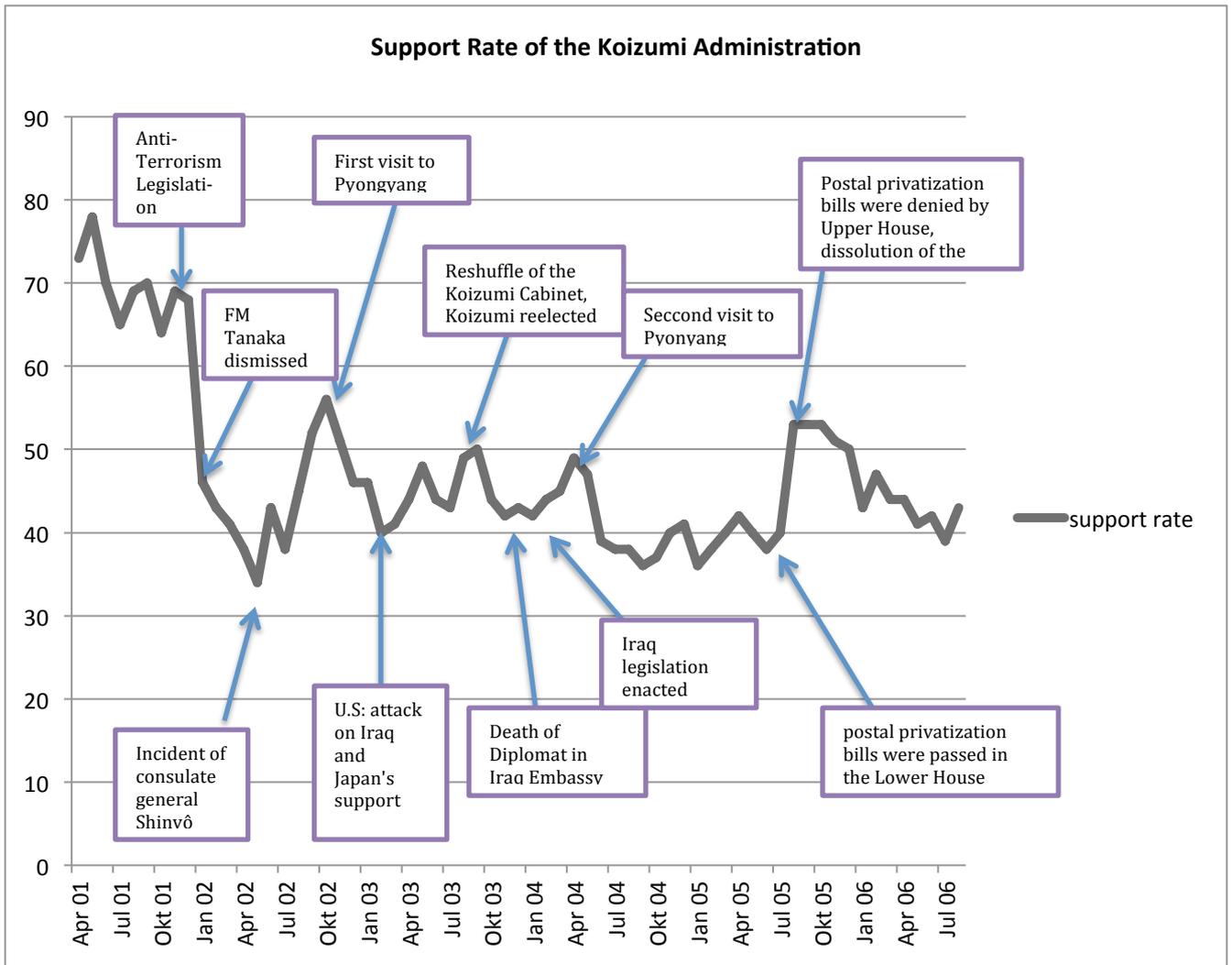
Source: *Jiji tsūshin* press public opinion polls, figure translated and reconstructed from Iijima 2006: 330-331.

Being backed-up by an institutional environment that allowed a top-down leadership-style, Koizumi, with his "Koizumi theatre", succeeded to use these advantages. He acted within and reacted to the existing political environment (Envall 2008: 228).

The main characteristics of his policy-making were ignoring and fighting traditional policy-making of the 1955-system, and instead repose his policy-making on first, clear and precise leadership, second, on clear sets of goals, and third, on public opinion. In his whole tenure as prime minister, he acted within the possibilities of these three aspects, and was well aware of their necessity for his political success. Patron-client ties or ties with other parties were of minor importance to him compared to some of his predecessors (Gaunder 2007: 125). Therefore, public opinion played an even greater role in securing political survival and helping fulfill his political agenda, particularly "his clear sets of goals" which were well defined at least on the domestic agenda.

By utilizing the full range of the media, together with a simple rhetoric and simple language, illustrating politics as matters of good against evil or as matters of pro-change or against change, he connected with public opinion. Uchiyama (2010: 6) has vividly summarized Prime Minister Koizumi as "a sentiment driven prime minister of pathos, versus the executive authority-wielding strong prime minister".

# 5. CASE STUDY I: THE JAPANESE – NORTH KOREAN NORMALIZATION PROCESS AND THE ABDUCTION ISSUE

When public opinion set diplomacy towards North Korea in motion, it had huge influence on Japan's political decision-making process (Hirasawa 2004a: 22). After the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) laid its priority on the normalization process between Japan and North Korea, the families of the abductees, their supporters and mass public, who were all well informed by the media, pushed the abduction issue on the agenda, and this issue eventually slowed down the normalization process. Even the North Korean government had realized the importance of Japanese public opinion for this issue (Hirasawa 2004a: 44).

In the following section the normalization of the relations between Japan and North Korea will be analyzed by taking into account the abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea. Thereby, public opinion as a determinant of Prime Minister Koizumi's decisions within the normalization process under consideration of specific explanatory variables, will be the focus of the analysis.

In the first part, a short historical overview of the events on Japanese-North Korean relations and the abduction issue will be given. In a second part, the question will be analyzed more thoroughly by tracing four major changes of course in the normalization process with reference to the abduction issue, and under special consideration of the relevance of public opinion as an important variable of the process. In a third part, the four processes will be analyzed according to the generalized questions and the explanatory variables introduced in the analytical framework of chapter 2.

## 5.1. Overview and background

The first major engagement of Japan with North Korea was introduced at the end of the Cold War, when public sentiment started becoming more accustomed towards the idea of making approaches towards North Korea as described in section 3.7.3.4.

South Korea opened up towards the North in 1990. At the same time the Japanese government felt it was time to approach the North and decided to hold the first high-level

bilateral talks with Pyongyang (Hagström and Söderberg 2006: 377). Pro-North Korean parties in the Japanese government, such as the Socialist Democratic Party of Japan (SDPJ) and parts of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), took the chance to arrange negotiations with North Korea, which finally took place in 1990 with the visit of Kanemaru Shin (a member of the LDP and deputy prime minister from 1986-1987). During this meeting, agreements were made towards normalization of the relations between the two countries, including an apology by Japan for its colonial rule. Until 1992 several unsuccessful normalization talks were held, in which issues of the colonial past, economic compensations and first implications of missing Japanese citizens were discussed (cf. Johnston, 2004; Hagström and Söderberg 2006). This approach was supported by 53% of the Japanese public (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute Poll: 1990.10.20). The normalization talks unfortunately broke down in 1992 "because of Japan's persistence in raising the issue regarding missing Japanese persons with suspected links to North Korea, which is now known as the abduction issue" (Schoff 2006: 3), a fact that was denied by North Korea for the years to follow.

The abduction issue started to become a matter of interest in the mid 1980s, when the *Sankei Shinbun* published an article with speculations over abductions of Japanese citizens by "foreign agents" (Johnston 2004). Attention of the Japanese government rose after a Korean agent carrying a Japanese passport belonging to a missing Japanese (Tadaki Hara) was arrested in 1985, followed by the arrest of a female North Korean agent (Kim Hyon-hee) in 1988 after the destruction of a Korean Airlines jet, and who further claimed that she had been taught Japanese by a Japanese woman. The teacher's description resembled that of the Japanese citizen Taguchi Yaeko, who had disappeared in 1978. In 1988 the Japanese Diet started closer investigations and confirmed for the fist time the possibility that Japanese citizens may have been kidnapped by North Korea (Johnston 2004). However, no further investigations on the abductions were made by the Japanese government.

Relations were further strained in May 1993, when North Korea first test-fired the *Nodong-I* missile, and threatened to leave the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT)[27]. This was the beginning of the first North Korean nuclear crisis, which overshadowed the abduction issue and the normalization talks that had began in 1990 and broke down completely

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[27] The NPT is an international agreement opened for signature in 1963, with the objective of limiting the spread of nuclear weapons. As of July 2011, 189 parties had signed the NPT including all nuclear-weapon states (Signatories to the Treaty on the NPT: February 2012).

(Johnston 2004). With the introduction of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) in 1995, with Japan, South Korea and the US as founding members, normalization talks between Japan and North Korea were resumed once again. However, Japan's demands on the issue of *nihonjinzuma*[28] and growing public pressure on the issue of the abductions, once again lead to the failure of negotiations (Hagström and Söderberg 2006: 379). By this time, according to an *Asahi Shinbun* poll, 49% of the Japanese public disliked North Korea and 79% had a bad impression of the country. Nevertheless, according to a *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll of 1995, still 52% were of the opinion that Japan should establish diplomatic relations with North Korea (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 1995.06.28; Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 1995.02.01).

The abduction issue once more became an issue of public awareness in 1996, when Ishitaka Kenji, the producer of *Asahi Broadcasting,* published an article in the magazine "Modern Korea", where he claimed of having met North Korean spy An Myong-jin, who gave him information on kidnappings of Japanese citizens, including the kidnapping of a young woman, whose description was recognized by the police of Niigata, and was identified as Yokota Megumi. Yokota Megumi was kidnapped at the age of 13 (Johnston 2004b; International Crisis Group 2005: 9-10). This has resulted in extensive media coverage of Yokota's case since 1997, and has become one of the most popular cases of the abduction issue ever since[29].

Threat perception towards North Korea rose within the Japanese public, and was further enhanced in August 1998 when North Korea launched a second missile over Japan, resulting in Japan is stopping its KEDO contributions and humanitarian aid to the North as well as a halt of bilateral talks.

The abduction issue, followed by North Korea's nuclear development and missile launches renewed the need for normalization between the two countries. However, domestic

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[28] *Nihonjinzuma* are Japanese-born spouses of North Korean citizens who accompanied their husbands to North Korea during the 1950s and 1960s. From 1995 until 1998 several bilateral high level negotiations had been made between Japan's MOFA and North Korean diplomats to arrange visits of *nihonjinzuma* to Japan (repatriation operation of "Japanese women"). However, since North Korea accused Japan of not providing enough food aid, Pyongyang canceled further rounds of visits to Japan by *nihonjinzuma* in 1998 (Hughes 1999: 100; CNN World Online 1999).

[29] The case of abductee Yokota Megumi is one of the most popular cases of this kind. Yokota was kidnapped at the age of 13, and according to North Korean officials had committed suicide in 1994. She was married to a South Korean, and is survived by a daughter, still in North Korea. Her parents, denying her death until today, have initiated a huge PR-campaign on Megumi's case such as the publication of a manga of her story or two *animes* and several movies, seeking her return to Japan. Ever since, the case and story of *megumi* has become symbolic for all abduction cases (Headquarter of the Abduction Issue, Individual Cases, accessed: 2012.05.11).

political instability within Japan in 1993, and an increasing negative domestic sentiment towards North Korea, let efforts for further talks fail. Japan's government being under pressure to show developments, especially in the abduction cases after the case of Yokota Megumi became prominent (in an opinion poll of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* of June 25, 1997, 50% of the Japanese public described it as the major issue of concern regarding North Korea), met with leaders from North Korea in 1997 in Beijing. At this occasion, Japan succeeded in gaining North Korea's agreement to search for information on "missing" Japanese persons (Johnston 2004). Further normalization talks were not held until December 1999, and public opinion was not convinced that relations between the two countries would change in any way (Shin Joho Center Opinion Poll 1998.01.11).

Within the framework of South Korea's introduction of the "Sunshine Policy"[30], Japan sent a high-level Japanese delegation representing all political parties to Pyongyang and agreed that normalization talks should be resumed. Once again no agreement could be reached on either North Korea's demands of reparations or Japan's demands on the abduction issue (Hagström and Söderberg 2006: 380). Shortly after, a North Korean spy boat was discovered in Japanese waters, which led to even more pressure from the abductee's families and supporters, but also from right-wing politicians for a firmer stand against North Korea (Johnston 2004).

Major developments in bilateral relations occurred after Prime Minister Koizumi and Kim Jong-Il held their first Summit on September 17, 2002 in Pyongyang, which signaled a turning point in the relations of the two countries. During the summit both leaders agreed on the Pyongyang Declaration, which stated that both countries agreed to resume talks. Japan apologized for the damage of its colonial rule over Korea, and agreed to extend economic assistance to North Korea once diplomatic ties were restored; they agreed to "discuss the issue of the status of Korean residents in Japan and the issue of cultural property; and confirmed they would comply with international law and would not commit conducts threatening the security of the other side" (MOFA, 2002.09.17). They agreed on "an overall resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, and that they would

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[30] The "Sunshine Policy" refers to South Korea's foreign policy strategy towards North Korea. It was introduced in 1998 by South Korean President Kim Dae Jung. For this approach in diplomacy, President Kim Dae Jung was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2000. The Sunshine Policy: "The sunshine policy seeks to bring about a state of peaceful coexistence in the Korean Peninsula by effecting changes in North Korea through reconciliation, cooperation, and mutual exchange, all founded upon a basis of airtight national security." The policy is "guided by three unwavering principles of zero-tolerance for aggression, renunciation of unification through absorption, and an active drive for reconciliation and mutual exchange." (Federation of American Scientists 2012.05.11).

comply with all related international agreements". They affirmed "the necessity of resolving security problems including nuclear and missile issues by promoting dialogues among countries concerned" (MOFA, 2002.09.17). At the same time Kim Jong-Il officially admitted and apologized for the kidnapping of 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, and confirmed that only five were still alive while eight had already died under non-specified circumstances. North Korea acknowledged in the Declaration that "related to the lives and security of Japanese nationals, it would take appropriate measures so that these regrettable incidents, that took place under the abnormal bilateral relationship, would never happen in the future" (MOFA, 2002.09.17).

These developments showed, on the one hand, that the normalization process moved forward and reached a new level of negotiations, but on the other hand, the issue of the abductions of Japanese citizens became a confirmed and outspoken problem and was not only a potential issue anymore, causing strong outrage within Japan's civil society, which now demanded severe measures from the Japanese government.

Ever since the normalization process showed improvement, the confession of the abductions had turned the tide of the process, and had converted it into a domestic political issue rather than a geopolitical security concern, as before. The public's interest in the abduction issue increased in the years 2002-2007, reaching more than 90% in 2003 (Sumikawa 2009: 177). Public opinion towards North Korea worsened and sensational media coverage of the abduction issue started to explode. In 2003 the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun* published more than 3000 articles related to the abduction issue (Sumikawa 2009: 177). Civil society organizations and political parties in favor of North Korea, such as the The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chōsen Sōren*),* the Socialist Party of Japan (SPJ), and The LDP Dietmen's League for the Promotion of Japan-North Korean Friendship were all weakened. In their place, grassroots organizations such as the The National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN) (Sukuukai), The Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (Kazo-kukai) or The Parliamentarian League for Early Repatriation of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea (Rachi Giren) gained influence.

After the Japanese government granted five of the abductees permanent residency in Japan without North Korea's approval, Japanese-North Korean relations deteriorated, resulting in North Korea's withdrawal from the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003. From that point on Japan made the resolution of the abduction issue and the termination of the

nuclear weapons program a requirement for the continuation of the normalization process between the two countries. Otherwise, unilateral economic sanctions and a cut back of economic assistance would be implemented (Kawaguchi Yoriko, speech of 2003.01.31; Kim 2006: 14).  In order to manage the second nuclear crisis of 2003, the multilateral framework of the Six Party Talks (SPT) consisting of Japan, USA, China, Russia, South Korea and North Korea was introduced in order to solve the problem of North Korea's nuclear development. Several SPT meetings were held between 2003 and 2005, however, Japan used this forum to discuss the bilateral issue of the abductions, which endangered the SPT-process due to North Korean protest of raising bilateral issues and Japan's engagement in the multilateral platform (cf. Ashizawa 2006).

No bilateral normalization talks were held until the second Koizumi-Kim Jong-Il Summit took place in Pyongyang in May 2004. Only several Japanese high-level delegations travelled to North Korea (in August, September and November 2004) for unofficial talks, in an attempt to negotiate on the abduction issue, without any success. The general trend showed great frustration among civil society, especially among the supporters and families of the abductees, regarding the government's failure to make progress in resolving the death of the eight abductees and the return of the children of the five survivors who now stayed in Japan (Johnston 2004). Consequently, the Japanese Lower House of the Diet had passed legislation on January 29, 2004 that enabled Japan to impose unilateral sanctions against North Korea without a UN resolution (Cha 2004: 2).

Ever since, Japan's political problems with North Korea became threefold: first, Japan made an effort to normalize diplomatic relations with Pyongyang, while, second, at the same time tried to solve the issue of abducted Japanese by North Korea. Third, Japan wanted to reduce the North Korean threat (in the context of the SPT) which had become virulent since the denunciation of the NPT by Pyongyang.

Although, according to Hirasawa Katsuei, chairman of the Rachi Giren, Prime Minister Koizumi was one of the few Japanese politicians who tried to deal with the abduction issue (Hirasawa 2004b: 87), and in spite of his personal intentions, he neither succeeded in solving the abduction issue nor bringing forth the normalization process between the two countries during his tenure as prime minister. Until today, no agreement has been reached on North Korea's nuclear potential, on the bilateral relations or on the abduction issue. The resolution of the abduction issue has remained a handicap in Japanese-North Korean relations, is still an ominous political problem for Japanese politicians (Hirasawa 2004b: 87),

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and has been made an unresolvable condition for the resumption of bilateral negotiations by Japan.

## 5.2. Testing processes

The negotiation process with North Korea during the Koizumi administration started successfully with the first Koizumi-Kim Jong-Il Summit in Pyongyang on September 17, 2002 but had stalled by the end of Prime Minister Koizumi's administration.

It is highly probable that decisions were strongly driven by domestic political debates, and more precisely by public opinion (cf. Kang 2005d; Lynn 2006; The Japan Times: 2007.11.19; Nakatsuji 2009). The issue of the abducted Japanese citizens by North Korea had a major impact on the public's attitude towards normalization and on decisions related to the normalization process since the public perceived the abduction issue to be more important than the nuclear issue (International Crisis Group 2005: 10). In this regard, several issues had occurred that altered the course of the process first adopted by the Koizumi government.

To be able to analyze the change of course of the negotiation process between Japan and North Korea under consideration of public opinion within this process, I will follow Thomas Graham's (1989, 1994) approach, and separate the negotiation process in different analytical stages that result in four different smaller sub-cases. The different stages that affected the normalization process will be first, the temporary visit of the five returned abductees that turned into a permanent stay, second, the change of strategy towards North Korea, third, Koizumi's second visit to Pyongyang, and finally fourth, the enactment of unilateral economic sanctions towards North Korea that will be outlined in detail in the following sections. The dependent variable will be the reaction of Prime Minister Koizumi in each stage while the independent variable will be public opinion.

To reconstruct the causal linkage between public opinion and Koizumi's reaction, each choice will be analyzed via process-tracing, with the objective of testing if the six domestic conditions (opinion magnitudes, consensus/disagreement among elites, opinion coalition-building abilities, domestic incentives, Kūki and decision stage) determined in chapter 2, connected public opinion and Koizumi as the decision-maker in the policy-making process of each analytical stage.

*5.2.1. Breaking the agreements – the permanent stay of the abductees in Japan*

Before the Pyongyang Summit in 2002, 53% of the Japanese public were in favor of improved relations with North Korea, and 58% favored a normalization of diplomatic relations - a clear majority in favor of approaching North Korea (Asahi Shinbun: 2002.09.30). For this reason, the Kim - Koizumi Summit in Pyongyang was well approved by 80% of the Japanese public (Daily Yomiuri: 2002.09.27), and the administration's approval ratings reached 61% right after Prime Minister Koizumi announced his visit (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2002.09.19).

When North Korea admitted during the Kim-Koizumi Summit on September 17, 2002 to have kidnapped Japanese citizens, the normalization process started to change completely. The fact that eight out of thirteen abductees had died and only five were still alive was a major shock for Japan's civil society, and a problematic situation for Prime Minister Koizumi (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi gaikō (6): 2004.11.25). Public opinion suddenly changed towards an intransigent course of anti-North Korean diplomacy (Uesugi 2006: 128). During negotiations of the Pyongyang Declaration, Prime Minister Koizumi urged for further investigations on the fates of the abductees and demanded the return of all living abductees. To prevent a diplomatic failure and public outrage, it was agreed to include a sentence relating to the abductions in the Pyongyang Declaration. Moreover, the Japanese side demanded an apology by Kim Jong-Il as a condition for the completion of the Pyongyang Declaration. Koizumi and his aides feared that otherwise the Pyongyang Declaration would not be accepted by the Japanese public and would lead to heavy losses of support for the Koizumi government (Ōtake 2006b: 221). In addition to the apology and the Pyongyang Declaration, it was also agreed that the five living abductees would be allowed to return to Japan for a ten-day stay.

81% of the Japanese public supported Prime Minister Koizumi's diplomatic initiative (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2002.09.19), but reacted with increased negative sentiments towards North Korea since the death of eight abductees became official. 88% responded in an *Asahi Shinbun* poll that they could not trust Pyongyang's investigation results (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 07.10.2002). Moreover, 76% believed that the apology by Kim Jong-Il was unsatisfying and insufficient (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2002.09.19).

The abductions issue became the major concern of the Japanese public towards North Korea (over 80%), even stronger than the North Korean nuclear or missile problem. Concerns over the abductions issue increased in the following years, and turned it automatically into the highest political priority of the Japanese government towards North Korea. (Cabinet Office, Public Opinion Poll on Foreign Policy, 2002-2006).

What emerged was the major demand of the Japanese public (especially of the families and supporters of the abductees) not to resume normalization talks with North Korea, unless the abduction of Japanese citizens issue was fully resolved (Ōtake 2006b).

After the Summit 90% of the public had no trust in North Korea and only 44% were in favor of resuming negotiations, while 43% were against it (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2002.10.07)[31]. This showed that as far as a continuation of negotiations was concerned, the public was ambivalent. As the theory of opinion magnitudes by Graham (1994) has demonstrated, dichotomy in public opinion gives a prime minister more flexibility to maneuver a situation, and, theoretically speaking, explains why Prime Minister Koizumi decided to resume talks with North Korea at the end of October and still followed his normalization course.

Negative sentiments towards North Korea together with the demand for a fast resolution of the abduction issue was further encouraged by strong societal groups as the Kazokukai (Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea), which was already established in 1997, and the Sukuukai (National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea), established in 1998 as a coalition of several societal organizations that supported the Kazokukai (Sukuukai online, accessed: 2011.03.18). These groups did not believe in the death of the eight abductees and demanded more thorough investigations by the Japanese government (Johnston 2004). Right after the summit, the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai had started to strongly criticize the Pyongyang Declaration and the passages regarding the abduction issue. In their view they did not mark a sufficient apology. Also, the government's and MOFA's reluctance to aggressively confront North Korea and take stronger measures were points of anger, particularly towards the Chief of MOFA's Asia Bureau Tanaka Hitoshi (Lynn 2006: 503; Ōtake 2006b: 221). Dissatisfaction passed over to the public and was also visible in a *Yomiuri Shinbun* opinion poll, where 50.3% of the Japanese public doubted that the Koizumi Cabinet would be able to achieve

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[31] The poll was taken on October 5th and 6th, 2002, before the return of the five abductees to Japan.

major progress in the negotiation process with North Korea on normalization and on the resolution of the abduction issue (Daily Yomiuri: 2002.10.03). The public's indignation over the failure of the government to protect its citizens adequately and pursue their fates was high (Ōtake 2006b: 222).

According to Hirasawa Katsuei, the Kazokukai and their supporters together with mass public were the driving forces of the abduction issue from the very beginning. The families of the abductees felt that MOFA had lost national interest in the abduction issue and prioritized its efforts in establishing diplomatic normalization with North Korea. As a reaction, Kazokukai took the lead in mobilizing public opinion and put the abduction issue on the government's agenda right next to the normalization process (Hirasawa 2004a: 147). In March 2002, prior to the Pyongyang Summit of 2002 Koizumi had met with the Kazokukai. In this meeting he had promised, "no normalization with North Korea would take place, unless the abduction issue was resolved". What remained unclear was what a detailed solution of the issue would look like (Ōtake 2006b: 200). By accommodating the public with this precondition, Prime Minister Koizumi automatically put the abduction issue on his political agenda and at the same time took the risk to deal with the public's demands even if no further progress would be achieved. This situation already constrained him in his political ability to act in the future.

The negative sentiment was also pushed to the fore by the Japanese media (Kimura et al 2004). Part of the media, which until that point had not commented on the abduction issue, adopted the story and made the abductions issue their number one media campaign. Iijima Isao, policy secretary of Prime Minister Koizumi, supported this coverage wave by generating a media campaign on the Kim-Koizumi Summit and the abduction issue, and turned the issues into audience rating magnets (Iijima 2007: 106; The Japan Times: 2007.11.19).

Media attention of the abduction issue had already existed to some extent since 1988. Only since the disclosure of the Yokota Megumi abduction case, which became the symbol of the abduction issue, media attention grew and media broadcasts increased. The fact that eight abductees were dead and only five were alive was widely thematized and broadly published. A study by Kimura et al (2004) showed that within one month (from August 30 to September 30, 2002) the four major Japanese newspapers, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, the *Asahi Shinbun*, the *Sankei Shinbun* and the *Mainichi Shinbun* each published close to 1500 articles related to the abduction issue (Kimura et al 2004: 97). The explosion of media coverage on

the abduction issue was clearly visible in a headline analysis of Kimura et al (2004) depicted in Figure 5.1, which revealed the increasing appearance of the word "*rachi*" (abduction) in newspaper headlines of the four newspapers before and shortly after the Pyongyang Summit on September 17, 2002:

**Figure 5.1: Newspaper headlines with the keyword *rachi***
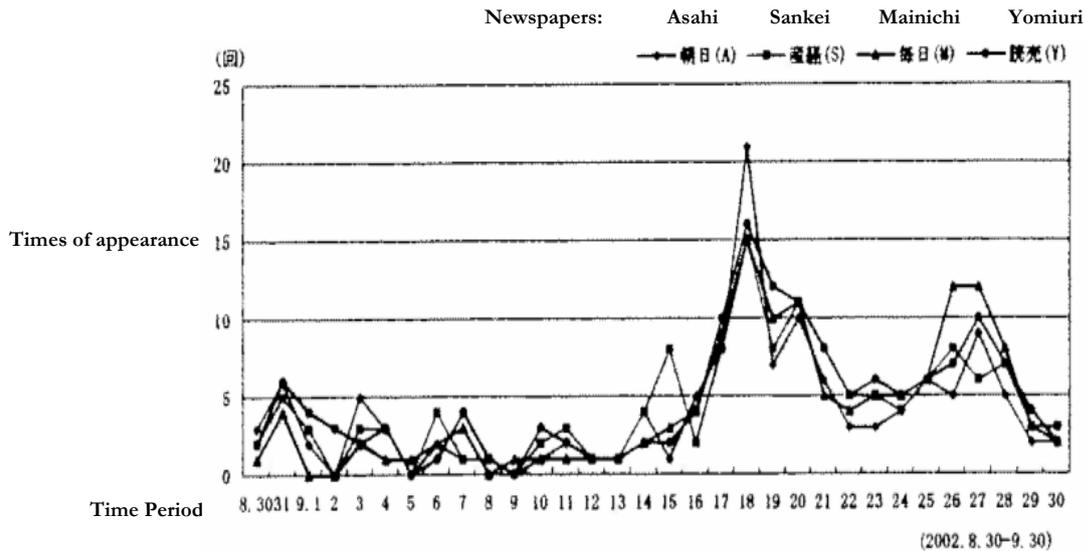


Source: Kimura *et al* 2004: 100.

Sumikawa (2009), who analyzed the media coverage on the abduction issue in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun,* moreover observed that public opinion shared the same trends as media coverage.

Table 5.1 and the accompanying graphical representation, show the process of coverage of the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi Shinbun* related to stories of the abductions, and Figure 5.2 illustrates the process of public opinion's interest on the abduction issue.

**Table 5.1: Number of articles covering the abduction issue**

| Newspaper | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Asahi | 799 | 3016 | 1876 | 930 | 924 | 1139 |
| Yomiuri | 917 | 3232 | 2162 | 1166 | 1045 | 1348 |

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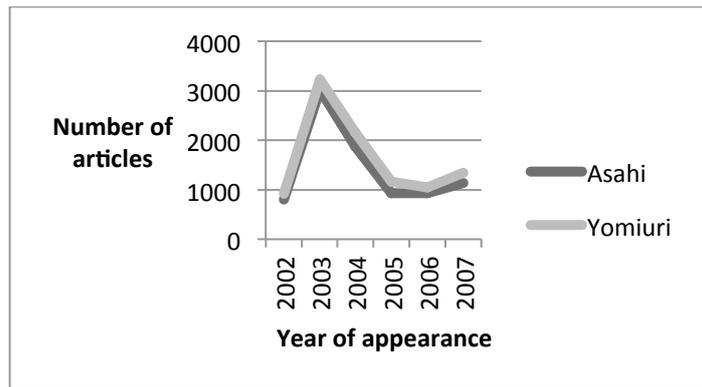
Source: Sumikawa 2009: 177.

**Figure 5.2: Interest in the abduction issue**
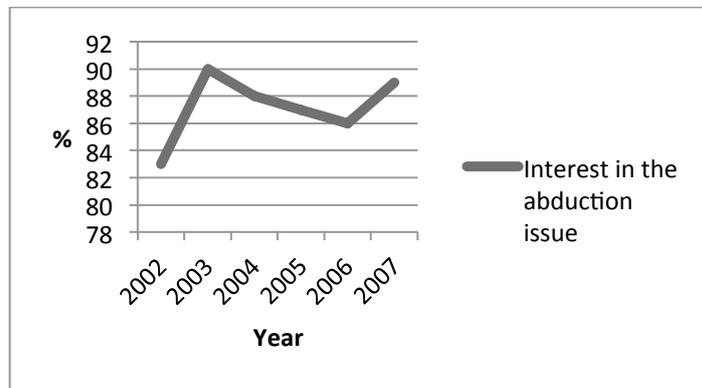


Source: Sumikawa 2009: 177.

When comparing Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2 it can be seen, that trends of media coverage and public opinion's perceptions run in accordance with each other, and are following similar trends.

An analysis by Itō (2008: 108) further showed, that especially after Koizumi's visit to Pyongyang there was a headline every day on the abductions issue in the newspapers until end of October (Itō 2008: 108). The abductions were an issue of great salience for the newspapers. What demonstrated the importance of the issue for the media was the fact that news coverage on North Korea during that time even dominated over the coverage of the LDP party presidential election (Lynn 2006: 491), an issue of domestic significance which traditionally dominates over news on foreign policy.

The new awareness and interest in the abduction issue was also incorporated in the agenda of governmental elites. Originally, sympathetic groups towards North Korea were the

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Japan Socialist Party (JSP), the New Koumeitou, the Japan Communist Party (JCP), and the Chōsen Sōren (the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan). Within the ruling LDP, some factions existed that were in favor of North Korea, and occasionally engaged North Korea in diplomatic issues. Furthermore, there existed the Dietmen's League for the Promotion of Japan-North Korean Friendship (Schoff 2006: 1). However, through the revelation of the abduction issue during the Pyongyang Summit of 2002, these North Korean support groups were stalemated by anti-North Korean supporters that started gaining prominence since then.

Since the Pyongyang Summit of 2002 and the acknowledgement of the abductions of Japanese citizens, opinion coalitions were formed which, first, led to disagreement among elites, and, second, to opinion coalitions with public opinion. Elite opinions regarding normalization between Japan and North Korea could be separated into two main group-ings, namely, the "dialogue faction" and the "pressure faction" (Schoff 2006: 9-11).

The dialogue faction (*yūwa-ha*) reflected opinions which favored the move toward normal-izing relations with North Korea. Supporters of this approach believed that through the diplomacy of dialogue, reconciliation of differences between Japan and North Korea could best be achieved in the long run. In addition, others feared that pressure would isolate Japan in the regional architecture and in negotiations over North Korea's nuclear develop-ment in the Six Party Talks. "The motivations for emphasizing dialogue over pressure vary depending on the individual" (Schoff 2006: 11). This also applied at the level of conviction of the dialogue approach whose opinions were divided into a "softer stance" and more "realist stance": Followers of the softer stance within the dialogue faction considered "the diplomacy of give and take and negotiations to be fifty-fifty" (Nishikawa 2008: 7). They believed economic sanctions were no effective tool for solving the matter of bilateral relations, and furthermore, they advocated the normalization of relations before negotiating the abduction issue. The realists within the dialogue approach represented a "comprehen-sive resolution" (*hokatsuteki kaiketsu*), which emphasized the tactic of "dialogue and pressure" (*taiwa to atsuryoku*) (Nishikawa 2008: 7). This strategy, however, already emerged before 2003. The comprehensive resolution included the strategy of threatening with economic sanctions without having the purpose to ever implementing them.

The slight distinctions of opinions within the dialogue faction showed, that there existed no strong cohesion within this group. Most prominent advocates of the dialogue faction

were Prime Minister Koizumi, Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda Yasuo, and Chief of MOFA's Asian Bureau Tanaka Hitoshi.

Unlike the dialogue faction, the pressure faction (*atsuryoku-ha*) showed strong cohesion. This group advocated an aggressive approach towards North Korea and to a certain extent had nationalistic tendencies. Advocates were mainly against normalization of bilateral relations between Japan and North Korea. Convinced that only pressure would force North Korea to respond productively, they supported the implementation of unilateral sanctions and demanded the solution of the abduction issue to be a condition for resuming normalization talks with North Korea (Schoff 2006: 9). Elites within the LDP, who were in favor of pressure and who spoke for the abductees and their families, were Abe Shinzou, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary, who was also appointed head of the Cabinet special task force to deal with the abduction issue (Rachi Mondai Tokumei Chimu). Besides Abe, LDP-member Nishimura Shingo, Environmental Minister Kouike Yuriko, Nakayama Kyouko, Special Advisor to the Cabinet and a strong ally of the Kazokukai and Saiki Akitaka, Deputy Director-General of MOFA's Asia Bureau favored the hardline stance towards North Korea (Uchiyama 2010: 108). Moreover, in 2002 the Rachi Giren*,* a Parliamentarian League for the early repatriation of Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea, was formed, whose majority of members called for a pressure approach.

Demands and criticism arose not only within the ruling-LDP but also within opposition parties, such as the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), which started to float with the current mood. The DPJ had a critical standpoint towards the Pyongyang Declaration and favored a hardline position towards North Korea (Kim 2006: 8). Party Chairmen Hatoyama Yukio welcomed the return of the abductees but also demanded a "thorough investigation and punishment of the persons in charge, as well as the realization of the return of the family members" (Hatoyama: 2002.10.15).

Domestically, Koizumi struggled with his economic reform efforts, which were mostly rejected by several factions within the LDP at this time period. The public felt betrayed by his promises for reform and questioned his leadership abilities. At the same time Koizumi was confronted with falling approval ratings because he had fired the very popular Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko, causing his approval ratings to fall dramatically from 70% to 46% in January 2002 (Uriu 2003: 81). In May 2002, Koizumi also decided to send an Aegis destroyer to the Gulf to support the US ally although public opinion opposed this action (Uriu 2003: 88). Observing Koizumi's actions on North Korea from a domestic perspective,

it becomes clear that he needed a successful action, especially on an issue that was of great importance to Japan's public.

The general climate of opinion (or Kūki) that had developed out of the recent events put the abduction issue on top of Prime Minister Koizumi's foreign policy agenda regarding the normalization process, and let issues concerning North Korea's nuclear possibilities be pushed lower on the priorities agenda.

Given the new relevance the abduction issue acquired for the Japanese public (including the media), the Koizumi government sent an official delegation to Pyongyang at the end of September 2002 for further investigations on the fates and remains of the eight dead victims, in an attempt to accommodate public opinion (Kim 2006: 9). To prevent further dramatic escalation, the Koizumi government established the Cabinet Special Task Force for the abduction issue (Ōtake 2006b: 219).

When the five abductees, Chimura Yasushi, Hamamoto Fukie, Hasuike Kaoru, Okudo Yukiko and Soga Hitomi finally arrived in Japan on October 15, 2002 for their scheduled ten-day stay as agreed with North Korea, the public opinion climate improved for the time being.

The return of the five abductees to Japan proved advantageous for the Koizumi government. *Asahi Shinbun* opinion polls in November 2002 showed that the Cabinet's approval rate had risen from 58% in October to 65% in November 2002. Although Koizumi's approval ratings were high, opinions on policies towards North Korea were split. 78% of the Japanese public supported Koizumi's government position on continuing the normalization process, but 79% disapproved and were unsatisfied with the government's actions regarding the abduction problem (Asahi Shinbun: 2002.11.05). On the one hand, public opinion was split because it approved the continuation of negotiations but disapproved with the government's measures on the abduction issue. On the other hand, the disapproval rate was too high to be ignored by Koizumi, since he needed a success regarding the abduction issue. This was partly due to a dramatic explosion in media coverage. The reunion of the five abductees with their relatives in Japan was sensationally broadcasted and continuously rerun on television. However, new problems arose when the issue of the "return" to Japan became even more relevant, when the media started to argue that it should be the government's first priority to return the families of the five abductees back to Japan, who according to the media's point of view, were still being held hostage in North

Korea (Ōtake 2006b: 223). The media, at this point, set the agenda for prioritizing the return of the family members as a requirement for further diplomatic processes.

Besides strong pressure by public opinion, by the families of the abductees, and by high media coverage, which rendered the abduction issue very prominent, there was even greater disagreement among government members in the course of action towards North Korea. This did not help Prime Minister Koizumi to continue with his original course. Being split into the hardliners (*kyōkōha*), and the faction leaning more towards trustworthy measures (*shinraijūshiha*) (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2002.10.27), increasing intergovernmental discussions took place, whereby both factions tried to influence the process towards North Korea. Disagreement existed as to whether the stay of the five abductees, that were present at that time in Japan, should be made permanent or if the government should comply with the original agreement between Prime Minister Koizumi and Kim Jong-Il and allow them to return back to North Korea after a ten day stay.

Tanaka Hitoshi, on the one hand, proposed to send the abductees back together with their relatives, by arguing that this solution would neither break any promises made towards North Korea nor would it disturb the normalization process and "break down all negotiations" (Ōtake 2006b: 223). Abe Shinzō and Nakayama Kyōko, both advocates for the abductees and their families, feared, on the other hand, that North Korea would not allow the abductees a second trip to Japan. They were convinced that sending back the abductees to North Korea would actually cause a disaster to Koizumi's government due to public outrage. This line of thought already demonstrated the constraining factor public opinion could have upon decision-making (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi gaikō (8), 2004.11.27).

Just a couple of days before the stay of the five abductees expired, the victims themselves, their families, associated groups and other supporting organizations, effectively started to pressure the government for extending the stay of the returnees. Suzuki Katsuya from Rachi Giren officially complained a day before the actual decision fell, that there had been no sufficient progress on the abduction issue since Koizumi returned from the Pyongyang Summit (Asahi Shinbun: 2002.11.08).

The representative of the Kazokukai, together with the Sukuukai, officially demanded on October 22, 2002 not to return the abductees back to North Korea, but also bring back to Japan the children of the abductees who still lived in North Korea. They expected from the government to take a more aggressive stand towards North Korea. On the same day the abductee Hasuike Kaoru called Special Advisor Nakayama Kyouko and declared his

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intention to stay in Japan. On October 23, 2002 abductee Chimura Yasushi also met with Nakayama and demanded the fast return of his children to Japan, if the government expected him to stay in Japan (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2002.10.23).

Ultimately, public opinion (including the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai), the media, governmental supporters of the pressure faction and opposition parties formed a strong opinion coalition against Prime Minister Koizumi, and unanimously started a campaign to promote the permanent stay of the returned victims, and also to support the return of their family members to Japan. Thus, Kūki in favor of public opinion, and, therefore, for a permanent stay of the five victims was formed.

Finally on October 23, 2002 Prime Minister Koizumi stated, "he will do his best efforts to meet with the families demands" (*kazoku no yōbō o dekiru dake mitasu yō kyoryoku shitai*) (Yomirui Shinbun: 2002.10.24). On October 24, 2002, the government decided to permanently extend the stay of the abductees and declared Japan as their permanent residence.

Eventually, Prime Minister Koizumi changed his diplomatic approach towards North Korea, and took the risk to jeopardize an effective bilateral normalization process. Sutō Nobuhitō, of DPJ, commented that this decision was a "foreign policy that cheers the emotions of the masses" and opinions within MOFA hardened that "the Kazokukai decides foreign policy" (Asahi Shinbun: 2002.11.08). Congruence between public opinion and the final outcome was, thus, achieved.

The decision of the Japanese government, to repatriate the five returned abductees after their ten-day stay in Japan and allow them to stay permanently, marked the turning point for Prime Minister Koizumi and advocates of normalization with North Korea to revamp their original plans. His course to support the engagement process with North Korea through dialogue, and continue the normalization process in a peaceful manner was disrupted, and a new strategic path in the normalization process was introduced (Hayano: 2002).

As a result of this decision, an ever-lasting deadlock in the negotiation process followed. "Securing the return of these families and obtain a full account of the whereabouts of abductees whose fates remain unknown [...]" became the precondition for the Japanese government to continue normalization talks with North Korea ever since (Hayes 2004).

*5.2.2. Changing the diplomatic strategy*

Prime Minister Koizumi's original intention was to reach diplomatic normalization between North Korea and Japan through a strategy of dialogue and engagement. However, he was not able to comply with this course, and had to alter his original strategy towards North Korea by introducing the strategy of dialogue and pressure (*taiwa to atsuryoku*) in the spring of 2003. In the following, the genesis of change of strategy, which significantly defined the course of the normalization process, will be reconstructed.

What put change in motion was North Korea's strong protest to Japan's decision to extend the stay of the five living abductees permanently, and the accusation that Japan broke the original agreements negotiated at the Pyongyang Declaration. The need to reconsider investigations on the abductions, as demanded by the Japanese government, was not recognized by North Korea, because they believed the abduction issue had been settled by the Pyongyang Declaration. At the negotiations meeting in October 2002 in Kuala Lumpur, North Korea demanded the return of the five abductees, who were still in Japan, if further arrangements for the repatriation of other family members, who still lived in North Korea, were to be discussed at all. First of all the Kazokukai and finally from governmental side MOFA declined this demand, and as a result North Korea officially announced its withdrawal from the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in January 2003 (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 45), and the normalization negotiations between the two countries came to a halt. The challenge for Prime Minister Koizumi was now to elaborate a proper way to deal with North Korea as a nuclear threat, and also as being responsible for the abduction issue, against the challenge of achieving diplomatic normalization, on the one hand, and against a hostile public opinion, which steadily demanded stronger measures, on the other hand.

Concern within the Japanese public rose. In January 2003, right after the announcement of North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, 60% of the Japanese public showed great anxiety, and 33% felt anxious to some extent towards North Korea's nuclear development program (in sum a total of 93%). At the same time, 70% distrusted North Korea's nuclear weapons program (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.01.28). In March 2003, a *Yomiuri Shinbun* opinion poll showed that 73% feared the danger of war, and 74% had concerns regarding the Korean Peninsula, which according to the poll results had its source in the uneasiness towards North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs, the North Korean spy boat incidents, and the abduction issue (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.03.30). As far as the abduction issue was concerned, 62% supported the approaches taken by the government to

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resolve the issue in January 2003 (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.01.28). Only a few months later, in April 2003, this support for the government's initiatives dropped to 48%, whereas 40% disagreed with commenced steps (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.25). Opinions on the normalization process with North Korea changed as well and acceptance dropped, especially in the year 2003 (Figure 5.3):

**Figure 5.3: Should Japan enter diplomatic relations with North Korea?**
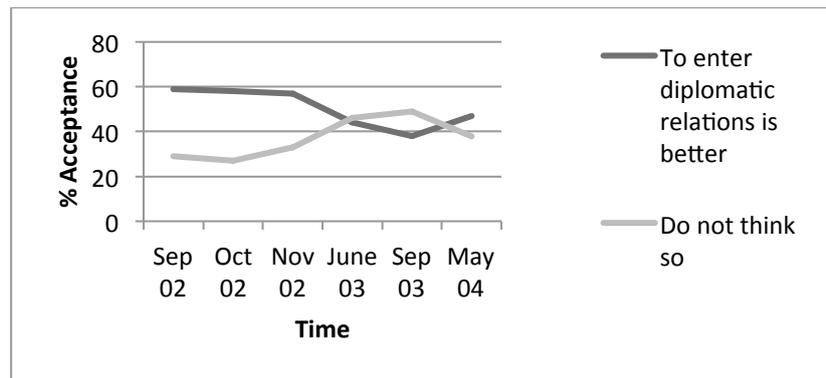


Source: Asahi Shinbun polls 2002-2003 and Sumikawa 2009: 173.

Figure 5.4 shows, according to *Asahi Shinbun* opinion polls in 2003 and 2004, similar trends were observed in the support rate of the government's approaches on the abduction issue, where dissatisfaction for the government's initiatives dominated until the first quarter of 2004 and reached levels over 50%:

**Figure 5.4: Support for the government's approaches on the abduction issue**
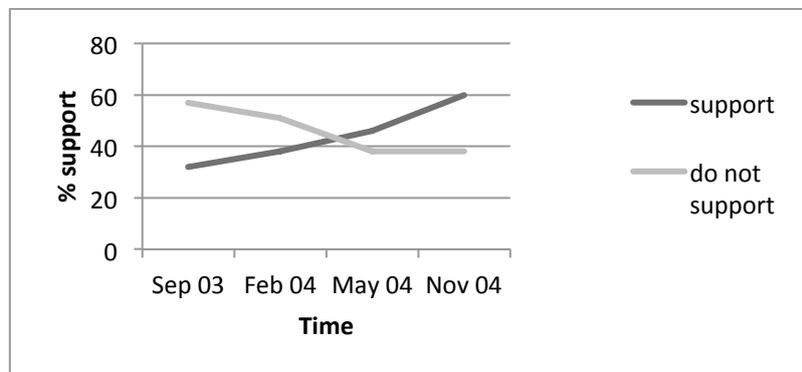


Source: Asahi Shinbun Opinion Polls 2003 – 2004.

In other words, in particular in the second half of 2003, public opinion was negative and marked a dissatisfied and opposing trend regarding the normalization process and towards the government approaches on the abduction issue, although by 2004 the trend turns towards support.

The families of the abductees together with the five victims repatriated in Japan, who were still very dissatisfied with the government's approach on the abduction issue, took individual initiatives, and visited the UN Human Rights Commission in March 1, 2003 to call attention to the abduction of Japanese citizens by North Korea. This brought about huge media attention both within Japan and internationally, and indirectly pressured the Japanese government for action (Headquarters of the Abduction Issue, Government of Japan 2003). In the year 2003 the abduction issue reached the highest level of interest among the Japanese public (90.1%) (Cabinet Office, annual public opinion poll on foreign policy).

The media followed closely this trend, and the North Korean withdrawal from the NPT also enhanced further negative coverage on North Korea. According to an analysis of Sumikawa (2009: 177), most articles on the abduction issue and on the nuclear threat by North Korea were published in 2003. Japanese media placed special emphasis on reporting about opponents of North Korea, a fact that antagonized the North Korean government. According to Hirasawa (2004a: 145), this move was a breach of old taboos in dealing with North Korea, and implied confrontation, which traditionally was studiously avoided.

However, Prime Minister Koizumi was not easily convinced by the strategy of pressure. Initially, Koizumi believed dialogue (*taiwa*) was the best method to achieve progress in the deteriorated relations with North Korea. By citing a book by the author Wakizumi Kei "I want to believe that there is no alternative (*tasaku na karishi o shin zemu to hotsusu*)"[32] Koizumi decided at the beginning of the confrontation with North Korea to first follow the strategy of dialogue and was not willing to gamble with the normalization process (Hayano: 2002). Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko and Tanaka Hitoshi from MOFA agreed with Koizumi on this matter. They feared North Korea would perceive all "pressure signals" wrong and chances for a continuation of the normalization process would be annihilated (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 46). Although demands for a harder approach towards North Korea became stronger, even within the

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[32] translated by the author.

ruling LDP, Koizumi still favored a peaceful solution of the North Korean issue, pointed to the fact that pressure must be used cautiously, and stated that there would be no change in course for the time being (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi gaikō (9): 2004.11.30).

Hardliners, such as Abe Shinzo, tried to argue against it and advocated for more pressure. Criticism within the ruling LDP arose already in December 2002. The younger generation of LDP parliamentarians accused the government of not handling the abduction issue appropriately and being fooled by North Korea. Because, in their view, the government seemed unable to resolve the issue, they decided to take the lead and formed an informal group "to consider the diplomacy card against North Korea" (*tai kitachōsen gaikō kādō o kangaeru-kai*), (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 48). This group developed the draft for the *Revised Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law* (*gaitamehō kaisei an*) in the first half of 2003. In consideration of upcoming local elections, the revised bill did not only have contentual but also political relevance for the parliamentarians who encouraged the draft.

Since negotiations with North Korea had stopped by the end of 2002, the Japanese government lacked opportunities to show public opinion its willingness to demonstrate a firm stance towards North Korea and make progress in the abduction issue. Therefore, Prime Minister Koizumi introduced several small measures to accommodate with the public's demands. Supplementary to the demand for full clarification of the abduction issue, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko also demanded in her policy speech in front of the Japanese Diet in January 2003, "North Korea to abide by the NPT, freeze its nuclear facilities and abandon all its nuclear development programs". The government's position was not to resume normalization talks with North Korea unless "Pyongyang would abide by international law and regulations" (Kim 2006: 14).

Ultimately, at the Bush-Koizumi Summit on May 23, 2003 in Texas, Prime Minister Koizumi gave in after the support rates for his initiatives had dropped vehemently from 62% to 48% in April 2003, and officially changed his *taiwa*-strategy by presenting for the first time his new comprehensive strategy of "dialogue and pressure". At this point in time, however, it was not clear what the pressure strategy would look like (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 47). Prime Minister Koizumi tried to make the handling of the abduction issue more transparent to the public, and set up several LDP committees to investigate the abduction issue. Just three days before Prime Minister Koizumi dissolved the Lower House for the upcoming elections, he established the Headquarters for the Abduction Issue of the Government of Japan (Seifu Rachi Mondai Taisaku Honbu) in October 2003 headed by

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the hardliner Abe Shinzou. In addition, the LDP had a North Korean Sanctions Simulation Team, the LDP Policy Research Council, that additionally investigated the abduction issue together with several small specialized groups (Schoff 2006: 14).

As a further step, the Japanese government decided in August 2003, to use the multilateral platform of the first Six Party Talks (SPT) to negotiate the bilateral issue and openly reconfirm their position towards the normalization process and the abduction issue. Originally, the SPT between China, the US, Russia, South Korea, Japan and North Korea were designed to discuss North Korea's nuclear weapons program and not bilateral issues (Schoff 2006: 21). At the opening statement of the SPT in Beijing, Japan affirmed that "the nuclear problem and the abduction issue have to be resolved before normalization can proceed […] furthermore Japan strongly requests the return of the family members of the abductees to Japan" (MOFA: 2011.02.01).

The discussion of the abduction issue in a multilateral international forum, crossed the borders of bilateral contestations between Japan and North Korea, and actively had to be interpreted as a hardline approach towards North Korea, and as a step away from the normalization process. This step was a decision against the original course of Prime Minister Koizumi, and certainly would not have been made if Koizumi had not felt the pressure from public opinion to show initiatives on the abduction issue.

This proactive signal in foreign affairs at this point in time in 2003, when no progress had been made in the abduction issue and dissatisfaction of public opinion with the government was high, could also have been related to domestic incentives. Domestically, Prime Minister Koizumi was challenged for his efforts to privatize government functions and reduce bureaucratic regulations. This included Koizumi's effort to privatize the postal savings system and reform of the national pension system. The DPJ backed LDP opposition and accused Koizumi for lacking progress in economic reforms (Uriu 2004: 170-171). Several LDP factions opposing Koizumi's domestic reforms, planned to topple Koizumi in the LDP internal party elections held on September 20, 2003, followed by the Lower House Election in November 2003, whereby a victory would have legally guaranteed him to stay in power until 2006. Moreover, the war in Iraq had started in the first half of 2003, while Prime Minister Koizumi was dealing with legislative discussions on Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF) dispatches to Iraq that involved fierce controversial discussions

within the Diet.[33] At the same time, the Japanese media had published several political scandals of LDP lawmakers, such as Sakai Takanori, who had defied the law for financial regulations of political activities and had received over 120 Million Yen of party donation, which overall discredited the ruling LDP, and, therefore, the Koizumi government (Institut für Asienkunde 04/2003: 127). This, together with a decreasing public support rate, which was under the 50% margin in March and December 2003, (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2003), increased Koizumi's domestic incentives to reach political success in the North Korean issue in order to win back public support. He needed this support to be powerful enough for the upcoming elections in the Lower House in order to force through his domestic reforms. The active measures to put the abduction issue on the SPT-agenda and to officially change the *taiwa*-strategy, could be perceived as a concession to public will - an established Kūki in favor of harder measures towards North Korea - paired with hardline pressure from within his own party, which led to disagreements among the ruling elite. Since domestic incentives together with the mentioned determinants were present as well, the public's will became even more relevant at this particular time period. Koizumi had to follow.

*5.2.3. The exception - who leads and who follows? The second Pyongyang visit of Prime Minister Koizumi*

Until this point, several examples have been given as to how Prime Minister Koizumi reacted upon and accommodated his North Korean policies with public opinion. Even though the general trend in the negotiation process between Japan and North Korea with regard to the abduction issue shows great importance and influence of public opinion, there was also one situation along the process when public opinion was partly *led* by Koizumi. This stage of the negotiation process will be outlined in the following.

Koizumi had to react to the stalled negotiation process with North Korea. By the first half of 2004 the bilateral negotiations had developed towards containment, favored by the Japanese public, and against the normalization process favored by Koizumi. According to Hirasawa Katsuei, who besides being the chairman of the Rachi Giren also acted as mediator between North Korea and the Japanese government, "concerns existed on the

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[33] The War in Iraq and domestic discussions on the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq will be discussed in detail in the second case study that follows.

North Korean side, that with every new move public opinion would harden even more […] Japanese public opinion could not be well predicted […] the abduction issue card was continuously present in diplomacy towards North Korea" (Hirasawa 2004a: 24f, translation by the author). The North Korean government was unwilling to negotiate with members of the Japanese government, because they believed it was not their voice that counted in decisions regarding the abductions issue, but rather the voice of the Kazokukai, Sukuukai and *mass public* (Hirasawa 2004a: 44). The disbelief in the actions of the Japanese government by North Korea, once again shows the influence of the Japanese public opinion and the difficulties both parties faced to resume negotiations.

Public opinion and its supporters demanded progress in the abduction issue and Koizumi himself hoped for the resumption of the normalization process, which since 2002 indubitably included a solution of the abduction issue. The fact that domestic incentives, and above all mass public opinion, were an important variable in Koizumi's decisions became especially visible with his second visit to Pyongyang on May 22, 2004.

At the time of the announcement of his visit, not only Upper House elections were a matter of high relevance for the government, since SDF had just been dispatched to Iraq. Koizumi had also to deal with upcoming pension scandals and the highway privatization reforms, while the postal privatization, which symbolized the heart of his reforms, lacked integrity and moral support domestically. As a headline analysis of Kimura et al (2005a: 124) showed, these issues were also very present and widely discussed in the Japanese media.

The announcement of the second visit to Pyongyang on May 15, and the domestic pension scandals were the leading headline stories, with most articles appearing in the *Yomiuri Shinbun, Asahi Shinbun, Sankei Shinbun and Mainichi Shinbun.* Masuzoe Yōichi, from LDP, stated in an interview with the *Asahi Shinbun* (2004.05.31) "that the only area, where the Koizumi Cabinet could have scored at that time was in foreign affairs". In May 2004 Koizumi decided to take the risk and negotiate with North Korea in person, hoping to resolve the issue of the abductees' family members, and be able to bring them back to Japan, so as "to put everything in order" (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikou (13), 2004.12.04). Koizumi tried to show leadership, and championed the position that a solution for the return of all abductees including their families lay in his own responsibility, and was Japan's first priority and a major condition for the resumption of the normalization process, although Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda, Chief of the MOFA's Asian Bureau

Tanaka, and Deputy Director General of MOFA's Asia Bureau Saiki all reminded him of the negative effect it would have on normalization efforts, if North Korea did not allow the return of the family members to Japan, since in that case, the public would only accept hard measures against North Korea (Ōtake 2006b: 225-226).

The Kazokukai and Sukuukai were against a second visit of Prime Minister Koizumi to Pyongyang. They had concerns that investigations on the abductions issue would be terminated once Koizumi and Kim Jong-Il came to an agreement at the meeting (Asahi Shinbun: 2004.05.24). The general public was also not altogether very supportive for the Koizumi Cabinet, and support rates dropped from 50% to 45% in May. The main reason, however, for this drop was the newly introduced pension reform law, which was disapproved by 70% of the public. On exactly the same day, Koizumi announced his second visit to Pyongyang, with the promise to return all left family members of the abductees, which, on the one hand, was supported by 60% of the general public, but, on the other hand, only 20% believed all family members would actually return (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.05.17). By officially promising to the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai to try to bring back all family members to Japan, both Koizumi and public opinion expected a successful visit. This gave rise to criticism from the DPJ, which said that the second visit simply intended to shift attention away from Koizumi's own domestic problems (Yomiuri Shinbun, Koizumi Gaikō (15): 2004.12.08).

Eventually, results of Koizumi's second trip to Pyongyang were promising, albeit hazardous. In an interview to the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, Tanaka Hitoshi, from MOFA described the situation of the second visit as critical:

> *[…] at that time public opinion was critical towards a second visit, and we knew the risk was high. That is why the Prime Minister decided it is a political responsibility to bring back the families. Great efforts were made to keep the environment in favor of the normalization of diplomatic relations […] this was an extraordinary political judgment by the Prime Minister* (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (22), 2004.12.18, translation by the author).

Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda also described Koizumi's handling of the second Pyongyang visit as follows: „against all odds regarding the second visit and the opinion environment, Koizumi was convinced the public would change. He was a prime minister very sensible to public opinion" (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (25), 2004.12.24, translation by the author).

Eventually, Koizumi took the risk to act against the will of party members of the hardline faction, who had formed opinion coalitions with the Kazokukai and Sukuukai. The second visit to Pyongyang took place on May 22, 2004, and Prime Minister Koizumi was able to bring back to Japan the family members of the abductees who still lived in North Korea. An *Asahi Shinbun* poll of May 2004 showed that even though 43% were dissatisfied with the present investigation results on the abductions conducted by North Korea - as required by the Japanese government, but contrary to the opinion of the Kazokukai and Sukuukai - 67% of the Japanese mass public supported the second visit of the prime minister to Pyongyang after its conclusion, and believed the leadership conference between Tokyo and Pyongyang was in general profitable. At this point in time, 46% of the Japanese public supported the government's approach not to implement sanctions against North Korea in order to capitalize on the agreements of the 2002 Pyongyang Declaration (Asahi Shinbun: 2004.05.24). In this respect, the second Koizumi-Kim Summit proved successful. However, at the same time he promised North Korea 250.000 tons of food aid and 10 Million US$ worth of medical supply, which neither complied with the expectations of the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai nor with their governmental supporters, who demanded a firm approach towards North Korea. What followed was strong criticism from media broadcasts and hardliners, who accused Prime Minister Koizumi of making such a concession only for the purpose of getting his own way. Opponents believed it was an undeserved approach to grant North Korea more food aid and not even be punished with sanctions (Okazaki 2004: 90). Furthermore, the Kazokukai officially declared it as "the worse expected outcome" (Asahi Shinbun: 2004.05.27).

The debate on the results of the second Pyongyang visit had been widely published in the media. Kazokukai's disapproval was broadcasted daily. At the same time, the images of the return of the family members to Japan were displayed, which was broadly regarded as a success by the Japanese mass public.

As a result of the second Pyongyang visit, five out of eight family members returned to Japan, and North Korea committed itself to investigate the welfare of the other ten missing persons. According to an *Asahi Shinbun* Poll, 56% of the respondents believed that the abduction problem had so far shown favorable results, but 61% disapproved Koizumi's pledge to provide North Korea with humanitarian aid and food assistance. Interestingly, at the same time public mood towards establishing diplomatic relations with North Korea had changed to a positive trend, and was supported by 47% of the public, compared to the

last quarter of 2003, when 49% opposed diplomatic relations between the two countries (Asahi Shinbun: 2004.05.24).

The majority of the Japanese mass public was surprised by the Kazokukai's and Sukuukai's vehement critique of the second visit (Asahi Shinbun: 2002.05.27). In that case, however, Koizumi was well backed by the majority of mass public against his critics in government, showing his instinct for using public opinion to his advantage was correct, and at the same time emphasizing the relevance of public opinion in the decision-making process.

Ōtake (2006b: 228) explained the increasing public support with Koizumi's ability to "…endure kazokukai's and sukuukai's criticism alone and taking responsibility won the sympathy of public opinion".

Koizumi successfully turned failure into mercy and won support rates back, with the result that 54% supported his Cabinet after his second visit to North Korea. Although public opinion was skeptical prior to the second visit, the prime minister took the lead and gambled with the situation. Masuzoe Youichi (Asahi Shinbun: 2004.05.31) describes Koizumi's success as follows: "with a topic where public opinion is split in two halves, the leader has to show a firm stance that clearly demonstrates he tries to make his best efforts; this is why the public followed for the first time…".[34] In this case Koizumi vividly combined his two leadership-strategies, first to show strong leadership and also to consider public opinion.

Taking a look at public opinion more closely, it can be observed that public opinion, as used in this thesis, was equally divided with regard to the second visit. The Kazokukai, theoretically also describable as the *issue public*, opposed the visit, but *general public* supported it. Mass opinion consisting of issue public and general public in this case was not homogenous, but was split, which, theoretically speaking, weakens the strength of mass public opinion, since they openly discussed their opposing views through the media. Koizumi took a risk and relied more on the general public and not on the issue public, who had formed an opinion coalition with governmental hardliners, which eventually turned out to be a stronger asset in this case. He, thus, assumed a leading position by focusing on the supportive opinion sphere, although the climate of opinion was split with a strongly disunited public opinion.

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[34] Translation by the author.

*5.2.4. Sanctions or no sanctions?*

It was a difficult task for Prime Minister Koizumi to enforce economic sanctions towards North Korea. Sanctions would have prevented the continuation or even a positive outcome of the normalization process. Therefore, Koizumi was very hesitant to take this step, and was rather in favor of a strategy of engagement for a long time. However, the domestic climate of opinion increasingly turned in favor of economic sanctions. This made it difficult for the prime minister to ignore public opinion, and was obliged to react and to compromise.

In July 2003 an *Asahi Shinbun* Poll asked how the public perceived the "dialogue and pressure" approach introduced by Prime Minister Koizumi. 45% were in favor of sanctions while 40% for deepening the dialogue (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.07.01a). This was quite a dichotomous opinion magnitude with a slight dominance for sanctions, which, according to Graham's (1994) theory of opinion magnitudes, still allowed Prime Minister Koizumi some room to maneuver with his strategy and actions, and was one reason why he was able to delay the implementation of sanctions. At the same time the support for normalizing diplomatic relations with North Korea dropped to 44% in June 2003 (57% in November 2002), while 46% were against normalization (33% in November 2002) (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.07.01a). There existed a plurality of opinion against normalization, which was still not significant enough in value (cf. Graham 1994).

In the run to make his "soft" strategy more transparent to the dissatisfied Japanese public, the abduction issue was added to the party manifesto of the LDP for the Lower House Elections of November 2003, and the demand for the return of all family members of the abductees alive was also included as a condition. These steps signified Prime Minister Koizumi's concessions to accommodate with the public and show proactivity and political action in an issue important to the Japanese public.

Moreover, supporters of the hardline position towards North Korea tried to take advantage of public opinion in order to overrule the dialogue factions. Abe Shinzō, for example, appeared frequently on every television wide show, and took the chance to voice his opinion to the Japanese public that pressure and sanctions should be applied to North Korea (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 49). With this tactic he formed an opinion coalition with the mass public leaning towards sanctions, and appeared to be speaking for them, on

the one hand, but on the other hand, defended his own political thoughts and agenda as a member of the pressure faction within the ruling LDP.

Growing support for pressure from the LDP-side also turned the tide of opposition parties. New Kōmeitō, originally critical towards sanctions, included a statement in their party manifesto "that it is inevitable to take more aggressive measures towards North Korea and that pressure is to be practiced on the long run". Even the DPJ competed in the same vain, and supported the enactment of the revised Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law (cf. Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 50 and Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (10), 2004.12.01).

Prime Minister Koizumi successfully won the Lower House elections in November 2003. That the abduction issue played a relevant role for the public was made clear by the number of Rachi Giren candidates elected into the Diet, which increased from 42 to 180 (Schoff 2006: 23). After the Lower House elections, Abe Shinzō met with the chair of the Kazokukai Yokota, and promised him to take the Revision of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law into the next parliamentary session for discussion. Even LDP-factions, which had been cautious with the introduction of sanctions, now expressed the need to discuss the revision bill (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 50).

As a next step the LDP introduced a draft bill that prohibited designated ships to enter Japanese ports (*tokutei senpaku nyūkō kinshi hōan*). This draft bill would have influenced extremely North Korea's trade (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 50).

By the end of 2003, although several attempts had been made to draft sanction bills, no concrete measures had been implemented yet. Moreover, no progress had been made either in the abduction issue or in the normalization process.

The environment for the enactment of the revision of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law was prepared, meaning that pressure should be exerted. Kūki had turned in favor of sanctions. Not only opposition parties, but also LDP-elites formed a coalition with public opinion against Prime Minister Koizumi's *taiwa*-strategy and domestic incentives, (e.g. the Iraq Special Measures Law in July, the Lower House election in November, and several scandals of lawmakers who discredited the Koizumi cabinet), did not allow Koizumi to act against the will of the majority.

Therefore, on January 29, 2004, the Lower House of the Japanese Diet opened the floor for economic sanctions and passed legislation that would enable Japan to impose economic sanctions unilaterally without a UN resolution. This was not possible under existing law

(Cha 2004: 2). Hence, the ruling LDP added the Revision of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law draft to their party meeting agenda, and agreed to take the draft bill to the next parliamentary session. This law did not name North Korea specifically, but was drafted in order to allow discontinuation of money transfers or ban imports (Cha 2004: 2). The law was enacted on February 9, 2004. Interestingly, in the same month the Upper House approved the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq.

The various drafted revision bills in line with the dialogue and pressure approach, made the North Korean government react by contacting several Japanese bureaucrats, who advanced a softer view towards sanctions, with the purpose of avoiding sanctions altogether (Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006: 50). This led to several individually led initiatives by politicians (*seijika-rūto*), who believed that if they had to rely on the government, the families of the abductees would never be able to come to Japan. Although each one of them met with the North Korean side and tried to negotiate on the abduction issue and on the return of the family members, no results were achieved. Eventually, Prime Minister Koizumi himself visited North Korea (May 22, 2004). As previously described, Koizumi succeeded in bringing back the children of the abductees already living in Japan, and reached an agreement with North Korea, that obliged the latter to resume investigations on the fates of the ten still missing abductees. Koizumi's official message for the second visit was that in order to protect the Pyongyang Declaration, normalization had to be restored. If protection of the Declaration, including no implementation of sanctions was granted, the family members of the abductees had to be returned to Japan (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (2), 2004.11.19). In return Prime Minister Koizumi promised North Korea food and humanitarian aid. This promise brought about public outrage. What followed was the enactment of a second law, called the Law that prohibited designated ships to enter into Japanese ports enacted on June 14, 2004. The law on port calls especially refers to the maritime traffic between Wonsan and Niigata, which is mainly used by the North Korean ship *Mangyongybong-92* (Institut für Asienkunde 06/2004: 203). The laws of February and June 2004 were enacted to symbolically pressure North Korea and accommodate public opinion, which was dissatisfied with Koizumi's promises for humanitarian and food aid to North Korea, but Prime Minister Koizumi did not implement them in order to sustain opportunities for the continuation of the normalization process (Nakatsuji 2009: 214). Moreover, in August 2004 Koizumi declared he would give North Korea only half of the

promised aid to ensure that reinvestigations would be continued by North Korea, and that public opinion would not feel betrayed (Okazaki 2004: 89-90).

The enactment of sanctions was already perceived by North Korea as a declaration of war and as a violation of the Pyongyang Declaration (Hirasawa 2004a; Yomiuri Shinbun Seijibu 2006).

As a result, three unsuccessful rounds of negotiations between MOFA officials and North Korea on the fates of the still missing Japanese followed, whereby Japanese officials suddenly returned in November 2004 with the cremated remains of a person claimed by North Korea to belong to the abductee Yokota Megumi. After the National Research Institute of Police Science in Tokyo conducted a DNA test showing that the remains belonged to someone else, and not to Yokota Megumi, The Government of Japan corroborated on December 24, 2004, "that there is no physical evidence or claims presented by North Korea […] that eight of the abductees had died and two in question had never entered North Korea. The Government of Japan considers these claims inacceptable and strongly objects to the lack of good faith demonstrated by North Korea" (Headquarters of the Abduction Issue, Government of Japan).

On January 26, 2005 North Korea sent a memorandum insisting the human remains were the ones of Yokota Megumi and demanded them back. The Koizumi government denied this request, and in return, demanded the return of all surviving abductees (Headquarters of the Abduction Issue).

As a result, public opinion in favor of economic sanctions started to increase and dominate the domestic climate. An *Asahi Shinbun* opinion poll (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.12.21) showed that 63% of the respondents were in favor of sanctions whereas in 2003 only 45% were for sanctions. A *Yomiuri Shinbun* opinion poll in October 2004 already highlighted that 68% were in favor of sanctions, and 70% did not support the Koizumi government's plan to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.10.11).

As is clearly shown in Figure 5.5, public opinion reached levels over the theoretical acceptable margin of 50%, and hence, became an important condition to defeat opponents of sanctions. This impeded Prime Minister Koizumi to ignore the public in this case.

**Figure 5.5: Sanctions towards North Korea**
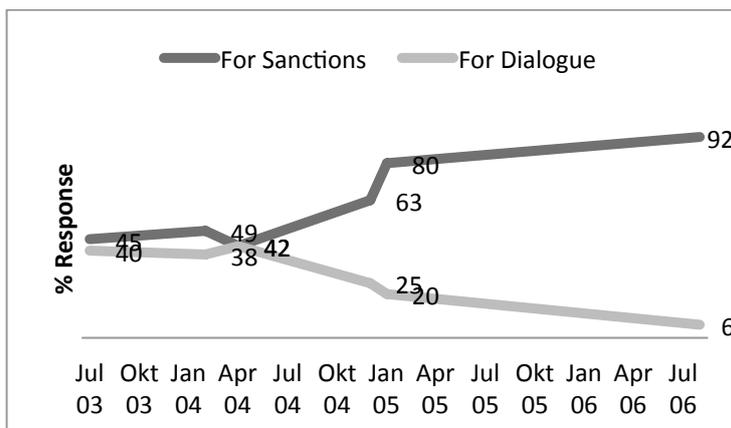


Source: Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.07.01; 2004.02.24; April 2004; 2004.12.25 and Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2005.01.21; 2006.10.17.

Together with public opinion media coverage promoting the implementation of sanctions dominated the discussion soon – a condition, which creates strong Kūki against the prime minister and in favor of public opinion. Furthermore, several special editions of magazines explaining the need for Japan's implementation of sanctions towards North Korea were published (cf. PHP Kenkyūsho 2004). Notably, after it became apparent that the remains delivered from North Korea were not those of Yokota Megumi, all major newspapers published articles addressing the question of sanctions (Kimura et.al. 2004: 13). Media initiatives for more pressure through sanctions already started appearing on September 15, 2003, with the *Yomiuri Shinbun* announcing for the first time in an article that Japan's government was considering gradual sanctions if North Korea undertook nuclear tests (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.09.15).

As far as the remains of Yokota Megumi were concerned, the two major newspapers *Asahi Shinbun* and *Yomiuri Shinbun,* published 217 (Asahi) and 215 articles (Yomiuri) respectively from November 1, 2004 until January 31, 2005 that were related to the human remains of abductees. In the same time frame the *Asahi Shinbun* published 111 articles related to human remains and Yokota Megumi and the Yomiuri 130 articles. Out of these, 77 articles

in the Asahi and 81 articles of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* discussed economic sanctions in connection with the remains[35].

In a headline analysis, conducted in the time between September 11- November 18, 2004 and December 9 – December 18, 2004 by Kimura et al (2005b: 15-16), the four major Japanese newspapers (*Yomiuri, Asahi, Sankei, Mainichi*) used the word sanctions in their headlines more than 20 times. Furthermore, they found out that the most frequent appearances of sanctions in newspaper headlines occurred first, in articles related to the return of the remains of the abductee Yokota Megumi, second, in articles in which it was mentioned that the remains had been the ones of another person, and third, in articles where the Japanese-North Korean leadership-meeting of December 17, 2004 was addressed. Although not all newspapers endorsed economic sanctions to the same extent, as for example the conservative *Sankei Shinbun* and *Yomiuri Shinbun*, the headline analysis of Kimura et al (2004: 17-18) showed, that by the end of 2004 all four newspapers including the more moderate *Asahi Shinbun* and *Mainichi Shinbun*, were in favor of economic sanctions, and had made them their main subject of discussion in the articles. Another analysis by Sumikawa (2009: 162) confirmed this trend, and additionally found out that since the discussion about Yokota Megumi's remains began, economic sanctions had been major subject of debate in the *Yomirui Shinbun* and *the Asahi Shinbun*. Pressure for sanctions was, therefore, exerted by public opinion together with mass media. According to Kūki theory this implied that a situation was at hand, in which public opinion and the media spoke in one voice, thus trapping the prime minister in an impasse which he could not ignore, and obliging him to react by capitulating to the external pressure.

As far as the political sphere was concerned at that time, all parties, including the LDP, had shifted from a standpoint of engagement towards a standpoint of containment and pressure. Both the ruling and opposition parties expressed their wish for sanctions. The shift within the ruling LDP was apparent in an opinion poll of December 2004 taken by the Sukuukai*,* which asked members of the Diet if they agreed on the early imposition of sanctions for the rescue of the abduction victims. 75% of LDP members and 66% of DPJ members supported this proposition. Furthermore, an average of all party members polled, showed that 45% supported an early imposition of sanctions (Sukuukai: 2010.11.27). These

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[35] Analysis of the author based on newspaper databases of the Yomiuri Shinbun *Yomidasu rekishikan* and the Asahi Shinbun *Kikuzō visual II*, provided by Crossasia.

trends lead to the cooperation between the DPJ and the LDP on the Law that prohibited designated ships from entering Japanese ports.

Until then, the Koizumi government had been very careful with sanctions and instead chose "gradual incremental steps to pressure North Korea, while at the same time seeking a dialogue with Pyongyang" (Kim 2006: 30).

Tracing back the process more closely, one can see that Koizumi doubted the effectiveness of economic sanctions, and feared efforts for normalization would be undermined completely, if sanctions were implemented (Nakatsuji 2009: 212). It was important for him to resolve the abduction issue and the normalization process comprehensively (Kang 2005b), as it was his aim to achieve normalization within his tenure as prime minister. Notwithstanding his original standpoint, he retreated from his previous position at the end of 2004, and declared he would not set a deadline for the restoration of diplomatic relations with North Korea (Kang 2005b). At the Pyongyang Summit Koizumi agreed with Kim Jong-Il that Japan would not impose sanctions as long as North Korea followed the Pyongyang Declaration (Koizumi 2004.05.27. Email-magazine No. 141). With the delivery of false human remains this agreement was broken.

According to an *Asahi Shinbun* opinion poll of April 2005, 79% disliked North Korea and 57% perceived the country as a military threat. The abduction issue was still the major concern regarding North Korea, followed by North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. However, when asked to what extent exercised policies reflected their opinion, 54% answered that this was only true to a small extent. To the question which government policy would they evaluate to be the worse, 77% answered it was the policy measures against deflation, closely followed by 61%, who responded that it was the declaration for humanitarian aid for North Korea, and followed by 60%, who were unsatisfied with the government's stance and efforts on the abduction issue (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.27).

In mid-2005 public protest in favor of sanctions became even more pronounced. In April 2005 approximately 6000 people demonstrated in Tokyo for the immediate implementation of sanctions against Pyongyang. Moreover, protesters rallied in May at the port of Niigata, when the North Korean *Mangyongbong-92* ferry, that was now protected by the law enacted in 2004, entered the port. These demonstrations were followed by protests of over hundred abductee's families in front of the Prime Ministers Office in June, demanding economic sanctions (Kang 2005c).

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In conclusion, Kūki for sanctions had also been established over time by 2005. Public Opinion, media and the majority of members of the political parties including members of the ruling LDP advocated the implementation of sanctions. Koizumi had to react and decided to cooperate by continuing to introduce several measures equivalent to economic sanctions, also called "virtual" or "pseudo sanctions" (cf. International Crisis Group 2005; Kang 2005b). At this time period he was especially dependent on public opinion support, since negotiations on his very controversial domestic reform plans - the postal privatization reform bill - reached their peak, as the approval for the postal services bill was scheduled for July (Lower House) and August 2005 (Upper House). Since opposition from his own party was very strong, and public opinion was skeptical of his reform plans as well, he was in the need to accommodate critics somehow.

As a result after the two laws already enacted by the Japanese Diet in February (the revision of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law) and in June 2004 (the Law that banned designated ships to enter Japanese ports), the amended Law on Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, a law requiring all foreign vessels weighing more than 100 tons to carry adequate insurance against oil spills, was implemented on March 1, 2005 (Kim 2006: 30) although only 2.8% of North Korean ships had adequate insurance (Hughes 2006a: 15). These laws were accompanied by support measures for North Korean asylum seekers, submitted to the Diet in February 2005 and 2006 in order to "encourage political defections and the destabilization of the North Korean regime", the "tightening of Chōsensōren affiliated credit unions", and "the removal of local government tax-exemptions for Chōsensōren" (Hughes 2006a: 16). By hardening financial regulations, bilateral trade declined to one third of its 2002 value by 2006, a loss more substantial for North Korea than for Japan (Okano-Heijmans 2008).

Moreover, in December 2004 the LDP together with the DPJ drafted and prepared a "North Korea Human Rights Act" including economic sanctions. This bill would have resulted in the ban of all humanitarian aid, unless there was progress in the resolution of the abduction issue. This draft followed the Human Rights Act passed by the U.S. Congress in October 2004, and was the third sanction law against North Korea (Kang 2005a). Eventually, the issue was pushed on international stage, when, on December 16, 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution criticizing the condition of human rights in North Korea, including the abduction issue. This resolution was co-sponsored by Japan and was promoted by families of the abductees (Kang 2006a).

However, not only "virtual sanctions" were used to show the public a firm stance towards North Korea. The multilateral forum of the Six Party Talks (SPT) was also utilized for this matter. In June 2005, when the families of the abductees protested in front of the Prime Minister's Office, they demanded from the government to implement sanctions, and even consider ignoring the views of the other parties in the SPT, if necessary (Kang 2005c). The SPT once more became an issue, when families of the abductees met with Foreign Minister Machimura. In this meeting the families urged the government to discuss the abduction issue during the talks (Kang 2005d). After receiving the information on the false results of Yokota Megumi's remains, Prime Minister Koizumi was undecided how to properly react, being faced with the alternatives to resist implementing sanctions in order to protect the normalization process, on the one hand, and to accommodate with public opinion, on the other hand. Further contacts with North Korea for additional negotiation meetings proved unsuccessful. Eventually, Japan raised the abduction issue at the fourth round of the SPT, and threatened to abandon the whole process once again, because North Korea declared that the future of the SPT would also depend on Japan's position on the abduction issue (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (21), 2004.12.17). Although the United States silently acquiesced Japan's aim to raise the abduction issue, criticism from the other parties was high, and Japan continuously risked its isolation in the SPT process.

Finally on June 13, 2006, only two months before the termination of Koizumi's administration, the Lower House passed legislation that allowed economic sanctions against North Korea, if the North did not cooperate in settling the abduction issue. This bill was approved by the Upper House on June 16, 2006 (Kang 2006b). Economic sanctions, however, were never implemented by Prime Minister Koizumi himself, but from his successor and hardliner Abe Shinzō (Prime Minister from 2006-2007).

In summary, although Prime Minister Koizumi never actually implemented sanctions, three laws that allowed sanctions were enacted, together with other measures, such as pushing human rights resolutions against North Korea internationally, which all together were almost an equivalent to sanctions. He changed the strategy of dialogue into a dialogue and pressure strategy, that was dominated by containment rather than engagement of North Korea. Moreover, the multilateral platform of the Six Party Talks to discuss North Korea's nuclear development was misused for bilateral negotiations on the abduction issue, and endangered Japan's role within this process. As a result, the normalization process between Japan and North Korea was interrupted, and bilateral agreements on the abduction issue as

well as agreements of the Pyongyang Declaration of 2002 failed completely. By the end of his tenure as Prime Minister, Koizumi was in a deadlock situation with North Korea, and neither did he manage to fulfill his goal of bilateral normalization nor was he able to fully solve the bilateral problems of the abduction issue, the security issue and the normalization of relations "comprehensively".


## 5.3. Analysis

In the previous section, I have outlined how the normalization process between Japan and North Korea developed, with a primary focus on the genesis of the abduction issue. This section provides an analysis of this process under special consideration of public opinion as a determinant, and the explanatory variables that link public opinion and Prime Minister Koizumi.

### 5.3.1. *Was public opinion an important variable in the decision-making process?*

In order to answer this question I will juxtapose again the main demands posed by Japanese public opinion for changes in the originally intended course of the government, with the actual outcome and the final decisions taken by Prime Minister Koizumi.

### *What were the original plans of Prime Minister Koizumi?*

Prime Minister Koizumi's political plan was to establish diplomatic relations with the Democratic Peoples Republic of North Korea (DPRK), and negotiate the normalization process successfully within his tenure as prime minister. He sought to achieve this goal by means of the strategy of engagement and dialogue, and originally condemned any hard-line or pressure methods. With the Pyongyang Declaration of 2002 he provided the basis for negotiations he meant to comply with. Concerning the problems of the abduction and the nuclear armaments issues respectively, it was Prime Minister Koizumi's goal to solve all problems comprehensively in a peaceful manner, without prioritizing any particular issue or threatening the success of the normalization process.

### *What were public opinion's demands?*

Since the first Koizumi-Kim Summit in 2002, the Japanese public's (issue public in form of the Kazokukai and Sukuukai together with the general public) first priority with regard to the Japanese-North Korean relations was to solve the abduction issue of Japanese citizens

by North Korea. They demanded full clarification on the fates of deceased abductees, the permanent repatriation of all living abductees to Japan, conviction of all persons responsible for the abductions, and adequate punishment for all untrustworthy actions taken by North Korea regarding the solution and investigation of the abduction issue. Unless these demands were fulfilled, they refused the resumption of the normalization process with North Korea. In order to achieve these demands, they expected the Japanese government to put the solution of the abduction issue on top of their diplomatic agenda towards North Korea, and to take full responsibility and all necessary actions, above all through the implementation of unilateral economic sanctions.

*Where the planned activities retracted or softened?*

As a result of public pressure, we can draw the conclusion that Prime Minister Koizumi's planned activities were partly softened and to a great extent retracted. In all four small subcases tested, congruence existed between public opinion demands and the actual decision made by Prime Minister Koizumi.

First, the original agreement between Japan and the DPRK for a 10-day stay of the living abductees was broken, and the stay was made permanent. Second, The original strategic course of engagement and dialogue was changed into the strategy of dialogue and pressure. Third, it was planned to visit Pyongyang for the second time in order to bring back the family members of the abductees; this plan was fulfilled and additionally food aid was promised. Fourth, the implementation of sanctions was supposed to be avoided in order not to endanger the normalization process, with the result that "virtual sanctions" had to be enacted.

In conclusion, the normalization process, which was Prime Minister Koizumi's most important point on his foreign policy agenda towards the DPRK, was replaced by the public's agenda i.e. the abduction issue. Moreover, not only the normalization process was influenced by public opinion, but also Japan's role within the Six Party Talks for the solution of North Korea's nuclear development was jeopardized. Even within the process of deciding what steps were necessary to resolve the abduction issue, public opinion had great relevance. The only exception so far was Prime Minister Koizumi's promise for humanitarian aid to North Korea, which he made during his second visit to Pyongyang, and which was generally rejected by public opinion. Within this particular decision-making process, Koizumi did not react to public opinion as such, but rather *led* public opinion, and

the public had to follow for the first time. Besides this exceptional situation, every other measure taken by the Koizumi government towards North Korea was eventually decided by taking public opinion strongly into consideration. Public opinion in this case was, therefore, a determining variable in the decision-making process of Prime Minister Koizumi, which made him *follow* public opinion.

### 5.3.2. What factors may account for this outcome?

In order to explain the linkage between public opinion and the final decisions taken, several explanatory variables had to be defined. By looking closer *under what conditions* public opinion becomes a determining variable in the decision-making process, explanatory variables were identified. The following Table 5.2 summarizes the outcome and value of the relevant explanatory factors that linked public opinion and the decision-maker in this case study.

*What was the value of each explanatory condition in this case?*

**Table 5.2: Results Japanese-North Korean relations and the abduction issue**

| Case Study | Outcome | Opinion Magnitude | Consensus/ Disagreement among elites | Opinion Coalition - Building | Domestic incentives | Kūki | Decision Stage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Japanese-North Korean Relations and the Abduction Issue | Original course retracted; Public Opinion an important variable | Strong long-term magnitude, mostly over 50% (mass public + issue public present) | Ruling LDP split between pressure and dialogue faction. Disagreement among ruling LDP! | Strong coalition-building abilities with government elites. Very strong issue public present | High | *Kūki* in favor of public opinion mostly given. Very strong media coverage | Very strong value at the beginning of the process |

*Opinion Majorities and Magnitudes*

Public opinion is strong if opinion majority exceeds 50%. In subcases 1, the permanent stay of the abductees in Japan, in case 2, the change of strategy, and, in case 4, the enactment of sanctions, opinion magnitudes of more than 50% were recorded. Theoretically speaking, it can be said that as a result, Prime Minister Koizumi *followed* public opinion in all three situations, and opinion magnitudes were a relevant condition. In cases where opinions were split or were under the margin of 50%, Prime Minister Koizumi was able to maneuver more freely and either *led* public opinion or *compromised* with it. One good example is his second visit to Pyongyang in 2004. In this case public opinion in itself was

divided. The masses supported Koizumi's trip but the issue publics, in form of the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai, opposed the trip. The media did not take a stance but rather took the backseat of a commentator by publishing both the opposing as well as the supporting positions of the public. Governmental elites were also split. Public opinion was not a united force with a clear majority. This gave Prime Minister Koizumi the opportunity to maneuver and follow his plan, risking opposition, but using the supporting mass public as a backbone, and implementing his plan to visit Pyongyang for the second time. This situation clearly shows that as soon as public opinion loses a critical magnitude, it still remains relevant and a considerable variable for the prime minister's decision, but is more easily led or is manipulable than followed.

*Consensus or disagreement among elites*

In this case study, the ruling elite of the LDP disagreed on approaches towards North Korea. The party was strongly divided between the dialogue faction and the pressure faction. The pressure faction was well represented and constituted a very homogenous opinion, advocating that only through pressure a solution of the abduction and the nuclear program issues could be achieved. By December 2004, 75%, of LDP members supported the opinion of the pressure faction.

The dialogue faction, amongst others represented by Prime Minister Koizumi, was very heterogeneous in their opinion representation compared to the pressure faction. They were split in their approach how to best deal with North Korea. One part represented only dialogue and diplomatic means, the other part represented a comprehensive solution in which pressure and dialogue were combined. This heterogeneity weakened the dialogue faction against the pressure faction. As a result, both factions disagreed on which issue to put on first priority of the diplomatic agenda towards North Korea. The dialogue faction wanted to secure the normalization process, the pressure faction a complete solution of the abduction issue, without putting much emphasis on the normalization process. In conclusion, the ruling LDP was not united in opinion.

Moreover, the coalition partner New Kōmeitō reflected no clear point of view on the issue. On the one hand, they acknowledged Prime Minister Koizumi's efforts regarding the abduction issue, on the other hand, they demanded a full solution and tended to support measures employing pressure.

Opposition parties were prone to opinions of the pressure faction, and continuously criticized Prime Minister Koizumi for being a member of the dialogue faction.


*Opinion coalition-building abilities*

Important in this case was that members of the LDP's pressure faction formed opinion coalitions with public opinion. The motives behind the unification of opinions are not relevant for the analysis. What counts, is that the outcome of this procedure, which is the acceptance of a common line of opinion.

*Issue public,* in this case the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai*,* have played an essential role in defining the strength and relevance of public opinion used in this study. The Kazokukai and Sukuukai*,* as parts of mass public opinion, enhanced opinion coalition-building with members of the ruling LDP. Thus, they increased the possibility of putting the abduction issue and their points of view on the prime minister's agenda. If a strong *issue public,* such as the Kazokukai and Sukuukai*,* exists as part of the definition of *mass public*, the importance of an issue, as well as influence capabilities by public opinion are enhanced and strengthened.

By having opinion coalitions with relevant governmental actors, the consensus among elites is automatically navigated by public opinion as well. Public opinion is strengthened through these coalitions and becomes a stronger voice within the policy-making process.

In this case, opinion coalitions between public opinion and governmental elites existed throughout the whole period under consideration between representatives of the ruling LDP as Abe Shinzō, Nakayama Kyōko, and later on even with opposition parties such as the DPJ, which all shared the opinion that a hardline approach towards North Korea was necessary, and that, furthermore, the solution of the abduction issue was the necessary condition for the resumption of normalization talks or any other diplomatic negotiations.


*Domestic incentives*

Specific domestic incentives were a great motivation for Prime Minister Koizumi to accommodate public opinion in decisions concerning North Korea. The abduction issue became the most salient foreign policy issue for the public. At the same time it became an important domestic issue, as was visible in the results of the Lower House elections in 2003, when 180 members of the Rachi Giren were elected into the Diet, three times as

many as in the years before. The support rates for the Koizumi Cabinet were, therefore, very much dependent on the outcome of the abduction issue negotiations.

Since it was Prime Minister Koizumi's biggest plan to implement domestic economic reforms, the climate of opinions on the North Korean abduction issue was a significant indicator for his support rates. Furthermore, the ruling party was not only split in their opinion on how to deal with North Korea, but also on economic reform plans. Prime Minister Koizumi was confronted with a great opposition for his domestic agenda throughout his tenure as prime minister. Beyond opposition for reforms, Koizumi was confronted with various political scandals. The only possibility to show leadership and gain the trust of the Japanese public in his decisions, whenever his support rates fell, was to take an accommodating standpoint in the abduction issue.

*Kūki/climate of opinion*

In all four subcases described in previous chapters, Kūki established was to a large extent in favor of public opinion and mostly against Prime Minister Koizumi. With the revelation of the abduction issue during the Pyongyang Summit of 2002, public opinion and the media shared a common opinion clout. Consensus gradually grew over time, and was clearly visible in the debate on the implementation of sanctions against North Korea. The climate of opinion had turned in favor of public opinion during the debate over the permanent stay of the five living abductees in Japan. Public opinion, together with the media and governmental members of the pressure faction, shared Kūki for a permanent stay against Prime Minister Koizumi. The decision to change the strategy from dialogue to dialogue and pressure towards North Korea, and enact sanctions and measures to assume a harder stance was also enhanced by Kūki that had been established in favor of these measures.

High media coverage gives salience to an issue voiced by the public or by the government. In this case high media coverage of the abduction issue accompanied the whole normalization process during Koizumi's tenure, and made it impossible to disregard or debilitate the issue. Negotiation capabilities of the public were enhanced through high media coverage, which was clearly visible with regard to the implementation of economic sanctions, the return of the abductees and later on of their families. High media coverage of all major Japanese newspapers was generally in support of raising the abduction issue to first priority on Koizumi's political agenda. Beginning with public opinion, backed by the media and

then additionally supported by opposition parties as well as parts of the ruling party (pressure faction), an intense Kūki against Koizumi was formed.

*Decision stage*

In this case study public opinion changed, already at the beginning of the process, the direction of Prime Minister Koizumi's foreign policy towards North Korea most effectively. The decision to grant a permanent stay to the five living abductees in Japan - influenced by public opinion - had the greatest effect on the diplomatic course to follow, and marked a turning point in Koizumi's diplomacy. By breaking the agreement to send the abductees back to North Korea after a ten day stay, Prime Minister Koizumi changed his diplomatic approach right at the beginning, which automatically gave rise to an everlasting deadlock in negotiations, and in the resumption of diplomatic relations during his tenure as prime minister since North Korea accused him to have violated the Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. Although the solution of normalization and the abduction issue were further pursued in the years to follow, public opinion had already successfully managed to put the abduction issue on first priority in first decision stages.

*5.3.3. Conclusion*

*Which combination of conditions was given?*

In the case study of the Japanese-North Korean normalization process and the abduction issue, public opinion was an important variable and a strong determinant in Prime Minister Koizumi's decision-making process. Public opinion had full impact on his decision, since Koizumi's original course was altered decisively at the beginning of the process. As a result, all decisions to follow were constrained by public opinion. The explanatory variables defined, that link public opinion and the prime minister, were all represented and were of high and long-term value.

# 6. CASE STUDY II: JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN THE IRAQ WAR AND THE DISPATCH OF THE SELF DEFENSE FORCES

The following case study takes a closer look at Japan's involvement in the Iraq War. The time period considered is from January 2003 until March 2004. During this time period, the Koizumi government made three significant decisions: first, Japan officially supported the Iraq War in March 2003; second, Japan enacted the Law concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq of July 2003, which opened up the legal possibility to dispatch military forces overseas; third, the drafting of the Basic Plan and the decision to dispatch, for the first time since World War II, the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF) to Iraq in December 2003 and January 2004. During this three-step policy process the biggest obstacle was the decision to dispatch the SDF to Iraq, which led to strong debates within the Japanese public, the media and the government.

In the first case study analysis on North Korea and the abduction issue, we were able to see that public opinion was very determining and influential on decision-making. As a result Prime Minister Koizumi mostly followed public opinion, which led to a general change of his political course. The present case study is an example of public opinion being *partially* effective in determining the decision-making process. As a result, on the one hand, public opinion was considered and effort was invested to convince the public for the planned course, on the other hand, the range of options for Prime Minister Koizumi was limited compared to his original plans.

Midford (2011: 125), who has closely analyzed the Iraq war in relation to Japanese public opinion, has argued that "public opposition led to a drastic watering down of Koizumi's initial ambitions and transformed the eventual dispatch into a Cambodia-style humanitarian relief and reconstruction mission". Miyagi (2009: 362) adds, "it was the public's personal support for Prime Minister Koizumi that allowed him to advance his agenda and it was public criticism […] that limited his extent".

By reconstructing the process of the final dispatch of the SDF to Iraq, the variables magnitude of opinions, consensus or disagreement among elites, coalition-building of opinions, domestic incentives and Kūki already tested in case study 1, will also be applied and be tested on the three stages of decision-making of this case. This will complement

existing arguments from case 1, and will allow an overall comparison in order to answer the question under what conditions public opinion is an important determining variable. Before reconstructing the three stages of decision-making, I will once again sketch out the main pillars of Japan's foreign- and security policy legal circumstances already introduced in Chapter 3, but which are relevant for the understanding of the difficulties the Japanese government faced in deciding to send Japanese military troops abroad.

## 6.1. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution and the US-Japan alliance

Japan has had a very limited military potential since World War II. Its Constitution of 1947, drafted by the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP), committed Japan to a neutral security policy and to a renunciation of the right for collective self-defense (*shūdanteki jieiken*) or the existence of military forces (Kawashima 2003: 8). In order to prevent a return of Japanese militarism Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution was created, which "renounces war and the use of force as means of settling international disputes" (National Diet Library, The Constitution of Japan, 2011.10.13). Although Article 9 represents one of Japan's most important constitution articles, its compliance in decision-making depends on the contemporary political circumstances as well as on the willingness of each Japanese ruling government to complement or expand interpretations of the Constitution (Hughes 2004a: 136). This also explains controversial interpretations, such as tolerance to Japan's right for collective self-defense given by the UN Charta, although it was originally prohibited by the Constitution (Chapter 3.7).

Japan's security policy is restricted to national defense only (*senshu bōei*) and to the necessary minimum (*jiei no tame no hitsuyō gendo*), which also implies military capacities to be held at a minimum (Hughes 2004a: 136). Japan's Self Defense Forces (SDF) (*nihon jieitai*) existed since 1954 for this purpose. In 1967 the military principles were expanded and the three non-nuclear principles (*hikaku sangensoku*) were introduced, which prohibited the possession, use or production of nuclear weapons (Hughes 2004b: 35).

These military guidelines are complemented by the US-Japan Alliance (*nichibei dōmei*) and the Mutual Security Treaty (MST) (*sōgo anzen hoshō jōyaku*) signed in 1960, which has been revised several times and exists until today.

The MST guarantees exclusive defense of Japanese territory by the United States in case of an attack. Because of Japan's non-nuclear principles, the MST further implies that Japan is defended by the "nuclear umbrella" of the United States (Hughes 2004b: 21f.).

The scope of the SDF was expanded in 1992, when Japan established the Peace-Keeping Operations Law (*kokusai rengō heiwa iji katsudō ni tai suru kyōryoku ni kan suru hōritsu*). This law served as legal basis for oversea dispatches of the SDF within the framework of cooperating in international UN-led peacekeeping missions. From then on, peacekeeping operations (PKO) were officially a component of the SDF's spectrum of tasks and allowed oversea dispatches for the first time. However, the operating range of the SDF was strictly limited to logistics and humanitarian tasks in order to comply with the pacifist principles of the Constitution. Moreover, SDF-operations were only possible, if there existed a cease-fire agreement among all conflicting parties, the neutrality of the peacekeeping troops was guaranteed, and approval for an SDF-dispatch was given from all conflicting parties (PKO Law, Art. 3, 2006.05.23).

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 on the World Trade Center in New York, Japan's security policy took a further step. The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law (*tero taisaku sochihō*) (ATSML) was enacted on October 29, 2001 for the purpose of military rearguard support (*kōhō shien*) of the US-forces in their fight against terrorism. Through the ATSML, Japanese Ground-, Maritime-, and Air-Self Defense Forces could be dispatched for search and rescue, humanitarian, logistical and reconstruction measures in "Japan's territory or in areas where combat is not taking place or not expected to take place while Japan's activities are being implemented. [...] Territory of foreign countries (Implementation shall be limited to cases where consent from the territorial countries has been obtained.)" (The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, Kantei, October 2001).

This law extended the dispatch possibilities of the SDF for the purpose of supporting the "prevention and eradication of international terrorism" and reflects a new field of application of the SDF abroad (The Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, Kantei, October 2001).

In the course of the ATSML, the Japanese government revised the PKO Law in December 2001 as well. The revision supersedes previous restrictions of the SDF. Under the revised law the SDF are permitted to monitor cease-fire agreements and patrol of cease-fire agreement zones, as well as to confiscate and transport weapons of conflicting parties.

Furthermore, they are allowed to use weapons for the protection of other nations or for the purpose of prisoner exchange in the outbreak of combat (Institut für Asienkunde 2/2002: 28f.). In other words, Japan's UNPKO-tasks were extended from missions of conflict prevention to missions of peacekeeping.

Although the ATSML, which implied the fight against terrorism at home and abroad, was widely supported, antimilitarism, pacifism and the US-Japan Alliance together with the unconditional support of UN principles have guided and determined Japan's foreign policy-making decisions until today. At the same time they have prevented Japan from making obligations for an open foreign- and security policy, which made decision-making in the 21$^{st}$ Century even more complicated.

## 6.2. Supporting the war in Iraq (February-March 2003)

Following the events of September 11, 2001 President Bush labeled in his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002 Iraq, Iran and North Korea as "rogue states" (*narazu mono kokka*) and "Axis of Evil" (*warui no sūjiku*). In September, the US announced a new national security strategy, the so-called "Bush Doctrine", and was further empowered in October 2002 by the US-Senate and the House of Representatives to declare war against Iraq (Morimoto 2004: 261-263). In November 8, 2002 the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 1441 which stated that

> *[…] the Government of Iraq shall provide to UNMOVIC, the IAEA, and the Council, […] a currently accurate, full, and complete declaration of all aspects of its programmes to develop chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and other delivery systems […] Iraq shall provide UNMOVIC and the IAEA immediate, unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access […] and warns Iraq to expect serious consequences, if the obligations made by the UN-Resolution are not followed* (United Nations Security Council (2002): Resolution 1441).

Iraq accepted the resolution on November 13, 2002. Whereas the USA and Great Britain already saw implications for a military attack in the context of Resolution 1441, France, Russia and China demanded a second resolution based on the results of the investigations by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq, which later revealed that Iraq possessed no Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). However, the UNSC member states could not agree on a new resolution and efforts resulted in an US-led attack on Iraq on March 20, 2003 without the legal basis of a new UN-Resolution (MOFA 2004: *gaikō seisho*).

At a press conference on March 20, 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi officially announced the Japanese government's support for the US war against Iraq[36]. While he highlighted his personal refusal of war in general, Koizumi legitimized his support by stating that it was in Japan's national interest (*kokueki*) to prevent Iraq from possessing or using WMD, never to isolate Japan from international community again, and to back the US-Japan Alliance:

> *I can understand that the public opinion among the people of Japan opposed to the use of force. For my part as well […] I abhor war. If possible I would like to avoid it […] however, […] when we consider how we are to respond to the threat of dangerous weapons of destruction […] I can understand the position taken this time by the US and it is for my view that supporting the US is in line with the national interests of Japan that I made this decision* (Koizumi: Press Conference, 2003.03.20, official translation).

> *Damaging the Alliance would go against the national interest of Japan […] Japan has to pursue international coordination and cooperation while firmly holding onto the Alliance with the US* (Koizumi: Interview, 2003.03.18, official translation).

Although Koizumi had been hesitant in his decision for support, and told the opposition parties he would decide according to the "atmosphere in time" (Yoshida: 2003.03.19), he finally agreed to the US position that a military attack towards Iraq was possible without a new UN Resolution. Being aware of facing difficulties to receive public understanding, he referred to already existing provisions of the previous UNSC Resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002) as legal basis for his decision (Yoshida: 2003.03.19).

As an answer to concerns of the ruling parties that public opposition would be too strong, Koizumi commented, "If I follow public opinion, I will make a mistake. Even if many (of the citizens) do not understand the decision, I, as a politician, have to continue the policies that have to be decided/implemented" (Asahi Shinbun 2003.03.19 und Ishibashi 2007: 766, translation by the author). A stance, clearly showing the will to lead/educate the public. Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) Fukuda, who said in an interview on March 15, 2003, that "public opinion in Japan can change over time", backed Koizumi in his view. "Public opinion up to now and public opinion in the future may be different. We cannot make a decision based on public opinion up until today. There are many times that opinions will change if circumstances change". (Takahashi and Takahara: 2003.03.15). The Koizumi government deliberately ignored public opinion. With the support of his close allies, the prime minister tried to rely on his assertiveness on public opinion and

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[36] According to his special advisor Iijima Isao, Prime Minister Koizumi refused the official statement prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Instead, he chose to deliver his message to the public in his own words to be more authentic (Iijima 2006: 172).

intended to convince the public afterwards. He hoped public opinion would change over time. Publicly, Koizumi explained his decision, with his conviction that his decision to support the US was a "great cause" (*taigi*) – namely, to rid the world of WMD (Koizumi gaikō (1): 2005.03.10 and Hayano: 2004.02.03).

However, this explanation was not sufficient for the Japanese public. Supporting the US-led attack on Iraq was a critical issue. An overwhelming majority of the Japanese public clearly opposed the Iraq War. According to *Asahi Shinbun* polls from December 2002 to June 2003 public opposition to the Iraq War ran between 60 to 80% (cf. Asahi Shinbun Opinion Polls of 2002.12.17; 2003.01.28; 2003.02.26; 2003.03.22; 2003.04.01; 2003.04.21; 2003.07.01).

Even prior to Koizumi's official support of the Iraq War, according to a *Nihon Terebi* (NTV) opinion poll conducted in January 2003, 77.4% opposed the American invasion to Iraq without a UN Resolution. 46.2% of the respondents said Japan should support the US in case of war against Iraq only if there was an international agreement based on a new UN-Resolution, and 41.9% opposed the invasion in general (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 1/2003). In March 2003, just before Koizumi's official support of the Iraq War, 52% of the Japanese public opposed the war. In this particular opinion poll, 47.3% opposed the war because an attack would destabilize the world due to opposition from France and Russia, and 41.9% opposed war in general (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 3/2003). In a further *Asahi Shinbun* poll in March, 39% opposed the invasion because they rejected war in general, and 12% opposed it because they believed the invasion had no real legitimacy (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.03.31).

In April, a majority of 54% of the Japanese public felt that the US military attack against Iraq was illegitimate (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 4/2003). Although a clear majority was against the war by March, when the prime minister's official support was issued, opposition had decreased in comparison to results of January polls, when opposition had reached its highest value rating at 77%.

After Prime Minister Koizumi had publically explained given his decision to support the US, 87% of the Japanese public was unsatisfied with the reasons given for the Japanese support of the Iraq war (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 3/2003). Instead, critics labeled Koizumi as a "foreign policy-amateur that judged against the backdrop of the US-Japan Alliance", and believed "Koizumi's stance towards Bush was rather based on personal trust than on

Koizumi's special knowledge of the situation in Iraq and strategic observation" (Ōtake 2006: 180, translation of the author).

Moreover, opinions within the Japanese academia were "questioning the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Iraq War" (Eldridge and Yasuaki 2008: 169). Furthermore, there was dissent whether the fight for democratization and against WMD could be achieved through war, and if there were sufficient reasons that would legitimate an attack by the US.

These opinion results were accompanied by mass protests already starting in the summer of 2002 and reaching their peak on February 15, 2003, when thousands of Japanese citizens demonstrated against the planned invasion in Iraq, followed by a demonstration of more than 10.000 people in Tokyo on March 15, 2003 (Shimoyachi: 2003.02.16; Penn 2006), and by massive protests of Japanese citizens in front of US diplomatic offices in Japan just two days before Koizumi's official declaration of support of the Iraq War (Takahashi: 2003.03.21). Several anti-war-protests in Japan had mostly been mobilized by already existing networks, such as anti-nuclear organizations, general anti-war movements or labor unions, but also by new organizations especially established on the occasion of the Iraq War (cf. Hamajima 2008: 35). Thirty-one such organizations were explicitly established in protest of the Iraq War (Hamajima 2008: 40). The main organization leading all anti-Iraq-War movements in Japan was the network *World Peace Now, Japan* consisting of 47 Japanese grassroots organizations and NGOs (cf. World Peace Now: 2011.09.26). Although protests against the War in Iraq have not been discussed thoroughly in the Japanese media except in the *Asahi Shinbun* (Kobayashi 2007: 89), numerous protest events had actually taken place starting in September 2001 until August 2004 as the following Figure 6.1. shows:

**Figure 6.1: Number of protest events per month**
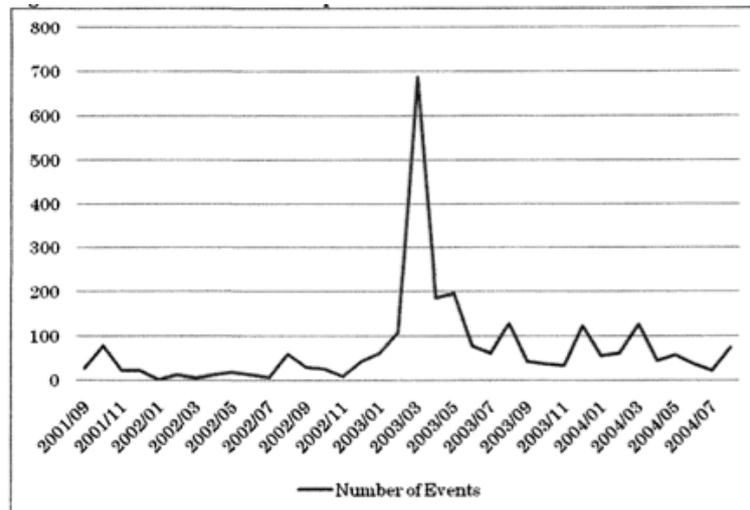


Source: Hamajima 2008: 45.

As can be seen in the figure above, most of the events took place just before the time period when support for the Iraq War was about to be decided. Prior to this, and also after the decision had been made to support the War, the number of events was marginal.

Major participants in the Iraq War movements were younger people who were not specifically associated with particular political activities or organizations (Hamajima 2008: 42). This fact was confirmed by an *Asahi Shinbun* article on March 9, 2003 which commented that "many young people and their families attend for the first time this kind of action […] participants are completely different form earlier protests. Ordinary people started to act" (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.03.09, translation by the author). It is noteworthy that not only particular *issue oriented publics,* who were especially interested and engaged in the anti-Iraq-war movement gathered for protest, but not affiliated *mass public* as well. Still, demonstrations and protests were mobilized by a mixture of already existing organizations and movements that incorporated the Iraq War protest additionally in their agenda, and organizations especially established in opposition to the Iraq War itself (cf. Hamajima 2008: 43). Summarizing, one can say that the Japanese public was opposed to the Iraq War in particular, but also that it followed the pacifist long-term trend of being against any offensive war in general, and did not want Japan to support or cooperate in such wars.

When taking a closer look at the Japanese media sphere, high media coverage on the Iraq issue started from January until July 2003. The *Asahi Shinbun* published 73 editorials related

to the war, Koizumi's support or plans for reconstructing Iraq, while the *Yomiuri Shinbun* published 49 editorials (Takekawa 2008: 170). Moreover, one can discover a big divergence in headlines amongst the two major newspapers. On the one hand, the *Asahi* represented a very critical voice towards the Iraq War and the Japanese government's actions regarding the war, whereas the *Yomiuri* voiced more supporting opinions for the government's position (Ōishi 2005: 49). Following the day of Prime Minister Koizumi's announcement to support the Iraq War, the *Asahi Shinbun's* editorials commented that "we are having a religious war..:", and "we do not support such a war…" (Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai 2004a: 47-52). According to an analysis by Maesaka Toshiyuki (2011), the *Mainichi Shinbun* and the *Tokyo Shinbun* followed the *Asahi's* drift of argument (cf. Maesaka 2011). Instead, the *Yomiuri* published headlines that signified a more positive attitude: "The fault lies in Iraq, the US and Great Britain's claim has a reason: it is in our national interest to stick to the US-Japan Alliance". Moreover, Maesaka observed that newspapers disagreed as to whether it was an American led "invasion" (*shinkō*) or an "advance" (*shingun*). The left wing newspaper *Asahi* labeled the American actions an invasion, whereas the *Yomiuri* described them as an advance (Maesaka 2009).

On the other hand, a comparison made by the Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai publisher house (2004a) between headlines of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun,* showed that both newspapers believed there was a high probability of Iraq possessing WMD. Although the *Yomiuri Shinbun* supported the war more openly than the *Asahi*, both newspapers agreed that the matter took an undesirable course, since no further UN-Resolution had been enacted. However, the newspapers disagreed on what further steps had to be taken in Iraq to end or even prevent a war (Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai 2004a: 54, 55). Whereas the *Yomiuri* saw a solution in the allowance of the inspection teams, the *Asahi* disagreed and claimed, that steps going beyond inspections were necessary, such as the support of building an independent government in Iraq (Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsenstu Iinkai 2004a: 56).

When looking at the newspaper coverage of protests against the Iraq War, strong variation was observed. Only the *Asahi Shinbun* covered to a certain extent demonstrations and protests whereas the *Yomiuri Shinbun* more or less ignored them in articles related to the Iraq War (Maesaka 2009).

Clearly, there was more dissent than consensus among the Japanese news media on the Iraq issue at the outbreak of the war, and positions were separated traditionally to left wing

and more conservative, which could be evidenced by the headlines appearing in each newspaper.

Similar trends were visible among elite opinions, which were split between the ruling coalition and the opposition parties. The opposition parties, namely the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Liberal Party (LP), the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), voiced their disagreement to supporting the Iraq War, claimed that the war "violates international law" and discredits the authority of the UN, which is one of Japan's major diplomatic pillars (Yoshida: 2003.03.21). „Liberal Party Secretary General Hirohisa Fujii weighed into the debate by saying that supporting the war counteracts the efforts the world has made to increase international peace and security since World War II„ (Yoshida: 2003.03.19).

The opposition parties, therefore, drew up a petition for President Bush urging him not to wage war against Iraq and invited members of the ruling parties to join the petition. However, there was no reaction to this request and opposition ignored (Yoshida 2003.03.19).

Disagreement also existed within the LDP and with their coalition partners who were not convinced on the support issue. The coalition partner New Kōmeitō, a party associated with the Buddhist organization Sokka Gakkai, which defended strong pacifist opinions, claimed that "a new U.N. resolution was necessary to justify any attack against Iraq." The party was in a deadlock situation with supporting the Koizumi administration, since they risked tensions with their voters who neither supported the war nor would they understand a support of the New Kōmeitō. Moreover, anti-Koizumi factions within the LDP, such as the Hashimoto-faction, voiced opposition towards Koizumi's Iraq policies. These politicians opposed Koizumi's decision mainly because they were eager to overthrow Koizumi politically rather than oppose the content of his policies or his decision to support the Iraq War. Since according to his close aids, Koizumi was a pacifist (Interview Bessho Kōrō: 2010.03.08), it was argued that Prime Minister Koizumi was hesitant in his decision to support the US, and was encouraged to do so by CCS Fukuda and State Secretary Takeuchi (Ōtake 2006: 179).

Supporters of Koizumi defended his decision. However, they did not legitimize their support by arguing for a war against WMD or the possibility that Saddam Hussein developed WMD programs, but instead they used the importance of the US-Japan Alliance and

the nuclear threat by North Korea as their primary reason (Kliman 2006: 119). At the end, the majority of the ruling coalition stood behind the prime minister's decision after agreeing with all three secretary generals of the ruling coalition parties (LDP; New Kōmeitō, NCP), to decide what role Japan will play after the UN Security Council had adopted a resolution to rebuild postwar Iraq. They further agreed, no support would be provided as along as the war continued and that a possible deployment of the SDF to Iraq would definitely require a new UNSC Resolution as a precondition. This agreement convinced the pacifist New Kōmeitō to endorse Koizumi's course of supporting the US (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.03.23). Members of the New Kōmeitō explained, however, that they were only on Koizumi's side in his support for the US government, but in fact were still against the war (Fisker-Nielsen 2012: 104). They came to the conclusion to support, because "as a party in government they have a responsibility as lawmakers […] they could no longer simply act as an opposition force (in which case they would have been likely against the war), they also had to decide how to handle the situation practically" (Fisker-Nielsen 2012: 108).

In summary, regarding the decision to support the American-led war in Iraq, Prime Minister Koizumi clearly ignored public opinion. The ruling decision-makers believed that they would be able to persuade the public of their decision in the long run. By trying to *lead* public opinion in his direction, Koizumi referred to Japan's national interest in securing the Alliance with the US against the background of being depended on the Alliance to ensure security in East Asia – a point of issue widely supported by the Japanese public. At the same time it was believed that supporting the Alliance partner in its missions, enhanced international cooperation and Japan's image in the international community, because of their diplomatic failures during the first Gulf War. By arguing that WMD were unacceptable, Koizumi tried to manipulate and convince the public by evoking security concerns, a matter of high importance for the public.

In spite of massive public protest, which would normally have forced a decision-maker to give in, Koizumi was able to follow his own agenda. This was possible due to consensus among the members of his ruling government. All ruling parties, the LDP, the New Kōmeitō and the NCP agreed at the end to support the War in Iraq. The DPJ, which just as public opinion opposed the war, did not manage to align with public opinion because the reasoning behind opposition was different (Hornung 2009: 202). The DPJ opposed the

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war because it violated the UN-Charter, whereas public opinion opposed war in general as an act of aggression. Likewise, Koizumi had a clear strategy on how to act, on the one hand, but on the other hand, was pressured from outside, mostly due to the obligations of the US-Japan Alliance, but also for showing active commitment on the international platform.

Nonetheless, although news media coverage was high, the newspapers took different stances on this matter and did not raise a unified voice in their headlines, which could have increased the already existing public protest and pressured Koizumi even more. As a result, there was neither a clear Kūki against the support of the Iraq War, nor was Koizumi dependent on public opinion, because of consensus within the LDP, and at the end also between the coalition partners.

## 6.3. The Law concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq (March-July 2003)

Besides supporting the Iraq War Prime Minister Koizumi also promised President Bush assistance in humanitarian and reconstruction missions in Iraq after major combat had ended. The UN Resolution 1483 of May 22, 2003, which appealed to all member states to assist on measures for the reconstruction, security and humanitarian stability in Iraq (UNSC: Resolution 1483, 2003), released Japan from any constitutional restrictions to support the missions, and paved the way to contribute to international efforts in Iraq. Still, it had to be decided on which legal basis and to what extent reconstruction and humanitarian assistance could be conducted. Koizumi stressed that Japan would make an appropriate contribution "within the limits of national power (*kokuryoku ni fusawashii kōken*)" (Koizumi Gaikō (2): 2005.03.11). The US made Japan understand that a "visible cooperation would be useful", and with this implied the request for military support by Japan, clearly referring to the dispatch of the Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF) to Iraq (Koizumi Gaikō (2): 2005.03.11).

In order to be able to send military forces to Iraq, a new law had to be drafted because the existent laws did not legitimize a dispatch abroad. The PKO-Law was not accepted, because combat was still taking place in Iraq, and the host governments did not request a dispatch of the SDF. The law prohibited missions under these conditions. Furthermore, in

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order to use the ATSML of 2001, an immediate connection with former President Saddam Hussein and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 had to be provided. This connection was not supplied (Ōtake 2006: 182). Therefore, the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq (*iraku jindō fukkō shien tokubetsu sochihō*)[37], which was outlined and submitted to the Diet on June 9, 2003, and which provided the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq, was drafted. This law evoked controversial debates among the Japanese government, the media and public opinion, which will be discussed in the following.

Decision-making for the law was a fast top-bottom process, where bureaucracy, especially the highest MOFA officials, took the lead in drafting the bill and presenting it to the *Kantei*. MOFA was proactively speaking for personnel support of the US in Iraq, which implied SDF dispatch (Miyagi 2009: 354). MOFA representatives argued that "just to support is not sufficient" (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi gaikō (14): 2005.03.30).

The Iraq Special Measures Law managed to pass the Diet within three months and was finally enacted on July 26, 2003. On August 1, 2003 it came into force (Shinoda 2006: 71, 83). To achieve fast enactment, the usual Diet session had to be extended for another 40 days in order to pass legislation - another uncommon and hasty step for the Japanese policy-making process.

In order to draft the bill the Policy Measures Headquarter on the Problem of Iraq (Iraku Mondai Taisaku Honbu) was established, which worked together with MOFA's National Security Division and a Defense Agency (JDA) task force. Already in April 2003, the Iraq Team announced an Action Plan for the reconstruction of Iraq, which included "economic assistance, on-the-ground reconstruction assistance, humanitarian assistance, dismantling WMD and mine-sweeping" (Shinoda 2006: 76). In June, the Iraq Team presented the new legislation, which included "that all activities would be based on UNSC resolutions, the area of activity would be limited to non-combat-areas and the standard of arm use would not be changed. Furthermore, the law would allow the dispatch of SDF personnel and civilians in order to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, to support the US and other forces and to dismantle WMD" (Shinoda 2006: 78,79). The legislation was supposed to be effective for four years.

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[37] From now on referred to as the *Iraq Special Measures Law*.

Being aware that the pacifist Japanese public would not approve reconstruction missions during wartimes, as it was the case in Iraq, the government decided to draft a law which would permit military reconstruction assistance only after major combat had ended (Ōtake 2006: 183) – another relevant signal, that public opinion was considered, and an important determinant in drafting the Iraq Special Measures Law, because otherwise, the SDF would have been dispatched during combat operations to provide medical services to the alliance partner USA (Midford 2011: 130).

Drafts for a new legislation had already been made earlier, long before plans for a new law had officially been disclosed. As early as 2002 Prime Minister Koizumi had held talks with the US on a possible cooperation (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (1): 2005.03.10). Many in the ruling coalition supported the Iraq war, however, opinions on dispatching the GSDF to Iraq were split. Discussions on the new Iraq law were held secret until President Bush declared the end of major combat and UN-Resolution 1483 was officially passed as described earlier.

Right from the beginning there had been no consensus among the ruling parties as far as the contents of the Iraq legislation was concerned. Although LDP members overall agreed that Japan needed to contribute and fulfill its obligations as a member of international society, disagreement existed on the Iraq Special Measures Law, and especially on the dispatch of the SDF. Koizumi first presented the bill to the secretary-generals of the ruling parties, before debating it with the Policy Research Council of the LDP, which had been the usual procedure up until then. This step was introduced to indirectly pressure the opposition voices within his own party (Shinoda 2006: 77). Opposition was issued particularly from the anti-Koizumi factions of the LDP, which tried to interfere with Koizumi in order to overthrow him in the following LDP presidential elections in September and the Lower House elections in November. These opponents claimed the bill had not been discussed sufficiently within the party and called Koizumi just a "US-follower" (*taibei tsuijū*) (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (1): 2005.03.10).

But also pro-dispatch representatives of the LDP were concerned of losing the elections, if the dispatch issue would be communicated openly. The majority of these representatives believed discretion on the dispatch issue was paramount until after the elections. Disclosure at that time would have raised the possibility to win the elections, on the one hand, and would have enabled a dispatch of the GSDF, on the other hand. If the present

government lost the elections, the Iraq mission could not have been implemented as planned. In this case domestic incentives and public opinion were considered. Notably, policy-makers, CCS Fukuda included, worried about the public's reaction to the dispatch right before the elections (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (2): 2005.03.11 and Koizumi Gaikō (16) 2005.04.02).

In other words, if in view of their pacifist opinions and their electoral behavior public opinion was an insecure variable, then inter-party support for the planned Iraq legislation was necessary to be able to send the GSDF for reconstruction missions. However, interparty support did not exist. As a result, Koizumi had to introduce two strategies: he used his very high public popularity to contain the opponents from inside the party. The LDP as such, was not as popular as Prime Minister Koizumi himself. For this reason he had to keep his support rates high in order to be able to work both with the internal opposition from his own party, and with the external opposition from other parties. Public opinion gave him strength and confidence. Once again, public opinion was considered an important variable for the process. Therefore, Prime Minister Koizumi justified the importance of the Iraq Special Measures Law by claiming that it was a law established to reconstruct Iraq "not only from the perspective of stability in the Middle East region, but also peace and safety in the international community as a whole, including Japan" (Koizumi: Statement 2003.07.26). Having the critical public opinion and party members in mind, Koizumi publicly tried to downplay the draft of the bill and attempted to convince public opinion by arguing that "it is for the Iraqi people" (*iraku kokumin muke*) that Japan contributed (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (11): 2005.03.25), and that "Japan cannot only offer financial support but also has to make a personnel contribution" (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.04.16). Moreover, he believed that with the Iraq Special Measures Law, Japan gave the appropriate support for his country and was in accordance with the spirit of the Japanese Constitution (Koizumi 2003.07.31: *mēru magajin*). Even more, Koizumi intentionally played with the public's feelings and consciousness, by arguing people should respect and honor the contribution the SDF could make abroad (Hayano: 2004.02.10).

The Japanese public opinion was very ambivalent at that time: 42% approved and 41% disapproved the Koizumi Cabinet in March 2003 (Nikkei Shinbun Poll: 2003.03.22), thus, giving Prime Minister Koizumi a chance and sufficient reason to try to *lead/educate* the public. However, despite ambivalence among public opinion, the general disapproval rate

was too high to sufficiently act as a determinant to pressure the LDP members, who were still undecided.

Therefore, he had to introduce a second strategy in order to reach agreement with his party and with the coalition parties. Accordingly, Prime Minister Koizumi had to make compromises in two points of his draft: first, some LDP members, especially from the anti-Koizumi factions, had criticized the clause on WMD within the legislation, given the fact that investigation results showed that there had been no WMD in Iraq, which, eventually, resulted in the agreement to remove the WMD clause. Second, carrying weapons and ammunition by the SDF as well as the military operation zones were hot debated topics between LDP and New Kōmeitō members (Hayano: 2004.02.03; Takahashi: 2003.06.12). Especially the New Kōmeitō was against carrying of weapons and ammunition. In their view this violated the Japanese constitution and implied that Japanese soldiers would operate in "war zones", something the mostly pacifist voters of the New Kōmeitō did not support (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.04.22). In order to get full approval from the party, but also from public opinion who shared the same pacifist requirements, the transport of weapons and ammunition was deleted from the draft, and the operation zones were limited to "non-combat-zones" (*sentō kōi ga okawarete orazu*). However, it was agreed that "it would not be differentiated between combat- and non-combat-zones and areas of SDF activities would not be defined after research results were gathered" (Shinoda 2006: 79,80). Furthermore, compromise on the bill had to contain "an exhaustive research of the local situation prior to dispatch, prior consultation with the LDP and sufficient explanations of SDF activities to the public" (Hornung 2009: 241). This was a requirement imposed by LDP and New Kōmeitō members. After adjusting the compromises into the draft, Koizumi gained approval from the coalition parties first, the LDP opponents were pressured and finally agreed on the draft after the required changes as well. The New Kōmeitō, again, justified their approval by commenting, "now as the situation stands in Iraq, it is only the SDF that can be sent to help Iraqi people (Upper House member Toyama Kiyohiko)" (Fisker-Nielsen 2012: 108). As a result, disagreement among elites was resolved, and the draft bill adjusted according to the will of opponents within the parties on the one hand, and in considering the public's opinion, on the other hand.

As agreement was reached, as already mentioned above, a further problem for Prime Minister Koizumi was the time period of enacting the legislation in terms of public

opinion. Although many LDP members believed in the importance of the Middle East for Japan, and, therefore, understood the necessity to contribute to this mission, however they severely doubted being able to achieve public support for an SDF dispatch. Members of the LDP were hesitant to submit legislation especially at the end of the Diet session and right before the LDP presidential elections in September, and, as a consequence, lose public support. Although confidence to gain public support for the legislation was not very high within the LDP, the question of public opinion was important. This led to the establishment of a Council to deal with the North Korean and the Iraq issue for the purpose of fighting WMD, underlining the importance to support the US-Japan Alliance, and convincing public opinion to accept the Iraq Special Measures Law. The linkage between the North Korean nuclear threat and Iraq was cleverly made, especially at this point in time when Japan was dealing with the problems of the abduction issue. As discussed in chapter 5, North Korea as a potential threat was a very sensitive and present issue among the Japanese public. Although the public was not satisfied with Koizumi's Iraq policies (54% evaluated it negatively; 34% positively) according to an *Asahi Shinbun* poll of April 2003, they trusted Koizumi's policies regarding North Korea (48% evaluate it well; 40% do not evaluate it well) (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.25). Therefore, the public was more prone to accept the argumentation of the Prime Minister, that obligations resulting from the US-Japan Alliance, which were related to the Iraq War, had to be fulfilled in order to obtain security against North Korea and its nuclear weapons.

Although support for Koizumi's explanation on the purpose and need of the Iraq Special Measures Law was lower than disapproval (53% disagreed with the prime minister's explanation and 36% agreed), nevertheless, the main reason why supporters at that time regarded the cooperation with the US to be necessary, was, the potential threat by North Korea (cf. Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.01). Prime Minister Koizumi partially succeeded in linking concerns related to North Korea with his argumentation for support of the Iraq War, and tried to *lead* public opinion at a time when the public was ambivalent towards him and his cabinet, and was susceptible to opinion formation as opinion polls showed: 43% supported the Koizumi Cabinet while 42% opposed it (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.01).

Although three LDP lawmakers, namely Nonaka Hiromu, former Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi and a lawmaker from the elder generation of the LDP, Gotoda Masaharu, voiced their opposition and eventually did not vote for the bill, the majority of the ruling coalition finally supported the draft of the Iraq Special Measures Law after the above

mentioned adjustments were made on June 9, 2003. Shortly after on June 12, 2003, followed the approval by the joint group of National Defense, Foreign Affairs and Cabinet divisions.

Once major approval from the LDP and coalition partners had been achieved, additional approval by the major opposition DPJ party was an important issue in order to pass legislation fast. The DPJ was ambivalent towards the Iraq Law as well. To begin with, they supported Japans cooperation in reconstruction missions in Iraq and shared the LDP's position that Japan had an international obligation. Therefore, they agreed that a new legal basis was necessary, which implied no direct denial for an SDF dispatch, and did not make any efforts to oppose the Iraq bill or mobilize the opposing public against the draft. On June 7, 2003 DPJ-party president Naoto Kan stated that "I don't say that (the SDF) should totally refrain from lending a hand in humanitarian assistance to rebuild Iraq, but I doubt such a bill is really necessary or possible [...] We should decide after hearing an explanation from the government and the ruling parties" (Kyodo News: 2003.06.07). However, after having sent their own DPJ fact-finding mission to Iraq, which returned on June 9, they suddenly opposed the dispatch of the SDF considered in the proposed legislation. They argued the dispatch, and especially the unclear definition of "non-combat-zones", would violate Article 9 of the Constitution, after the US Army had claimed, that "the whole country is a combat zone" (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.06.24). As far as the DPJ was concerned, humanitarian and reconstruction assistance without participation of SDF was sufficient. This position was presented by the DPJ in a new draft for an amendment bill, which included the deletion of the SDF dispatch. In their opinion it could not be correctly defined what constitutes a combat or non-combat zone. Consequently, they adopted the viewpoint that the possibility that a dispatch of the SDF was unconstitutional was enhanced (Uchiyama 2010: 90 and Asahi Shinbun: 2003.07.01). Hence, their opposition was based on purely legal reasons, and they were not in principle against a dispatch.

Apart from concerns that the bill was unconstitutional, all other opposition parties criticized the present draft for allowing the SDF to take part in "military administration of the US and British occupation forces" (The Japan Times: 2003.06.30).

To delay the passage of the Iraq Special Measures Law, the opposition parties raised a no confidence motion against Prime Minister Koizumi, which was overruled by the ruling coalition parties. What made opposition weak was the fact that the amendment of the DPJ was not supported by the other opposition parties, resulting in a deviation of argumenta-

tion within the opposition block. Lacking unity, the opposition parties lost both strength and their common voice, and Koizumi was able to pass the law with a majority vote, in spite of the fact that all opposition parties voted against the bill (Yoshida: 2003.07.26). Opposition had weakened, lost its stability in argumentation and could easily be overruled. This also led to a lack of unity with public opinion, which shared opposition but for different reasons (Hornung 2009). Public opinion was against a new law that allowed a military dispatch in general, because they regarded the situation in Iraq as too dangerous, whereas the DPJ opposed it for legal reasons. The DPJ neither managed to align itself with public opinion nor to mobilize the public or to use the Iraq issue against the ruling elites in order to strengthen its own voice. No opinion coalition against the Iraq Special Measures Law was formed.

As described in the previous section, public opinion had been very critical of the Iraq War. As a result the public did not accept the draft of the Iraq Special Measures Law, which included the dispatch of the GSDF in a war zone without the request of the host government – a requirement for PKO missions - for the first time since World War II.

According to monthly *Asahi Shinbun* and *Nihon Terebi* (NTV) polls, the average majority of the respondents had been against dispatching the SDF to Iraq. Although support for dispatching the SDF dominated in June, opinion shifted and more than 50% opposed the bill in July and August 2003 when the Iraq Special Measures law passed the Diet. The opinion behavior from June until July 2003 can be seen in the following Figures 6.2:

**Figure 6.2: Asahi Shinbun and Nihon Terebi opinion polls on the question of dispatching the SDF to Iraq**
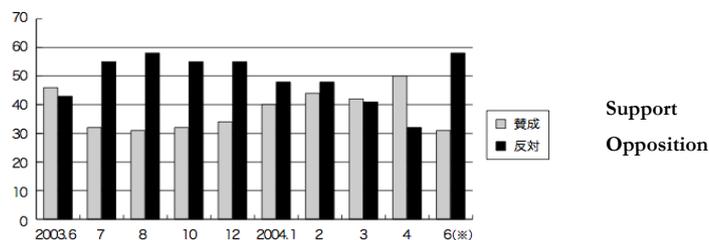


Source: Asahi Shinbun Polls: Ōishi 2005: 53.
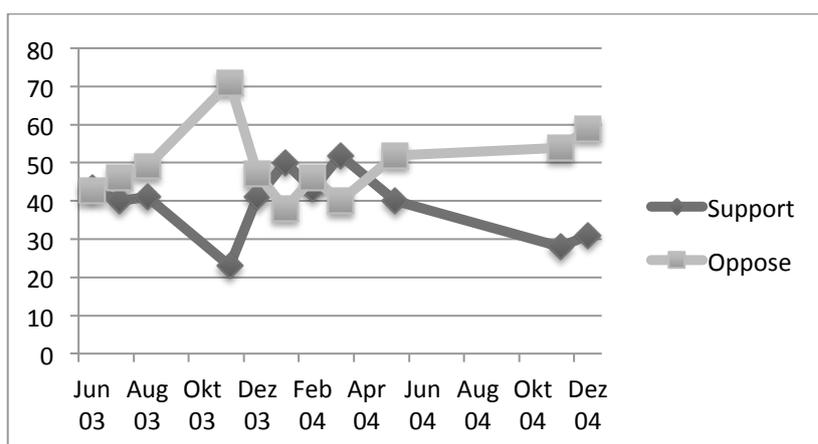
Source: Nihon Terebi (NTV) polls June 2003; July 2003; August 2003; November 2003; Dec. 2003; Jan. 2004; Feb. 2004; March 2004; May 2004; Nov. 2004; Dec. 2004.

Figures 6.2 show, from July 2003 onwards, opposition to the dispatch of the SDF outweighed support. Up to December, an opinion magnitude of more than 50% continuously opposed a dispatch.

As opinion polls of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* conducted since the 1980s have shown, overseas military activities that include the use of force are traditionally not well supported in Japan. From 1993 until 2001 more than 80% of the Japanese public considered the dispatch of the SDF for PKO missions problematic because of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution (cf. Karasutani 2005: 68). According to a *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll in June 2004, 78.4% of the respondents preferred the SDF to perform emergency relief operations when natural disasters occurred or to conduct PKO based on UN resolutions after the conflict had ended (41.8%) (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2004.06.03).

Respondents who supported a dispatch considered it as a necessary international contribution (cf. Nihon Terebi (NTV): 6/2003; 7/2003), whereas opponents feared that the deployment zones (non-combat-zones) were still too dangerous, the domestic situation in Iraq still insecure and instable, and that there had never been sufficient arguments for the dispatch of Japanese military after all (cf. Nihon Terebi (NTV): 7/2003). An NTV poll in July 2003 raised the question of the SDFs role in Iraq: 80.5% believed the SDF activities should be restricted to medical assistance as well as food and water supply. Only 14.5% agreed that the SDF should be allowed to transport weapons and ammunition, if requested (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 7/2003).

Despite the fact that the average public was against a dispatch over the long term, short term ambivalence existed as well, and in particular in polls in June 2003, right at the time when the Diet enacted the Iraq Special Measures Law: 43.4% supported the dispatch whereas 42.7% opposed it, a difference of only 0.7 percent (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 6/2003). Also *Asahi Shinbun* polls of July, 1 showed 46% in support of the dispatch whereas 43% opposed it, a difference of just 3 percent (Asahi Shinbun poll: 2003.07.01). Thus, in June and July polls, no dominant opinion magnitude was attained, and opposition and support to dispatch almost balanced each other. Ambivalence made its appearance already in April 2003, when respondents were asked to define the way that Japan could best contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* published a poll during the drafting period of the Iraq Special Measures Law, where 65.9% of the respondents answered that administrative staff, civilians and the SDF should be dispatched to Iraq (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.21) - an obvious answer in favor of the SDF dispatch. However, this trend changed dramatically by the end of July, when the law was enacted, and 33% supported the dispatch while 55% opposed it (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.07.22).

These results show that during the time the Iraq Special Measures Law was being approved, public opinion was very ambivalent and undecided, and the public's views were too volatile and unstable. This gave Prime Minister Koizumi the opportunity to try to *lead* public opinion after he succeeded in gaining party support, and continue with his plan since the public did not express itself as a clear majority in one or the other direction at this particular time period. Beyond that, Koizumi still enjoyed very high overall support rates for his administration. Although approval rates had dropped in March to 45%, when he declared his support for the Iraq War, support rates rose again to 59% in June and 55% in July 2003, when the Iraq Special Measures Law was submitted to the Diet (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2003). He also received clear support for his administration and his other policies as the North Korean issue (supported by 54%) or domestic issues, as the highway reform (45% support), with a stable opinion magnitude over 50%. Additionally, the NHK's monthly survey of political perception conducted in May 2003 posed the question whether the SDF should be dispatched. Results showed that 18.7% supported a dispatch, 16% opposed it, and 62.1% answered that a dispatch should be in agreement with UN and international resolutions (NHK *seijiishiki getsurei chōsa* May 2003 in: Karasutani 2005). Accordingly, during the drafting period of the Iraq Special Measures Law, the Japanese public neither voiced clear opposition nor clear support to encourage

decision-makers to draft or completely prevent such a bill, but was merely ambivalent. As far as the theory of magnitudes of public opinion is concerned, this ambivalence gives the decision-maker the liberty to *ignore* or to *lead* the public, which is exactly what Koizumi did. Indicatively, the *Asahi Shinbun* columnist Hayano Tōru wrote that Prime Minister Koizumi used rhetoric tricks and mislead the public in his Press Conference of July 29, 2003, when he stated that the Iraq Special Measures Law did not mean that the SDF would automatically need to be dispatched, although in Hayano's opinion it was clear from the very beginning that the SDF will be dispatched (Hayano: 2003.08.05).

If we turn our attention to the Japanese media sphere, we can see that the periods with the highest media coverage on the SDF were June 2003, when the Iraq Special Measures Law was drafted and openly discussed as well as July 2003 when the law finally passed the Diet (Sakai 2007: 358).

An editorial analysis of Sakai Keiko of Tokyo University has shown that during the US-led attack in Iraq 79.5% in March and 66.5% in April 2003 of all editorials discussed the war in Iraq. After major combat had ended in May 2003 the degree of editorials addressing the war decreased to 17.8%. Instead, editorials concentrating on issues of reconstruction rose from 10.3% in April to 27.1% in May 2003. In June the number of editorials further increased on this issue, and discussions on Japan's policy related to Iraq and the SDF dispatch rose from 6.3% in April to 62.3% in June when the first drafts of the Iraq legislation were published. Out of the 62.3% editorials dealing with Japans policy, 98.5% discussed the SDF as a primary keyword (Sakai 2007: 354-356). Media coverage on reconstruction and the SDF rose immediately, after it became clear that a new legal basis for a possible SDF dispatch was about to be established at the same time as parallel discussions on that matter took place in the Japanese Diet.

These findings align with results of opinion analysis in newspaper articles of Otopalik and Schaefer (2008). In their analysis they found out that the most frequent opinion source used in newspaper articles was the LDP and the ruling coalition (37%), followed by opposition parties (20%) and journalists voices (13%) (Otopalik and Schaefer 2008: 279). During the period the Iraq Special Measures Law was established (June-July 2003) and the decision was eventually made to dispatch the SDF to Iraq (December 2003), only 24% of the articles analyzed issued a critical opinion, whereas 73% of all articles represented supportive opinions for the Iraq Law. Additionally, the period of June, and July until

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December represented the highest balance between differing kinds of opinion compared to all other time periods analyzed (Otopalik and Schaefer 2008: 279, 280). This meant that according to these articles, the opinions of the ruling coalition, the opposition and the journalists did not differ from each other very much. As a result, although the media covered extensively the issue of the Iraq Special Measures Law just right before enactment, they did not convey a climate of disagreement between elite opinions. The view of the ruling elites on the issue presented by the news media was quite homogeneous. Still, the most frequently presented voice in newspapers was the opinion of the ruling coalition, which eventually agreed on one course of action.

To underline the above-mentioned results, specific keyword database searches on *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Asahi Shinbun* articles were conducted. In the time period after Prime Minister Koizumi officially declared support for the Iraq War in March until the passage of the Iraq Special Measures Law end of July, 1092 articles were published with the primary keywords "Iraq" combined with "SDF", and 604 articles with the combined primary keywords "Iraq", "reconstruction" and "SDF". In the time period when the draft of the Iraq Special Measures Law was mainly discussed (June 1 - July 27, 2003) 613 articles were published with the keywords "Iraq" and "SDF" and 391 articles with the keywords "Iraq", "reconstruction" and "SDF". Compared with the overall number of articles in the time period March, 1 until July, 30 2003, June and July where the months with the highest coverage on SDF and reconstruction along with the enactment of the Iraq Special Measures Law in the Diet[38].

The traditional differences between *Yomiuri Shinbun,* which strongly supported the government's position during the Iraq mission, and the *Asahi Shinbun,* assuming a critical position, existed as well. Especially in April 2003 the *Yomiuri Shinbun* published several editorials, which argued in favor of a dispatch of the SDF to Iraq for humanitarian purposes, implying the existence of the Iraq Special Measures Law and published headlines as "*irakusensō-tadashikatta beiei no rekishiteki ketsudan nichibei dōmei no igi o saikakunin seyo"* (The Iraq War – the right historical decision of the US and Great Britain, let US reconfirm the meaning of the US-Japan Alliance!) (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.04.11). After the opinion poll had shown that 65.9% were in favor of sending civil servants, private individuals and SDF,

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[38] Research was made via Crossasia access of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* archive database *Yomidasu rekishikan* and the *Kikuzō visual II* Database of *Asahi Shinbun*. Keywords used in Japanese: *iraku, jieitai, fukkōshien.*

the *Yomiuri* claimed the poll results were a confirmation of its argumentation to mobilize in favor of a dispatch.

In contrast to the *Yomiuri* the *Asahi* traditionally published 11 editorials with critical views on the deployment until July (Takekawa 2008: 172). In their editorials they made the existence of non-combat zones a subject of their discussion, and doubted that such areas could be found in Iraq. Furthermore, editorials argued that the drafting process of the Iraq Special Measures Law was not carefully planned, and raised more questions instead of defining a clear-cut strategy for the mission (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.06.26).

In summary, it can be stated that disagreement among the elites of the LDP existed at first, because of the elections and public opinion and the competition between pro- and anti-Koizumi factions. New Kōmeitō asked for adjustments because of their pacifist party philosophy as well. Therefore, Koizumi had to make compromises in his draft of the law in order to reach agreement with the coalition parties and his own party and to accommodate public opinion. He eventually reached agreement with the coalition partners, which then also pressured the LDP to unify and remain strong for the election campaign for the Lower House elections in November. What further helped the situation in favor of the Iraq Special Measures Law, was that opposition parties lost their common voice and, as a consequence, their strength. Although the opposition shared views with the public regarding the law, they were not able to form an opinion coalition with the Japanese public to gain power and to pressure the Prime Minister. This was particularly true for the DPJ, whose opinions were unstable and diverged from the reasons for opposition adopted by the public.

Public opinion showed a short-term ambivalence and volatility, especially during the drafting period and the enactment of the Iraq Law, which also weakened their position. Although public opinion opposed the law over the long term, still high support rates for Koizumi were recorded. Even so, mass protests took place, but reached their lowest peak during the Iraq Special Measures Law establishment.

Media coverage during the drafting period of the law and the actual enactment was high, and the topic was widely discussed. However, neutral publication and the ruling parties position dominated the articles. Although support and criticism was traditionally represented between the *Asahi* and the *Yomiuri*, articles representing a positive opinion dominated and created a homogenous picture. Opposing opinions from the *Asahi* and *Yomiuri Shinbun*

did not outweigh the media atmosphere. As a result, there did not exist a clear *Kūki* of a unified opinion of media and public opinion against the government during the critical period of the enactment of the Iraq Special Measures Law.


## 6.4. The Basic Plan and the dispatch of the SDF (July-December 2003 and January - March 2004)

The legal framework for dispatch had been built with the enactment of the Iraq Special Measures Law. To define the tasks of the SDF in detail, a Basic Plan (*kihon keikaku*) was outlined which was coordinated by Defense Policy Bureau Director General Kazuki Iihara, Defense Policy Division Director Takamizawa, the Operations Division and the three branches of the SDF (ASDF, MSDF, GSDF) (Hornung 2009: 253). "The basic plan is envisioned to show the general framework of the government's scheme for dispatching the SDF to Iraq under a special law allowing Tokyo to send them to non-combat zones in the country" (Kyodo News: 2003.12.07).

The Basic Plan was supposed to be approved by the Cabinet as soon as possible in order to draft a concrete Action Guideline for the dispatch of the SDF by October. However, cabinet approval for dispatch had to be postponed until December 9, 2003 and Koizumi's dispatch order until January 26, 2004, as a result of a negative "domestic political climate" (Shinoda 2006: 85).

In August, right after the Iraq Special Measures Law came into effect, public opinion polls showed dissatisfaction for the law allowing a dispatch of the SDF to Iraq. According to a *Nikkei Shinbun* poll of August 4, 2003 only 28% supported a dispatch and 52% opposed it. Similar results yielded an *Asahi Shinbun* poll on August 26, 2003, which showed that 31% supported the dispatch and 58% opposed it.

Along came several critical incidents in Iraq that severely influenced the domestic climate: the bombing of the UN Headquarters in Baghdad on August 20, 2003; the attack on Italian troops in Nasiriya on November 13, 2003, followed by shots that were fired at the Japanese Embassy in Baghdad on November 18, 2003, and foremost the assassination of two MOFA diplomats Katsuhiko Oku and Masamori Inoue on November 29, 2003. An incident, which widely shocked the Japanese public, and brought Iraq "closer" to home.

These incidents soured any plans for an immediate dispatch and made the government's explanations of the existence of "non-combat-zones" in Iraq sound insubstantial. Thereby,

the government lost its justification to dispatch SDF at that particular time period. This was reinforced by NTV and *Asahi Shinbun* opinion polls (Figure 6.3), which showed that public opinion continuously opposed the dispatch of SDF until December 2003, when the actual dispatch order was given:

**Figure 6.3: Asahi Shinbun and NTV poll results on the dispatch of SDF (June 2003-February 2004)**
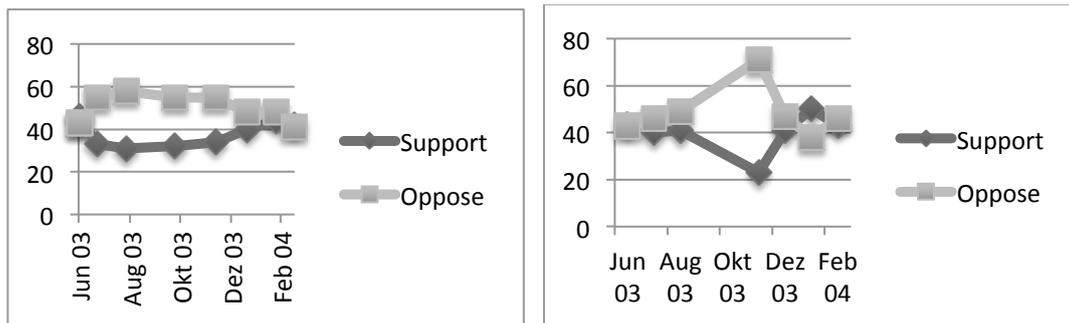


Source: Asahi Shinbun Polls: June 2003-Feb 2004, Nihon Terebi (NTV): June 2003-Feb 2004.

As visible in Figure 6.3, according to *Asahi Shinbun* polls up to December 2003, when the Basic Plan was approved, more than 50% of the respondents opposed the dispatch of the SDF. Similar results could be found in NTV polls, where opposition was in the vicinity of the 50% margin as well. These results represent a strong opposition variable, which cannot be ignored by decision-makers. The security situation in Iraq had been one major concern of public opinion (42.6% believed in November that the public order in Iraq was deteriorating and the danger was increasing (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 11/2003)). There was no other possibility or legitimacy for Prime Minister Koizumi to continue with immediate dispatch plans, especially prior to elections!

The opposition parties, such as the DPJ, agreed with public opinion. They believed that the timing for a dispatch was wrong and claimed that the SDF should only be send if the UN adopted a new resolution "to send forces to Iraq, and a provisional government to be established in that country which asks the international community to send military and other personnel" (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.09.26).

Having the upcoming domestic reforms (*dai san kaikaku*), the elections and negative domestic perceptions in mind, the drafting process of the Action Guidelines was deliberately not made transparent by Koizumi (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.12.05). It was not until the

end of November, that details of the Basic Plan were leaked to the press and conjectures started on the timing of a dispatch (Iijima 2006: 176).

In the meantime, Koizumi had won the Lower House Elections of November 9, 2003 and the LDP remained in power within a two-party coalition with the New Kōmeitō (The Japan Times: 2003.11.25). During the whole election campaign, unlike the abductions issue in Japan-North Korean relations, the LDP had downplayed the issue of Iraq and tried to avoid it as a topic in order to avoid public opposition. Also the DPJ did not take the chance to use the Iraq issue in their election campaign, mobilize the public, and strengthen their voice against the ruling parties. It was not until after the elections that the possibility of a SDF dispatch was openly discussed. Opinion results also show, that the distraction of the Iraq issue was successful, since the Iraq issue did not significantly influence voter's choice. In an *Asahi Shinbun* poll of November 2003, only 6% answered that the Iraq issue played a role in their vote, in a *Mainichi Shinbun* poll it was only relevant for 3% of the respondents, and according to a *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll of October 2003, the Iraq issue and the SDF dispatch were significant for 12.6% of the respondents. In all three opinion polls economic measures and the pension system mattered most (over 40%) (Asahi Shinbun poll: 2003.11.09 and Yomiuri Shinbun poll: 2003.10.24, in: Ōishi 2005: 57). This shows that Koizumi successfully "mis"-*led* public opinion by removing the Iraq topic form the agenda and away from his election campaign, because he knew it was a topic which would not bring him any votes. In other words, public opinion was indirectly impacting, because Koizumi invested strength in distracting the public towards other political topics.

After the victory over the Lower House elections, Prime Minister Koizumi reshuffled his cabinet, but all cabinet members who were involved with the planning of the Iraqi reconstruction mission and the SDF dispatch remained in office (Iijima 2006: 177). Hence, he could continue with his Iraq plans as scheduled.

In the light of the assassination of the MOFA diplomats and other terrorist attacks in Iraq, heavy discussion arose with the disclosure of the Basic Plan not only within the Japanese public but also among the political parties in an extraordinary Diet session in November 2003. Considering the dangerous situation in Iraq, the existence of non-combat zones, and the safety of the base in Samawah, where the SDF was supposed to be stationed, was strongly doubted. It was not until November 2003 that Samawah was chosen as the base for stationing the SDF, because it was difficult to find a legitimate place which could be defined as a safe and credible non-combat zone. Therefore, a GSDF inspection

team was sent to Samawah on November 18, 2003 to assess the security situation locally. The parties, at this point in time, judged that an immediate dispatch to Iraq was too dangerous and unconstitutional since heavy combat was still taking place. As an answer to public and party concerns over the SDF dispatch, Prime Minister Koizumi declared he would "carefully judge the situation and he will explain when the right time comes" – an unsatisfying answer for both ruling and opposition party members, who demanded a thorough disclosure and explanation of the Basic Plan (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.12.05). Although Koizumi reinforced his decision to dispatch the SDF to Iraq, he was in a serious predicament. The opposition parties LP, JCP and SDP opposed the dispatch in all circumstances. The DPJ opposed the dispatch of the SDF as planned by Koizumi, but noted it would support a dispatch if the UN would lead the reconstruction missions (Shinoda 2007: 129). The DPJ demanded an extraordinary Diet session where the Iraq issue should be discussed once again. The ruling parties denied this pledge. Koizumi declared he would decide upon the report of the GSDF-advance unit sent to Iraq. The denial of the extraordinary Diet session and the secrecy of the Basic Plan were probably made out of concern that sensitive debates would be made public. This could be related to domestic issues, namely the reform plan for the public pension system by the end of the year, as already discussed in chapter 4 (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.10.17). In order to keep approval ratings high, so that he could pressure all party members who were against the pension system reform, he tried to avoid publicizing issues criticized by the Japanese public.

On December 4, 2003 the results of the GSDF advance unit were reported to Prime Minister Koizumi and were discussed with CCS Fukuda and FM Kawaguchi. Still, the report (*seifuchōsadanhokoku*) was held secret, which gave rise to criticism among the LDP (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.12.05). At the same time the New Kōmeitō declared its approval of the government's proposal for a Basic Plan but not for an immediate dispatch of the SDF (Nikkei Shinbun: 2003.12.04). Even more, the party was troubled with the specific passage in the Basic Plan, which implied the transportation of weapons and ammunition by the SDF. Because Prime Minister Koizumi depended on the approval of the New Kōmeitō, he agreed that the SDF would not transport weapons or ammunition, although the passage would remain in the Basic Plan (Hornung 2009: 252). With the New Kōmeitō's approval Prime Minister Koizumi had, thus, the majority to have the plan endorsed by the Cabinet.

On December 8, 2003 the Cabinet approved the Basic Plan and made it public. It was stressed that the plan "is not an implementation guide or an order for the dispatch" (The Japan Times: 2003.12.08). The Basic Plan included:

> *humanitarian and reconstruction assistance as medical services, water supply, rehabilitation and maintenance of public facilities including schools, transportation of humanitarian and reconstruction related goods and others in areas where combat is not taking place and is not expected to take place throughout the period during which the activities are to be conducted there. Security of the SDF troops must be ensured when implementing the said activities* (MOFA December 09, 2003: Basic Plan, official translation).

The SDF dispatch was planned to last one year. Up to 600 GSDF soldiers and eight aircraft of the ASDF, including C-130 transport planes, and four ships of the MSDF were due to be sent for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Kuwait and Iraq (The Japan Times: 2003.12.10a). The ruling coalition approved the Guidelines on December 9, 2003 while the opposition parties voted against the Basic Plan, because they were convinced "the troops will merge with the occupation forces and this clearly infringes on the Constitution" (The Japan Times: 2003.12.10a and 2003.12.10b).

The next step for Prime Minister Koizumi was to decide upon implementation of the Basic Plan and the time for dispatch; a difficult task regarding New Kōmeitō's and the public's opposition for an immediate dispatch.

As public opinion polls showed above, the public was critical. However, ambivalence towards the Basic Plan was obvious as well. On the one hand, protests against the endorsement of dispatch plans were held again in front of the Prime Minister's Residence (The Japan Times: 2003.12.10b). Although the Iraq Special Measures Law disclosed the possibility to dispatch SDF to Iraq, protests were much higher in December, when the deployment was approved, than during the policy-process of the new law (cf. Hamajima 2008: 63).

On the other hand, public opinion was indecisive on this matter as well: according to an *NTV* poll in December, 41.4% supported the dispatch and 47% opposed it (in November 2003: 22.6% supported it and 70,9% opposed it). Compared to polls in November, the support rate had risen. Although opposition rates were still 5.6% higher than support, the *Asahi Shinbun* poll of December 13 showed that 64% of the respondents believed Japan should be involved in reconstruction missions in Iraq. In this Asahi poll, opponents were measured higher than in the NTV poll: although only 34% supported a dispatch and 55% opposed it, still 56% believed a dispatch was possible if the situation in Iraq was secure,

and 14% believed they should be dispatched immediately. Only 26% believed there should be no dispatch at all. As a result full refusal of the SDF dispatch was not observed. At the same time this poll showed a drop in support for Prime Minister Koizumi from 47% to 41%, but also an opposition of 41%, which indicated that the public was undecided in how to evaluate the prime minister's policies at that time (Asahi Shinbun Polls: 2003.12.12; 2003.12.13). A *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll revealed similar results: 48% supported the dispatch, if the security situation in Iraq was stable, while 18% answered the SDF should be dispatched as soon as possible (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2003.12.16). Moreover, a Kyodo News opinion poll released just before the Basic Plan was approved by the Cabinet showed, that 56.3% supported the dispatch of SDF to support Iraq's reconstruction, but only 7.5% supported a fast dispatch, while 33.7% opposed a fast dispatch and alleged the government should be cautious with the timing of the dispatch (The Japan Times: 2003.12.10b).

Reasons for support in the *NTV* poll were, first, the importance to support the Iraqi people (42.8%), and second, the US-Japan Alliance (36.8%), while in the *Asahi Shinbun* poll, as part of the international contribution, received a rating of 20%. (Asahi Shinbun Polls: 2003.12.12; 2003.12.13). The main reasons for opposition were the rejection of war activities in general (57.7%), and also the fact that public order in Iraq was too volatile and dangerous (40.5%) (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 12/2003).

The *Asahi Shinbun* asked the interviewees, who were against the dispatch, what would they regard as the best means of assistance to reconstruct Iraq. 29% responded support from civilians and public servants as well as financial aid. 17% believed assistance should be restricted to financial aid only. When asked if the killing of the Japanese MOFA diplomats in November changed their mind on the dispatch, 63% answered it did not do so. Furthermore, 51% believed the possibility that the SDF got involved in battles was high. (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.12.13).

As can be seen from the polls, the public neither genuinely denied the involvement in reconstruction missions in Iraq nor was it definitely against a dispatch of the SDF for this matter, although opposition outweighed support if asked directly how they evaluated the SDF dispatch. However, true support for a dispatch was not recorded either. The Japanese public's opinion in December 2003 was mixed all the time on most issues, but was in favor of some form of contribution – a good window of opportunity for Koizumi. A major concern was the local security situation in Iraq according to which, in the public's view, a decision for or against a dispatch should depend upon. Yet, they were not convinced that

Prime Minister Koizumi was able to properly judge whether the situation in Iraq promised a secure operational zone for the Japanese soldiers, which, otherwise, would have contravened Art. 9 of the Japanese Constitution. While public opinion showed an ambivalent stance towards the Basic Plan, strong issue oriented publics, such as the business community represented by the chairman of the Japan Business Federation Nippon Keidanren or the chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, voiced their support for Prime Minister Koizumi's decision. In their view a dispatch of the SDF with the goal to stabilize the Middle East was of major importance for Japan's international relations. The business community agreed with the Prime Minister, that Japan, as a member of the international society, should cooperate in reconstruction activities (see The Japan Times: 2003.12.11; Keidanren: 2003.12.09).

As a result, Prime Minister Koizumi was confronted with a Japanese public which did not clearly refuse a dispatch or the reconstruction missions in Iraq, and at the same time with issue publics, one important pillar of the "iron triangle", who were also relevant for his domestic reform plans and who supported him. In this situation and with no harmful opinion pressure, he was able to risk approval for the deployment plan.

On December 18, 2003 Prime Minister Koizumi approved the deployment plan for the SDF to be dispatched to Iraq. Koizumi publicly warranted his plans at a press conference on the same day by citing parts of the preamble of the Japanese Constitution:

> *We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want. We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations. We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources* (Koizumi 2003.12.09: Press Conference, Kantei translation).

Koizumi further explained that Japan has a responsibility as a member of the international community and as an alliance partner of the US, whom they depend upon for reasons of self-defense. He further described the mission as the answer to the request of the United Nations issued through Resolution 1511, enacted in October 2003, to help reconstruct Iraq with personnel and not only financially. In his view only the SDF and not civilians were prepared to undertake such missions. Koizumi compared the Iraq mission with Japan's PKO missions conducted in Cambodia, East Timor and Mozambique, demanded the same level of trust for this mission, and equalized all missions at the same level. He declared that Japan was involved in a purely humanitarian mission and not as a military occupation force.

He asked the Japanese public to be grateful to the soldiers who voluntarily engaged themselves in such dangerous missions and noted "it is my wish that many of the people of Japan send off the members of the SDF with feelings of respect and gratitude. They have withstood a daily regime of severe training that could not be handled by ordinary people […]" (Koizumi: Press Conference, 2003.12.09).

Prime Minister Koizumi tried to lead the Japanese public in favor of a dispatch by down-playing the extent of the mission of the SDF in Iraq, personalizing the work of the Japanese soldiers and by familiarizing the public with the issue. A journalist of the *Mainichi Shinbun* claimed that "people are only interested in foreign policy issues whenever they feel they are close to them. One reason may be that Japan is an isolated insular state, and from the minute the Iraq issue became a constitutional matter of discussion due to the new law for dispatching the SDF, it automatically turned into a domestic affair that was 'close' to the people" (Interview Anonymous C: 2010.08.25).

For the majority of the Japanese public the explanations of Prime Minister Koizumi were, nevertheless, not convincing. According to an *Asahi Shinbun* poll, 64%, and according to a *NTV* poll, 45.7% found Koizumi's explanation incomprehensible (Nihon Terebi (NTV): 12/2003 and Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2003.12.12).

Because the public did not successfully acknowledge Koizumi's explanations, the prime minister hesitated to finally decide upon the timing of dispatch and postponed his decision by explaining he would send an advance team of GSDF and ASDF to examine the situation first. On the one hand, a move by the prime minister to save time in an attempt to convince a skeptical public that was not convinced by his explanation. On the other hand, a decision made possible only after the New Kōmeitō had effectively approved a dispatch.

The New Kōmeitō agreed after party leader Kanzaki Takanori visited Kuwait and Iraq to convince himself of the security situation in the field. Kanzaki expressed his concerns regarding the dangers of having casualties. Prime Minister Koizumi admitted during an Upper House debate that he could not guarantee that the SDF would not be attacked or shot at during the night (Hayano: 2003.07.15). Because New Kōmeitō is associated with the Sokka Gakkai, many voters of the New Kōmeitō were against war and the dispatch of the SDF. The approval of the dispatch by the New Kōmeitō was precarious for Koizumi because his government depended on the votes of the New Kōmeitō supporters. In case the dispatch lead to casualties, a victory in the Upper House Elections in the summer of

2004 would be endangered in a twofold manner: he would lose both LDP and New Kōmeitō voters. This would lead to a loss of the absolute majority in the Upper House, which would impede the decision-making process even more.

The advance GSDF-team was sent on January 16, 2004 to Samawah. A few days later, on January 26, 2004 Prime Minister Koizumi gave his approval for dispatch of the main SDF-units, after the advance unit reported that the situation in Iraq was stable and sufficiently safe.

By mid-January public opinion opposition to the dispatch rose again and gained actuality when 6000 protesters, organized by *World Peace Now*, marched through the center of Tokyo demonstrating against the dispatch of the SDF (Hayashi and McKnight 2005; The Japan Times: 2004.01.26). In a *Kyodo News* opinion poll on January 17 and 18, one day after the advance GSDF-unit was dispatched for Iraq, 51.6% opposed the dispatch and 42.8% supported it. Surprisingly, the same poll found out that the Koizumi's Cabinet approval rates in January were higher than the rates in December and ranged at 52.2% (The Japan Times: 2004.01.19). In an *Asahi Shinbun* poll on January 20, 48% opposed the dispatch while 40% approved it. Both opinion polls asked interviewees whether the SDF should continue their mission or should be withdrawn in case of casualties. Both surveys showed a majority of over 50% for a withdrawal (Kyodo News: 53.2%, Asahi Shinbun: 53%). The main reasons for opposing the dispatch were still the dangerous security situation in Iraq, and the reluctance for overseas dispatches of the SDF in general. Among the members of the Koizumi government, the improved cabinet approval rates of January, were interpreted as a decrease of ambivalence towards Koizumi's decisions, and as an approval of the government's policies and leadership, and, therefore, indirectly, for SDF deployment as well. They believed that "the understanding of the activities of the SDF has deepened […] whatever the content is, the public approves Koizumi's decisions" (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.01.20). Although the majority was still against the dispatch, they believed the difference in opinion had been reduced and felt a feeling of relief. Koizumi stated "public opinion now is split. Afterwards they will understand the dispatch. I will try to explain it to the public" (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.01.20). A clear statement of public opinion having indirect impact, because it was taken into consideration in the decision-process, and effort was invested to convince them afterwards.

Strong opposition was still apparent among the three LDP members Kato Kōichi, Kogo Makoto and Kamei Shizuka, who were the main critics of the LDP, and did not approve of

the SDF dispatch. They left the Diet during the vote, queried the existence of a "great cause" (*taigi*), and were doubtful of the war in general. In their view Iraq was still in a state of war and was too dangerous to send SDF troops for humanitarian purposes (Hayano: 2004.02.03).

Nevertheless, the Lower House approved the SDF dispatch together with a 118.8 billion yen budget for reconstruction measures in Iraq on January 31, 2004, despite disapproval from all opposition parties and the three LDP members who claimed decisions were made too hastily (Kajimoto: 2004.01.31).

During November and December 2003, when discussion on the Basic Plan started, and also January 2004, when the SDF were dispatched to Iraq, media coverage reached its peak. According to an analysis by Sakai (2007), 64.7% of the editorials in November 2003, 72.6% in December 2003, and 74.1% in January 2004, were focused on the SDF. In the same time period, more than 90% of the editorials dealing with Japan's policy had the SDF as a primary keyword (Sakai 2007: 356). This result can be confirmed by a keyword search of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Asahi Shinbun* archives. Most coverage on the dispatch of the SDF was in November and especially in December, when the discussions on the appropriate time for the dispatch took place. The *Asahi* was much more vocal than the *Yomiuri* and published almost double the amount of articles. At this time period the Yomiuri published 104 articles from which 89 were published in December. The Asahi published 146 articles on that topic from which 123 appeared in December. When looking at the media coverage by searching with the keywords "Basic Plan" and "SDF dispatch" in the time period between August and November, a strong difference on the amount of coverage is observed. The *Yomiuri* only published 7 articles and the *Asahi* 10.[39] As a result, main coverage of the discussion on the Basic Plan and the SDF dispatch only occurred in November and December, parallel to the beginning of discussions within the Diet. The coverage on this issue decreased strongly again in January, when only 5 articles were published by the *Yomiuri* and 10 by the *Asahi*.

Coverage decreased in mid-January 2004, after the SDF was dispatched. One of the reasons could be the demand by the Defense Agency to refrain from detailed reporting on the SDF's activities in Iraq due to safety reasons (The Japan Times: 2004.01.10). During the

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[39] Keyword hits found by the author of "*kihonkeikaku*" and "*jieitaihaken*" in the *Yomidasu rekishikan* and *Kikuzō visual II* Databases (*Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Asahi Shinbun*. Access through Crossasia).

Lower House election campaign the ruling parties tried to be silent about the Iraq issue, and, consequently, media coverage on Iraq and the SDF was lower. News articles concentrated more on domestic economic issues or the North Korean issue than on Iraq. Still, the *Asahi Shinbun* published some articles that related to Iraq and that discussed the issue of Art. 9 of Japan's Constitution with regard to the planned SDF dispatch. However, the amount of articles was not high enough to have influence on the public (ōishi 2005: 61).

If we compare the media coverage of the biggest daily newspapers, it becomes obvious that opinions published were divided. The *Asahi Shinbun* as well as the *Mainichi Shinbun* published many cautious and critical articles, whereas the *Yomiuri Shinbun* represented a more supportive stance (Ōishi 2005: 59). The *Yomiuri Shinbun* issued support for an SDF dispatch and more or less rehashed the government's positions; the *Asahi Shinbun* opposed a dispatch and described it as a big mistake. The *Asahi* pledged for support to Iraq only under the auspices of a UN resolution. When the government approved the Basic Plan, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* welcomed this step, whereas the *Asahi* expressed discontent and opposed the decision (Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai 2004b: 89, 90). The *Asahi* described the dispatch as a dangerous path and feared that it would change Japan's pacifist course entirely (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.12.10).

The death of the two MOFA diplomats Katsuhiko Oku and Masamori Inoue on November 29, 2003 appeared as an opportunity for the newspapers to generally present and discuss their views on the Iraq War and Japan's role in reconstruction missions. In ten days both the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* published five editorials on this matter, although argumentations were different. The more the *Yomiuri* defended the SDF dispatch, all the more the *Asahi* opposed it (Takekawa 2008: 175). Besides opinions on the dispatch, differences in describing the conditions in Iraq were obvious. The *Asahi* described the situation as "war" (*sensō*) while the *Yomiuri* mostly used the word "terrorism" (*tero*) (Takekawa 2008: 178). The *Asahi* continuously argued for a UN-leadership in the reconstruction of Iraq and demanded the reconsideration of the SDF deployment, by arguing that LDP members also had issued their concern over the dispatch (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.12.06). The *Yomiuri Shinbun* did not distinguish between UN and US-leadership in the reconstruction mission, and maintained in its argumentation "that to dispatch the SDF is an obligation as a member of the international community" (Takekawa 2008: 183 and Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.12.10).

An analysis by Hollstein (2008) has further shown that the *Asahi Shinbun* published more articles than the *Yomiuri Shinbun* at the time the dispatch was decided. Both newspa-

pers used the SDF forces and the security situation in Samawah as the major topic in their articles. Although the *Asahi* had a greater coverage on these issues, Hollstein found out that both newspapers provided critical evaluations of Japans policies in their articles (Hollstein 2008: 111). Both newspapers evaluated the security situation in Samawah negatively. When discussing the SDF's work itself, all newspapers took a more neutral position (Hollstein 2008: 107). The Diet Speech of Prime Minister Koizumi on January 19, 2004, in which he defended his decision to dispatch the SDF, was widely covered by all newspapers. The most frequently quoted statement was that "Iraq would bring honor and respect to Japan for fulfilling its international obligations" (Hollstein 2008: 116). Hollstein states, that in judging the government's position on the SDF deployment, the trend toward neutral coverage dominated. From all newspapers analyzed, the *Asahi Shinbun* showed the most critical voice (Hollstein 2008: 116). In all newspapers under consideration, the government's positions on most issues was more thoroughly dealt with than the positions of the opposition. Only in regard of the security situation, media shared the same opinion as the public.

In summary, it can be said that regarding the approval of the Basic Plan and the decision for SDF-dispatch, Prime Minister Koizumi was not able to follow his original dispatch plans as scheduled from the beginning, mainly due to public opposition. The unstable security situation in Iraq was a major concern to the public, supported by media coverage, thus, forming Kūki for caution, and forced Koizumi to *compromise* with the public's demands. He was obliged to postpone the dispatch order many times, keep his plans secret, and introduce several advance teams to investigate the safety of the operation zones. Still, a window of opportunity in favor of approving the deployment opened in December 2003, when public opinion showed strong ambivalence by refusing the dispatch on the one hand, but supporting reconstruction missions when the local security was safe, on the other hand. Ambivalent support rates for the prime minister himself reinforced this impression. After reaching consensus with all ruling parties on the dispatch plans, he was able to risk giving the SDF-dispatch plans to the Diet for approval, and attempted to *lead* public opinion towards accepting the mission, by describing the operation as a peace-keeping mission similar to the missions in Mozambique or East Timor. Since his explanation was not well received, the timing of dispatch was once more delayed, and, as a result, the actual dispatch order was not given until January 2004.

When looking at the media sphere, coverage was very high, but traditionally separated into left and conservative oriented opinions, without sharing a common line for or against the dispatch. Therefore, no Kūki from media and public opinion opposing the dispatch existed, and pressure for Koizumi out of Kūki was not high. Only Kūki for caution regarding the security situation existed, which forced Koizumi to delay his dispatch plan. The same holds true for the biggest opposition party DPJ, which was basically opposed to the dispatch but was not able to form an opinion coalition with public opinion or with other opposition parties.

Since public opinion was ambivalent in critical time periods and consensus among elites could be reached, Koizumi could continue his original course, the only limitation being the compromise with domestic demands.

## 6.5. Analysis

*6.5.1. Was public opinion an important variable in the decision-making process?*

In order to answer this question I will juxtapose again the main demands posed by Japanese public opinion for changes in the originally intended course of the government with the actual outcome and the final decisions taken by Prime Minister Koizumi.

*What were the original plans of Prime Minister Koizumi?*

Prime Minister Koizumi's original plan was to fulfill all obligations necessary as a member of the international community and as an alliance partner of the US. In order to fulfill this obligation he supported the Iraq War and promised personnel support where deemed necessary. The Koizumi government had originally planned a bigger security role for the SDF in the Iraq War and envisaged a contribution not only in reconstruction and humanitarian missions but also militarily. This included the plans to assist with personnel during wartimes, allow the SDF to carry and use weapons and ammunition for self-defense, and to assist in law and order missions. Moreover, an early SDF dispatch was planned right after the Iraq Special Measures Law was enacted.

*What were public opinions demands?*

The Japanese public opinion strongly opposed Japanese involvement in the Iraq War, first, because they were against war in general, and second, because the public did not believe in the legitimacy of an attack on Iraq, especially since the UN did not back it.

There was opposition to the Iraq Special Measures Law since it implied military contribution in an area where combat still took place. The pacifist Japanese public did not accept this matter and was concerned with the public order in Iraq. Instead, compared to prior UNPKO missions, only humanitarian contribution under the leadership of the UN was approved and supported. For this reason the actual Basic Plan for the actual dispatch of the SDF to Iraq was opposed as well. In the public's view, support of civil servants in humanitarian missions was sufficient as an international contribution. Altogether, the public supported a humanitarian form of contribution, and at the same time disagreed to all military implications for this mission.

*Where the planned activities retracted or softened?*

In this case study, which was divided in three different decision processes, namely, the decision to support the Iraq War, the decision to establish the Iraq Special Measures Law, and the decision to dispatch the SDF to Iraq, public opinion was an important variable for the decision-making process. Overall it can be said, that the quality of the Iraq deployment was changed. However, the public was not influential enough to change the governmental course entirely. Although the public denied support to the war, the Koizumi government *ignored* public opinion by publicly arguing that "there are times when we might make a mistake if we follow public opinion. History proves the point that in many cases, it is not right to be swayed by public opinion" (Takahashi: 2003.03.06), and declared support for the US-led attack, which at that time automatically implied military personnel contribution in reconstruction missions in Iraq afterwards. In the other two subcases public opinion was *partially* successful in transforming the government's plans. It was effective in downplaying the military degree of the mission as well in delaying the timing of the dispatch. Koizumi was forced to make concessions to his plans due to public opposition, but at the same time he made efforts to *lead* public opinion in favor of his plans.

Despite the fact that constitutional limitations and opposition from political parties existed, public opinion was also strong enough a variable to *"shape"* the Iraq mission. Although Prime Minister Koizumi officially declared the government's support for the Iraq War, the military assistance of the SDF was converted into a humanitarian and reconstruction assistance mission (Midford 2011: 125), the SDF deployment was delayed for almost 6 months, the operating zones were limited to "non-combat-zones", the carriage of weapons and ammunition was prohibited, and assistance was only possible after major combat in Iraq had ended and after several official advance teams had been sent to investigate whether the situation in Iraq was safe before SDF could be dispatched. Since the public was ambivalent, but was still restraining the process, Koizumi additionally took the chance to *lead* the public and pursued his original plan even though he had to make some changes. He, thus, publicly altered the character of the whole military mission by claiming first, that by supporting the US-Japan Alliance in the Iraq War, Japan was basically defending itself against North Korea. Second, he argued that the mission would enhance the security of the international community, and as a consequence, the security of Japan. He outlined, that

Japan would not take part in any combat missions, and would only deliver humanitarian support to the Iraqi people, an action, which was supported by the public.

As a result, the original plans to participate in the American-led Iraq mission were altered and operations were restrained. Eventually, public opinion *constrained* the scope of action for the mission and had an *indirect* impact, without preventing it entirely.

Nevertheless, throughout the whole process, the prime minister considered public opinion both directly and indirectly. Koizumi reacted by compromising and leading public opinion, thus rendering public opinion a constraining factor, and, as a consequence, a determining variable in the decision-making process.

*6.5.2. What factors may account for this outcome?*

The following Table 6.1 summarizes the outcome and value of the relevant explanatory factors that linked public opinion and the decision-maker in this case study.

*What was the value of each explanatory condition in this case?*

**Table 6.1: Results of Japan's participation in the Iraq War and the dispatch of the SDF**

| Case Study | Outcome | Opinion Magnitude | Consensus/ Disagreement among elites | Opinion Coalition - Building | Domestic incentives | *Kūki* | Decision Stage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Iraq War and the SDF dispatch | Original course weakened.<br><br>Public opinion an important variable with constraining and indirect impact | Strong on long-term, but ambivalent on short-term. | First, disagreement among elites.<br><br>After adjustments, consensus among elites for decisions reached. | Non-existent. Issue public present but mixed with general anti-war movement and not directly linked to the Iraq issue | High | No *Kūki* in favor of public opinion. Only for "caution" at the end. Strong media coverage, but split in opinion. More or less *Kūki* of ambivalence | No strong value at the beginning of the process. Rather at the end, but only after the Law had already been enacted. |

*Opinion majorities and magnitudes*

In his initial decision to support the Iraq War Prime Minister Koizumi ignored public opinion and supported the war despite a strong opposing opinion magnitude of 60-80%. According to the theory of magnitudes of opinions, such a magnitude normally represents

a consensus opinion, its impact is important to substantial, and has the ability to deter opposition or defeat strong bureaucratic opposition (cf. Graham 1994). Since no bureaucratic opposition existed and the ruling coalition was in accordance, this strong magnitude of opinions did not threaten Koizumi.

In the second decision process, concerning the establishment and enactment of the Iraq Special Measures Law, public opinion was not entirely ignored. Although it was a constraining factor in the drafting process, the law was still enacted. The reason for this was the public's opinion short-term ambivalence. Monitoring public opinion over a long period of time showed that it continuously opposed the dispatch of the SDF, therefore, also opposed the Iraq Special Measures Law, which was the legal basis for dispatch. Over short periods of time, however, public opinion showed ambivalent magnitudes and was volatile towards the law. Especially during the drafting period and until its enactment the Japanese public was undecided and the percentage difference between supporters and opponents was very small, ranging from 0.7% in June to 3% in July 2003 (cf. page 198) when the law was submitted to the Diet. A poll at the beginning of June, however, showed that the majority supported a dispatch. This trend changed in July and August again. Moreover, neither support rate nor opposition rate ever ranged over the 50% margin, thus, making opinion magnitudes almost insignificant for the decision-maker (cf. Graham 1994).

When looking at the issue publics and protesters, analyses have shown that they reached their lowest peaks during the drafting and enacting processes of the Iraq Special Measures Law. At the same time, examining Prime Minister Koizumi's support rates, supporters outweighed his opponents and ranged at 59% in June and at 55% in July, when the law was enacted. These trends clearly show that during the drafting procedure and final enactment of the law, the Japanese public represented an ambivalent opinion and neither voiced a clear opposition or a clear support for the SDF dispatch and the Iraq Special Measures Law. The public's message was, therefore, one of indecision and apprehension during the decision-making process, with still high support rates for Koizumi.

After the Basic Plan was openly discussed, public opinion was mixed as well. Opposition in December 2003 had decreased compared to results in November. Statements that Japan should be involved in reconstruction missions, if security considerations permitted, increased. The gap between opposition and approval was again small. Similarly, Koizumi's approval ratings in December followed a similar trend, with 41% supporting and 41% opposing him, respectively. As a result, public opinion did not clearly show opinion

magnitudes that denied an SDF dispatch in connection with reconstruction missions, but at the same time it was doubted that Koizumi could properly judge security aspects. Here again no clear magnitude was measurable.

*Consensus or disagreement among elites*

During the decision to support the Iraq War, the public's high opposition magnitude, although strong in voice, had no effect, because the ruling elites, despite differences in opinion, managed to reach agreement. When it came to a decision, all shared the opinion to support the Iraq War as a necessity to contribute internationally, and foremost, to support the alliance partner, having North Korea as a possible threat perception in mind. As a result, there was no opposition party among the ruling elites, which could have taken advantage of the opposing public.

Regarding the enactment of the Iraq Special Measures Law, disagreement among elites existed during the drafting process, however, not on the aspect that Japan needed to contribute with personnel, especially since a UN Resolution existed that asked member states to contribute in the reconstruction of Iraq. Within the LDP, opposition was mainly issued by anti-Koizumi factions. However, the reasons behind opposition were not only the law and the mission as such, but an anti-Koizumi government stance in general, related to the planned economic reforms. Using clever strategic measures, such as consulting coalition-parties first for approval of the draft and reaching agreement with them, the LDP opponents were pressured to come to agreement as well. Nevertheless, in the course of negotiations adjustments in the draft had to be made first, both for opposition LDP members as well as for the opposing New Kōmeitō, to reach final agreement. After a settlement was reached, the draft was made public, and the parties presented themselves with a unified voice, which made their position in front of the critical public stronger.

The majority of the LDP members supported the Basic Plan, therefore, Koizumi was not confronted with an intra-party conflict for dispatch. Only the New Kōmeitō was insecure in giving their definite agreement for dispatch orders. After results of a GSDF-advance team guaranteed stability in Iraq and Koizumi guaranteed that the SDF would not carry any ammunition, the New Kōmeitō supported the dispatch order as well.
Having the support of the ruling parties also for the Basic Plan for dispatching the SDF, including the domestically important New Kōmeitō, Koizumi took the risk, and in spite of

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the public's ambivalence, agreed upon the deployment plan. Although the public was still split in January, when the dispatch was planned, Koizumi's Cabinet support rates rose again. This was interpreted as a sign that public opinion began to understand the government's decision. Since Koizumi had also secured both the support of his party and the coalition partners before disclosing his plans for dispatch, he felt he had enough political backing to face the mixed public opinion.

Concerning the Iraq Special Measures Law, the opposition party DPJ was not against the establishment as far as the Iraq Law was concerned, but changed its mind quickly, after being informed of the contents of the draft, and suddenly turned against the SDF dispatch for legal reasons. Although the DPJ together with the other opposition parties introduced a no-confidence motion against Koizumi, they did not manage to overthrow him, because they could not agree on a common course. Except for the DPJ, which filed its own amendment for an Iraq Law, all other opposition parties were against the dispatch and the law in general. The DPJ on its own could not mobilize the ruling elites, because there was consensus among all ruling parties. Once again the opposition parties did not constitute a threat since they were split in their opinions. The DPJ agreed on a dispatch if the mission were lead by the UN, the other opposition parties opposed the dispatch altogether.

Overall it can be said, that consensus was reached in all three cases, however, only after prior disagreement was solved. Moreover, consensus was relatively unstable, further since disagreement on dispatch orders or bills could have reoccurred any time.

*Opinion coalition-building abilities*

In the initial stage of making the decision to support the Iraq War, protest and issue publics were present, which benefited the opposition magnitude. However, these issue publics were a combination of protesters who advocated peace all over the world and supported an anti-war movement in principle. These issue publics were not established especially for the purpose of opposing the Iraq War, but for opposing war in general, for the fight against nuclear weapons, and for environmental reasons. Issue publics were a combination of several organizations with different objectives. As a result, they were only strong on a short-term basis. They mobilized the masses, which, however, consisted mostly of younger people or families who protested politically for the first time, and were not engaged in political activities in general. Therefore, the association of the issue publics to the ruling

elites was either weak or non-existent, because issue publics were formed for many different reasons, but not only for opposing the Iraq War or a future Iraq mission. Moreover, there were only very few government members in the ruling coalition, with little political power, who shared the same opposing view. This weakened the position of the issue publics to a large extent.

The DPJ, JSP, LDP and SDF, which opposed the war, did not form a coalition with public opinion to build a strong opposition bloc against the ruling parties. One reason for this was that the motives for opposition differed for each party. Public opinion opposed the war in general and was against support, involvement or active participation to war. Instead, the DPJ opposed the Iraq War because it violated the UN-Charter. Neither the DPJ, as an opposition party, managed to take advantage of public opinion and mobilize the public against the ruling elites nor did public opinion succeed in forming coalitions with representatives of the DPJ who would pleaded for their cause. As a result the strength of opinion coalition-building activities was negligible in this case.

Concerning the Iraq Law, a similar phenomenon was apparent. Opposition parties, such as the DPJ, which could have advocated in favor of public opinion against the ruling parties, did not take advantage of this position, because their opinion also reflected ambivalence. As in the first decision-process already analyzed, the DPJ again did not take the chance to gain capital from the opposing public opinion. As the ruling elites kept the Iraq issue silent, because of upcoming elections, the DPJ also adopted the same strategy and did not use or discuss it openly either. Therefore, an opinion coalition could not be built between public opinion and the DPJ in this case either. Overall, the DPJ did not boycott the Iraq Special Measures Law by attempting to raise public opinion through extraordinary measures. Instead they attended the legislative meetings and voted for their own revision bill. Although public protest was present, it was not encouraged by the DPJ.

With the opposition weakened, and a non-existent opinion coalition between the opposition parties and public opinion, it was easier for the united ruling parties to proceed with their plans.

*Domestic incentives*

Although public opinion showed opposition over the long term and indecision on a short-term basis, it was not ignored by the ruling elites and its stance was taken into consideration. This was due basically to domestic incentives, such as the upcoming elections in September and November. The LDP members, who first opposed the bill, did so because they were Koizumi's political rivals and wanted to overthrow him at the next election, and not so much for the sake of the law as such. Among the Koizumi and dispatch supporters, cautious opinions towards the law also existed for the same reason: having the upcoming elections in mind, they valued public opinion highly and feared a drop in votes. As with the anti-Koizumi faction, their caution with the Iraq Law was not the dispatch itself and the law as such, but the opposing public opinion and the upcoming elections. At that point public opinion already had a constraining function. The same holds true for the coalition-partner New Kōmeitō, who was afraid to lose the pacifist electorate from Sokka Gakkai members. To unify the ruling coalition and to accommodate concerns over public opinion, Koizumi and his allies had to make compromises on the draft of the law and on the decision process. First, as a precaution not to daunt voters, the drafting period was not made public but was kept secret; second, the bill was narrowed down to a humanitarian and reconstruction law, excluding all articles which could be interpreted as military actions.

A similar situation came up at the time of approving the Basic Plan for dispatch. The domestic climate was very negative with regard to the Iraq issue, due to several terrorist attacks and the assassination of two Japanese diplomats in Iraq. Unfortunately, the Koizumi administration had planned to draw a reform plan for the pension system by the end of the year, an issue very salient for the Japanese public (more than 40% had rated it as an important issue in the last elections), and also an issue with great opposition from within the LDP. Since the domestic reform plan collided with the actual dispatch plans, seen from the perspective of domestic incentives, Koizumi had to act strategically and change the timing of approving the Basic Plan in order not to jeopardize one aspect of his main domestic reform agenda.

Media coverage of the Iraq War was very high as the issue was very salient among the public. To form Kūki in favor or against the support of the Iraq War, the three domains, namely government, media and public opinion have to be taken into consideration. To achieve Kūki against the support of the Iraq War, a majority opinion in more than two of the three domains or in all three domains had to exist, and the majority opinion had to increase over time. Public opinion was against the support of the Iraq War, the ruling elites for it. To define Kūki media trends are important. However, in the case of supporting the Iraq War media headlines, especially between the conservative *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the more left oriented *Asahi Shinbun,* were continuously split. The same holds true for the conservative *Sankei Shinbun,* which leaned more towards the *Yomiuri Shinbun,* and the *Mainichi Shinbun* sharing argumentation with the *Asahi Shinbun.* Coverage was high in all cases, however, opinions represented by the media diverged. The *Asahi* was strongly against the war while the *Yomiuri* supported the government's position and was more inclined to support the Iraq War. This deviation in opinion among the press was not helpful in developing Kūki for or against the support of the Iraq War. Thus, all three domains of the Kūki-model were unable to reach consonance, and steadily voiced different opinions, which did not change over time. This enabled Koizumi to *ignore* public opinion at that time, but left him with the intention of convincing the public later on, that the decision he had taken was the right one.

Media coverage regarding the Iraq Special Measures Law was high as well. The number of editorials dealing with Iraq's reconstruction increased. Analyses have shown that the most represented opinion was that of the ruling elites. Although critical publications existed, traditionally from the *Asahi Shinbun,* which opposed the Iraq Special Measures Law, supportive and neutral coverage outweighed opposing views.

Consequently Kūki could neither be developed in favor of nor against the Iraq Special Measures Law. Media and the ruling elites did not represent a common opinion climate because media coverage was either neutral or divided. The same applies to media and public opinion, which reflected a trend of ambivalence as opposed to the ruling parties which agreed on one opinion. Therefore, it was more likely to develop Kūki for ambivalence rather than against the Iraq Special Measures Law. Since the Kūki of ambivalence did not exert high pressure on Koizumi, he had the possibility to ignore it.

In as much as the media were split in their headline trends on the dispatch plans, despite very strong coverage, no Kūki in favor of public opinion could be established here as well, because the three main actors drastically differed in opinion: the media were split, the government was for dispatch, and the public either opposed or was ambivalent. Most likely as in the second subcase, a Kūki towards ambivalence was present, which did not put enough pressure on Prime Minister Koizumi to enforce an overall change in his plans, but rather to merely bring about a plan modification. The only short-term Kūki that was established was, that public opinion and media agreed that the situation in Iraq was too dangerous. This fact may also have prevented Koizumi from giving the dispatch order too fast, as long the situation locally was not secure.

*Decision stage*

Graham has found out that the public's impact is at its highest at the beginning of a process, when an issue is put on the agenda, and at the end during the ratification process of legislation or decision (cf. Graham 1994). Unlike the previous case study on North Korea and the abduction issue, public opinion's impact was very weak at the beginning of the decision-making process of the Iraq issue. With the official declaration for support of the US in Iraq, public opinion lost strength in changing Koizumi's course right from the beginning.

Powlick's (1991: 638) study showed that "officials are receptive to public opinion prior to the completion of a policy decision, but unresponsive if the public subsequently opposes the decision, preferring instead to educate […] citizenry". Alternatively, decision-makers try to lead public opinion when a policy decision has already been accomplished. This phenomenon was also observed in the case of the Iraq issue. Public opinion was not influential in preventing Japanese support for the US-led invasion in Iraq and the, therefore, implied military cooperation afterwards. Since public opposition and public protest was ambivalent and weak during the drafting process of the Iraq Special Measures Law, Prime Minister Koizumi tried to lead the public towards his already made decision. The Iraq Law was enacted, on the one hand, but drafts were changed and weakened, on the other hand. This implied a constraining effect of public opinion in the drafting process.

Public opinion had the greatest impact in postponing the timing of dispatch. Since the decision for dispatch had already been made, the public could merely constrain Koizumi's autonomy during the dispatch approval period.

As a result, it can be summarized that public opinion lost the opportunity to achieve greatest influence in the first decision stage or avoid a ratification of the Iraq Special Measures Law, which weakened the possibility to alter the original course, but was influential on constraining the extent and timing of the SDF dispatch at the end.

*6.5.3 Conclusion*

*Which combination of conditions was given?*

Concluding, it can be said that while public opinion was not decisive in changing the government's course entirely, it nevertheless, acted as a strong constraining variable, and, therefore, had to be taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

What generally weakened the strength of public opinion was that the public did not show clear opinion magnitudes during important decision periods, often showed ambivalence and no stable or increasing Kūki in favor of public opinion could be established.

The main dominant variable for Prime Minister Koizumi was that he managed to form consensus among the ruling elite, which automatically strengthened his position. Moreover, public opinion did not manage to exert its impact right at the beginning of the decision stage, when effects are the highest, as could be observed in the previous case study on North Korea. Under consideration of the conditions tested in this study, elite consensus paired with opposition opinions, that were oftentimes mixed, only made a constraining impact possible for public opinion. The strongest condition variable in this case study was long-term opposition magnitudes for dispatch paired with short-term ambivalences, final consensus among elites and domestic incentives. All other conditions were of smaller value.

# 7. CASE STUDY III: THE VISITS OF PRIME MINISTER KOIZUMI TO THE YASUKUNI SHRINE

## 7.1. Origins and Constitutionality

Prime Minister Koizumi was not the first Japanese prime minister to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro (1982-1987) and Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutarō (1996-1998), visited the Shrine in their official capacity as prime minister, but refrained from further visits after protests by China. However, Koizumi was the first prime minister since Nakasone, who visited the Shrine in his function as government official, and repeated his visits annually until the end of his tenure. What made his visits unusual was the fact that he did so despite strong negative resonance from public opinion, and the negative effects on bilateral relations with China and South Korea, which vehemently opposed visits of Japanese officials to the Yasukuni Shrine. Prime Minister Koizumi, however, comment-ed criticism as follows:

> *I visit Yasukuni Shrine based on my own thoughts and do not force anyone to do the same. Nor do I myself visit Yasukuni Shrine under coercion. As for the opinions of these mass media commentators and intellectuals who criticize me, I cannot help but think that in essence they add up to the contention that I should stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine because China opposes such visits. Or in other words, it is better not to do things that China does not like. I wonder how these mass media commentators and intellectuals perceive freedom of thought and conscience? Is it not a good thing to express feelings of re-spect and gratitude to the war dead, or is there something wrong with that?* (Koizumi 2005.06.16, Email-magazine No. 192).

Throughout 2001-2006 domestic discussion of the Yasukuni issue was prevalent and relations with the two Asian neighbors worsened annually. General interest in the Yasukuni issue was high among public opinion and there existed various agitated opinions (Ito 2008: 57).

The Yasukuni Shrine located in Tokyo was built by order of Emperor Meiji in 1869 "to memorialize soldiers who had died for the emperor since the 1853 rebellion" (Wan 2006: 235). The Shrine, originally named Tōkyō Shōkonsha, was renamed to Yasukuni Shrine by emperor Meiji in 1879 (Yasukuni Shrine Website: 2011.06.29). The Yasukuni Shrine was originally built in an act of state. During the Meiji era, Shinto was the official religion of Japan and had a close connection to the Imperial House. State Shinto was increasingly used to promote patriotism and nationalism (Su 2007: 5). The Yasukuni enshrines the spirits of

war dead of the Sino-Japanese war (1894/95), the Russo-Japanese war (1904/05), and World War II including World War II Class A war criminals. The Yasukuni Shrine is considered a symbol of State-Shintoism and emperor cult. Since the end of the Shogunate as a form of government, and the beginning of the rule of emperor Meiji (1868), the Yasukuni Shrine was inextricably connected to the emperor's throne and propagated Shintoism as the only viable religion of the state. "With the political creation of Shinto as the only state religion, the awareness of a cultural national identity was to be created in order to strengthen and unify the nation against forces of the West" (Wieczorek 2001: 383, translated by the author). The Yasukuni Shrine was one of the most important Shinto shrines of the Meiji era, and represented the most important memorial for worshiping the war dead among all classes of Japanese society, and even for the emperor who visited the Yasukuni Shrine annually to honor the war dead who had sacrificed their lives for him (Wieczorek 2001: 384). The strong connection between the emperor and the fallen soldiers transformed the Yasukuni Shrine into a symbol of militarism and ultra-nationalism. As a result, state Shinto was made responsible for Japan's militarism during World War II. Since Japan's capitulation on August 15, 1945, the Shinto directive of the American occupation forces prohibited any control or support of Shinto by the Japanese state. State Shinto was to be abolished by separating state and Shinto entirely (Wieczorek 2001: 385). Followed by the establishment of the Japanese Constitution the emperor renounced his status of divinity, and became a solemn symbol of Japan who takes up his position from the people of Japan who possess the sovereign power (Wieczorek 2001: 385). Since the end of World War II, Art. 20 of the Japanese constitution of 1946 denotes that:

> *Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. 2) No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebration, rite or practice. 3) The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity* (National Diet Library, The Constitution of Japan, November 3, 1946, Art. 20).

Moreover Art. 89 declares:

> *No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated fort he use, benefit or maintanance of any religious intstitution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.*

Overall, visits at the Yasukuni Shrine represent two problems: domestically, for many people, visits by politicians reflect a violation of the Japanese Constitution, which requires

the separation of state and religion, since it was unclear, whether Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine as a private person or as prime minister.

Based on today's principles of the Japanese Constitution of separating religion and the state, Yasukuni was made an independent religious institution (*shūkyō hōjin*) after World War II. However, against the background of state ideologies from before the war, the Yasukuni Shrine is still one of the salient issues of war memory and political leaders from the conservative and left wing use the issue of Yasukuni Shrine as a tool for their respective interests (Seraphim 2006: 228, 229). Whereas the left wing interprets the Shrine as a sign of support for nationalistic tendencies, the ruling LDP manipulated the issues through their own constituents by generating political capital out of the issue. Instead of embracing the chance, to come to terms with the past the LDP preferred to challenge the limits of the constitution in terms of "renewing state domination of public life, were democracy and individual and civil rights were at risk to be intruded by the government" (Seraphim 2006: 239, 240). As a result, Yasukuni Shrine is a place, "were ritual form, constitutional law and interest politics overlap and finally converged on the role of the state" (Seraphim 2006: 230).

Both opinion trends are represented among the Japanese public: on the one hand, there are actors willing to keep the Yasukuni spirit bound to pre-war ideologies, in public light. There are still several organized rightist pressure groups today, which claim that the "spirits of fallen heroes" (*eirei*) should not be forgotten. "They feel the shrine symbolizes the history of modern Japan and the hardships it has endured. The shrine reassures them of the continuity of Japanese tradition, religion, and culture" (Shibuichi 2005: 199). These views are advocated by the Japan Association of Bereaved Families (JABF, Nihon Izo-kukai), the Japan Conference (Nippon Kaigi), the Military Pension Federation (Gunjin Onkyu Renmei), the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honchō), and the Association to Commemorate the Spirits of Fallen Heroes (Eirei ni Kotaeru Kai). These organizations, especially the JABF, have close ties to members of the LDP, who have established the Association of Members of Parliament to Visit the Yasukuni Shrine Together (*minna de yasukuni jinja ni sanpai suru kokkaigiin no kai*) in the 1990s, and oftentimes function as chairpersons of one of these organizations (Shibuichi 2005: 200-201). Conservative religious organizations have been one of the LDP's most important supporters next to the traditional support groups, such as the agriculture lobby or big business, and have managed to justify their interests through war memories (Tanaka 1995 and Seraphim 2006: 256-257).

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As Seraphim (2006: 238) has pointed out, politicians gained profit already in the 1960s out of the fact of mourning the war dead. She further argues that "the issue of state protection of Yasukuni Shrine came to occupy a central place in the forging of close and powerful ties between the Association (of War Bereaved Families) and the LDP, granting the Association representation of its interests at the highest level while guaranteeing the LDP a stable pool of votes". As a result, organizations as the JABF possess great indirect power and have maintained close political connections with the LDP for many years. Moreover, the organization is well represented in both Houses of the Diet and in the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (cf. Nihon Izokukai Website).

On the other hand, there exist several organized groups which oppose what the Yasukuni Shrine represents, and stand up against conservative rightist opinions. In their opinion „the Yasukuni is a symbol of the imperialistic and feudalistic Japan that died in August 1945" (Shibuichi 2005: 203). Moreover, visits by politicians to the Yasukuni Shrine violate Article 20 of the Constitution (see page 227). Leftist opinions are represented by organized groups, such as the National Organization of Pacifist Bereaved Families (Heiwa Izokukai Zenkoku Renrakukai), the Yasukuni Shrine Demolition Enterprise (Yasukuni Kaitai Kikaku), and political parties as the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) (cf. Masshardt 2009). The leftists key objective is "to stop the emperor, prime minister, and cabinet from officially visiting Yasukuni Shrine" (Masshardt 2009: 8).

The leftist and rightist opinion camps have collided oftentimes. The main trigger has been the prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Since 1945 almost every prime minister has visited the Shrine during the spring and autumn festivals. These visits were not controversial and were not publicly discussed between 1950 and the 1970s. However, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro was the first prime minister who visited the Shrine in his official role as prime minister on August 15, 1985, the memorial day of Japans surrender in World War II. The visit resulted in vehement protests from China and from domestic left-wing opinions, which led to the cancellation of his next visit to Yasukuni for the autumn festival. Since Nakasone, only Prime Minister Koizumi's visits have lead to controversies of the same kind. He visited annually the Yasukuni Shrine from 2001 until 2006, albeit at varying dates, without exception, despite strong domestic and international criticism.

In summary it can be said, as long as no constitutional revision was the topical subject of discussion, interest groups of all political strata have succeeded in instrumentalizing the Yasukuni issue for their public debate on war memory and national values.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, visits to the Yasukuni by officials imply worshiping the souls of World War II Class A war criminals. This offends neighboring Asian countries that have suffered under Japanese occupation during several wars. Diplomatic relations especially with China and South Korea, have been intensely stressed by prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. In regard of Japan's diplomatic relations to its Asian neighbors, both China and South Korea still have difficulties in coming to terms with the past. Apologies made by Japanese politicians in the past forty-five years for the wartime atrocities have been made, however, China and South Korea still doubt their sincerity (Sturgeon 2007: 164). Seraphim (2006: 226) argues, one reason "lies in the government's refusal to take an explicit, representative, "official" stance on the meaning of the war". She further points out that indirect gestures, such as visiting the Yasukuni Shrine as Prime Minister, generated more attention of the public on nationalistic mindsets.

In the following sections Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine from 2001 until 2006 will be analyzed. Through process-tracing, special emphasis will be put on the domestic circumstances surrounding the visit. Under special consideration is thereby the role and importance of public opinion in Koizumi's decision to visit the Shrine. As in the two previous case studies conducted before, the determinants defined in the theoretical chapter will be tested in each decision, questioning whether public opinion played a role in deciding to continue or stop the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Therefore, an answer will be given regarding the conditions under which public opinion was an important variable in the decision-making process to visit the Yasukuni Shrine.

In this case study I argue that Koizumi's plans to visit the Yasukuni Shrine were not altered, and public opinion was completely *ignored* in the decision to cancel the visits. Nevertheless, public opinion was an important variable under specific circumstances in the decision *of choosing the timing for the visit*. Koizumi could not fulfill his full promise to visit Yasukuni on August 15 until the year 2006, out of concern for domestic plans and public opinion. Therefore, public opinion generally had no impact on the question to cancel the visits, but had a constraining impact in timing his visits.

## 7.2. Koizumi's visit in 2001

Koizumi Junichirō became Prime Minister on April 26, 2001. In his election campaign, one of his significant promises was to visit the Yasukuni Shrine in his official capacity as prime minister every year on August 15, the day of Japan's surrender, in order to "pay tribute to the souls of the war dead" (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.07.29). Already in his position as Minister of Social Affairs in 1997, he issued his intention to once visit Yasukuni Shrine on that particular date (Tomisaka 2005: 144).

   Koizumi did not foster relationships with grassroots organization as his predecessors, since he lost favor of their support, because of his economic reform plans that worked contrary to the usual system of the "Iron Triangle" and traditional interests. The only organization he could still count on was the JABF, in whose interest it was that prime ministers visited Yasukuni (Shibuichi 2005: 210). Since visiting the Yasukuni has been a subject of controversy in Japan, opposition for the planned visit has been strong. "China has been in tandem with leftist forces in Japan and has persisted in maintaining an anti-Yasukuni stance until today" (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.07.29).

Public opinion, however, was in general very supportive of the Koizumi Cabinet. According to an *Asahi Shinbun* poll in April 2001, 78% supported Koizumi. With regard to the Yasukuni visits, people were more skeptical. When asked in the same opinion poll, if it was better to be cautious with the visits when taking Japan's Constitution into consideration, 48% answered caution was better, and 41% thought Koizumi should actively visit (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2001.04.30). The opinion climate became more undecided in July, when people were asked if Koizumi should be cautious: 42% answered yes, whereas 41% answered he should actively visit (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2001.07.10). At the beginning of August the *Asahi* asked the public directly whether Koizumi should visit the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 or not: 65% responded he should be cautious, whereas only 26% responded that he should visit the shrine on this particular date. At the same time people were asked if they could understand China's and South Korea's critical reaction on Koizumi's planned visits. 55 % answered they could understand the critical reaction, and only 35% showed no understanding (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2001.08.04). According to the *Asahi Shinbun,* public opinion was very skeptical and concerned over the planned visit on August 15, showing ambivalence and with a tendency to favor opposition to this endeavor.

The conservative oriented *Yomiuri Shinbun* released different opinion polls. According to their poll in April 2001, only 6.7% regarded the official visits to the Yasukuni as a constitutionally problematic issue (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2001.04.05). In July the *Yomiuri Shinbun* asked poll participants if they agreed with Koizumi's visit on August 15. 47.7% answered he should not visit the Shrine if he held the post of the prime minister, 24.2% approved official visits, and 22.7% approved the visits if done in a private capacity. This meant that 47.7% were against a visit of a prime minister, while 46.9% approved the prime minister's visit only under specific circumstances (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2001.07.11). An undecided opinion trend was visible here as well.

However, *Yomiuri* polls of August 2001 then showed, that 40% approved the Yasukuni visit, whereas only 34% disapproved (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2001.08.07). In summary, according to *Yomiuri Shinbun* polls, the public moved from ambivalence towards approval of the visit, although with no strong opinion magnitude well over 50% in favor of the visits.

If we compare TV opinion polls with the newspaper polls, results reveal that most of the public supported Koizumi's plans of the Yasukuni visit (Nippon Broadcasting System poll on August 3: 76% in support of an August 15 shrine visit; TV Asahi poll on August 4: 59% in favor and 37% opposed, and Fuji Television Network poll on August 10: 48.8% for the visit and 43.8% against it (Takashina 2001)).

The varying opinion results of the two major newspapers in Japan caused Prime Minister Koizumi to complain publicly about the poll results. He criticized the dissonant results and started to doubt if election polls also differed in the same way, and hence cannot be used as reliable sources. He publicly asked the newspapers to investigate the differences in polling results between them and offer explanations for the large deviations (Asahi Shinbun 2001.08.07). This criticism leads to the conclusion that Prime Minister Koizumi took public opinion polls seriously with regard to his decision to visit the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, 2001, and was interested in the public's sentiment on this matter. This is evidence that public opinion indeed was an important determinant in this particular decision-making process.

Among the ruling elite, opinions were split as well. The two Secretary Generals of the ruling coalition Fuyushiba Tetsuzo (New Kōmeitō) and Noda Takeshi (New Conservative Party) as well as opposition party leader Kan Naoto (DPJ) issued concern over Koizumi's

planned visit (Yoshida 2001: 71-72). After having attended a meeting in China they urged Koizumi to think over his decision carefully.

On the other hand, LDP Secretary General Yamasaki supported Koizumi's plans. So did the majority of the LDP which was in favor of a Yasukuni visit. Nevertheless, there were also critical voices within the LPD, the most prominent being that of Foreign Minister Tanaka Makiko: "I clearly told him it is my own belief, he should not visit Yasukuni Shrine [...] There is a problem with Article 20 of the Constitution [...] Moreover "she stressed the seriousness of negative effects on [...] relations with the two countries (China and South Korea)" (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.08.01). She further criticized Koizumi's justification to the public that he intended to explain his actions after he had accomplished them. In her view, an explanation should come in advance (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.08.01).

Defenders of Prime Minister Koizumi's visit within the LDP argued instead that Yasukuni visits did not contravene with the constitution, unless Koizumi's prayers "are not in accordance with Shinto rituals". Moreover, it was argued "the prime minister would visit the shrine in accordance with his own beliefs [...] it is strange for someone to tell others what his beliefs are" (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.08.01). According to one of the closest and influential assistants of Koizumi – Iijima Isao – a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine was a matter of course for a Japanese leader in order to protect Japans pledge of war renunciation (Tahara 2007: 219). Furthermore, Koizumi had always declared that he never went to Yasukuni to mourn for the World War II Class A war criminals. Instead, he meant his visit to symbolize the renunciation of war. According to Iijima's statements, Koizumi never even thought about the Class A war criminals, when deciding a visit to the Yasukuni (Tahara 2007: 221).

Concern over domestic and international pressure encouraged the decision to reschedule the visit from August 15 to August 13, on short notice. Although the majority of the LDP-party members supported the visit on August 15, and preparations and speeches had been made accordingly, the decision was taken just two days before, after rumors circulated that China would not oppose a visit on a date other than August 15. This rumor was disclosed after the return of Director General of the Asian Affairs Bureau Makita Kunihito from an official meeting with the Chinese side (cf. Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (1): 2005.05.25 and Iijima 2006: 314).

According to Iijima, Prime Minister Koizumi was convinced by CCS Fukuda and LDP SG Yamazaki to change the date. They argued that if China would not raise an issue over the visit, then domestic opponents would remain silent as well (Iijima 2006: 314-315). As a result, Prime Minister Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine on August 13, 2001, two days before the originally scheduled date. CCS Fukuda changed statements and speeches accordingly on short notice without the knowledge of his close aide and speechwriter Iijima (Iijima 2006: 315). Although the primary date was changed because of China's unofficial approval and pressure from LDP elites, this was also another indication for a short-term decision-making process by the prime minister, in which public opinion played an indirect role in changing the date. This, however, was only accomplished after it became clear that international criticism from China and South Korea, that would otherwise have angered public opinion even more, could be prevented through the change of the date.

As in the two previous case studies, domestic concerns were relevant in this decision-making process as well, since Koizumi's political agenda was dominated by his structural reform plans and the implementation of several economic measures. Although the LDP gained a lot of strength by winning the Upper House Elections on July 29, 2001[40], the possibility to loose high public support by visiting the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 was an obstacle for his reform plans, and also in this case a relevant determinant to consider public opinion in his decision to visit the shrine (Daily Yomiuri: 2001.09.11). Since public opinion did not show a clear opposition towards the visits, besides a cautious attitude concerning the timing of August 15, Prime Minister Koizumi was able to prevent loosing support by just changing the date of the visit. We can assume that he anticipated the public's future reaction and took broader national interests into consideration.

Support rates of Prime Minister Koizumi after his visit on August 13, 2001 showed, that the visit did not significantly alter his standing among the public. According to *NHK* public opinion polls the Koizumi Cabinet support rate still ranged at 72% in August 2001, and 74% in September 2001 (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute: 2001), and according to *Jiji tsūshin press* opinion polls the cabinet support rates ranged at 65.3% in August 2011 and 69% in September 2001 (*Jiji tsūshin* press in: Iijima 2006: 330-331). Finally, according to a *Mainichi Shinbun* opinion poll of August 20, 65% supported the change of

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[40] The LDP won 110 seats out of 247. The LDPs coalition partners added another 38 seats. The ruling coalition, therefore, had the majority of 148 seats in the Upper House.

the date, and only 28% found it inappropriate. Moreover, 49% believed that the demands by China and South Korea were unacceptable (Mainichi Shinbun poll: 2001.08.20).

Against all expectations of the Koizumi Cabinet, opposition from China and Korea was very strong, despite existing rumors that a visit on August 13, 2001 would be accepted. There were signs, that Koizumi's Yasukuni visit jeopardized bilateral talks between China and Japan during the APEC meeting in Shanghai on October 21. Since China was offended by Koizumi's actions, rumors circulated that President Jiang Zemin would refuse to meet Koizumi during the conference. This kind of meeting had never been refused before (Wan 2006: 242). Due to heavy reactions of the neighboring Asian countries, Koizumi had to patch up relations and asked for visits to Beijing and Seoul prior to the APEC meeting. Koizumi therefore visited Beijing on October 8, 2001 for one day and expressed Japan's apology for its wartime aggressions towards China. However, he did not deny his plans to visit Yasukuni Shrine again. "The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States shifted the pararmeters of Sino-Japanese relations" and made China and Japan cooperate in the war against terrorism (Wan 2006: 244). As a result, Prime Minister Koizumi met with President Jiang at the sidelines of the APEC meeting in Shanghai. Koizumi once again declared his wish to continue the good relations between the two countries that had been normalized for thirty years. Both parties sought to move beyond the Yasukuni issue (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (2): 2005.05.26). Moreover, LDP SG Yamazaki travelled to the neighboring Asian countries in an attempt to explain Prime Minister Koizumi's real intentions regarding his Yasukuni visits, and to prevent further concern on this matter (Okazaki and Yayama 2006: 118).

With Koizumi's election promise to visit the Yasukuni Shrine annually, media coverage on the Yasukuni issue dramatically increased in the year 2001, and became one of the most discussed topics in the print media. If we compare in Figure 7.1 article counts of the *Asahi Shinbun* and the *Yomiuri Shinbun* from 2000 and 2001, which include the keyword „*yasukuni*" and „*yasukunisanpai*" (yasukuni visit), a new awareness on the issue is clearly visible:

**Figure 7.1: Increase in media coverage of the Yasukuni issue 2000-2001:**
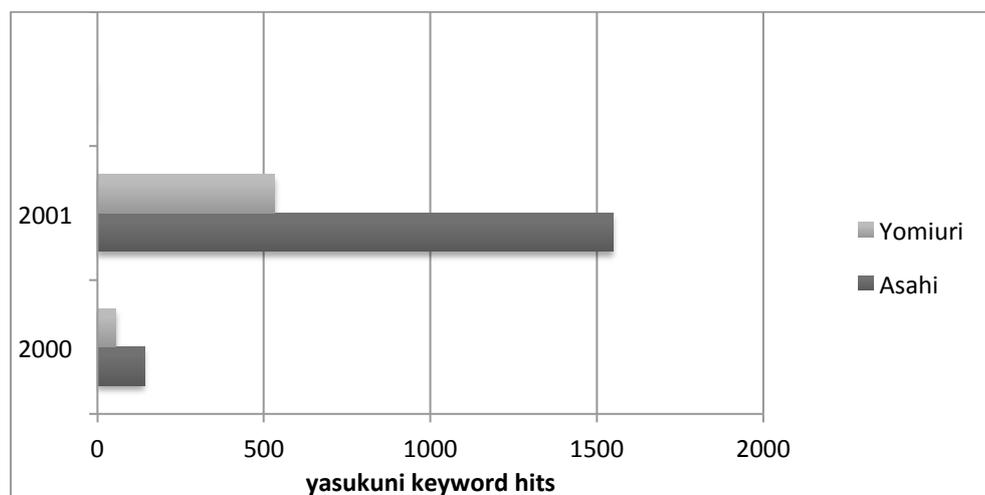


Source: Research conducted by the author via the databases *Yomidasu* and *Kikuzō*.

On the first visit to the Yasukuni Shrine the Japanese print media was split and basically represented both support and opposition to the visits along the lines of the political orientation every newspaper traditionally represented.

The *Yomiuri Shinbun*, supported the visit and argued in the same manner as the government itself, that the Yasukuni issue was a "domestic matter" (Seaton 2008: 166). Furthermore, it supported the change of date in Koizumi's visit and called it a "clever political strategy" (cf. Yomiuri Shinbun: 2001.08.14). To the contrary, the *Asahi Shinbun* argued against the visit, and referred to the separation of religion and state anchored in the Japanese Constitution (cf. Seaton 2008: 167). In the Asahi's view, the Yasukuni visit had been a "thoughtless action" which did not consider sufficiently diplomacy towards neighboring countries (cf. Tan and Ni 2009 and Asahi Shinbun: 2001.08.14).
As a result, no unified voice of the media was detectable throughout the year 2001. Argumentations were split comparable with the ambivalence of the Japanese public opinion.

When taking Kūki into consideration, we can see that no clear opinion climate existed for or against the first Yasukuni visit. The ruling LDP, unanimously supported the visit at the end, after the date had been changed. Before this decision was made, public opinion revealed a very ambivalent opinion trend, with no clear opinion magnitude advocating against the visit, despite the indication by the public that the prime minister should be

cautious. Moreover, the media, being the third party relevant in the determination of Kūki, was split in opinions as well. As a result, the prime minister was able to take the risk and accomplish his plan after disagreement among the elites - here typified by the coalition parties the New Kōmeitō and the New Conservative Party which were also in favor of changing the date - was removed.


## 7.3. Koizumi's visits in 2002 and 2003

In 2002 Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on April 21 for the spring festival. Koizumi's official statement for the visit was that "the purpose of my visit was to mourn sincerely all those who lost their lives for their country (…). It is not my intention to once again cause anxiety and elevate tension in Japan and abroad […]„ (Koizumi: Observation by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the Visit to Yasukuni Shrine, April 21, 2002).

With this visit Koizumi kept the promise he had made during his election campaign and visited Yasukuni Shrine again. The visit caught China, which thought the visit would not be repeated off guard, and resulted in heavy opposition. China postponed several defense and navy related high official meetings with Japan (Wan 2006: 247). Moreover, President Jiang Zemin showed an outrageous reaction and issued major concerns when he met with Kanzaki Takenori from the New Kōmeitō. Koizumi's response to China's criticism was that "the visit is my own private conviction" (*sanpai wa watashi no shinnen da*) (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (3): 2005.05.27), and "paying respect to the war dead is only natural" (Przystup 2002a). On August 9, 2002 Koizumi then announced the cancellation of his visit to China for the thirtieth anniversary of Sino-Japanese normalization, officially explaining that he had too many domestic obligations to attend to. Instead, he sent LDP SG Yamazaki to attend on his behalf (Przystup 2002b).

As in 2001, Koizumi's Yasukuni visit once again disturbed multilateral negotiations during the APEC summit in Mexico on October 27. Out of protest, China did not miss the opportunity to criticize the Yasukuni visits several times during the summit. Thereby, China succeeded in making the visits an issue of international high profile, while at the same time putting it on the summits agenda, next to issues of North Korea or international trade cooperations (Wan 2006: 248).

Public opinion regarding the second Koizumi visit was not easy to grasp. There were almost no public opinion polls focusing on the second visit since the visit came as a surprise. The only available source in 2002 is a question posed by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* on April 5, 2002, asking the public which aspects were of concern in connection with the Japanese Constitution. Only 11.7% replied that the official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine were a matter of concern (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2002.04.05). Compared to the poll posing the same question in 2001, in which only 6.7% saw a concern in the Yasukuni visits related to the Japanese Constitution (cf. Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2001.04.05), a slight rise in concern among the public could be observed. Both the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Asahi Shinbun* conducted opinion polls on Sino-Japanese relations in September, which, however, did not only deal with the Yakusuni issue. According to the *Yomiuri* poll, 49.7% of the respondents could not really decide if Sino-Japanese relations were on the right track, but 55% of the public indicated that they did not trust China. In the public's view, the main points that needed improvement in Sino-Japanese relations were the solution of historical problems and the improvement of cultural exchange (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2002.09.11). Accordingly, the public was very well aware that, among other issues, Yasukuni visits were a difficult aspect in Sino-Japanese relations.

The *Asahi* poll showed similar trends: 45% believed that Sino-Japanese relations were strained, compared to 41% who believed relations were good. When asked if Japan has compensated enough for the problems of the past, 44% believed that Japan had not done enough, and 42% that Japan's actions had been sufficient (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2002.09.27). This result suggests a slightly undecided opinion trend in dealing with historical problems. We, therefore, can assume that the Japanese public was unsatisfied with the Sino-Japanese relations, and was aware of the fact that dealing with historical issues had a strong impact on the improvement of the bilateral relations. However, people were undecided whether Japan was actually doing enough, because at the same time they mistrusted China.

Domestically, the year 2002 was dominated by efforts to implement structural reforms, which, nonetheless, brought about no recognizable results. In January, Prime Minister Koizumi had to reach a compromise over his plans to cut the highway related public works projects. However, opponents inside the LDP in favor of these efforts were strong. Therefore, Prime Minister Koizumi was caught in a deadlock situation. Moreover, the dismissal of FM Tanaka Makiko lead his support rate decrease to 39% in June, the lowest support rate since the beginning of his tenure (NHK Broadcasting Culture Research

Institute: 2002). As already described in previous chapters, the whole Koizumi Cabinet was stunned by the strong effect on support rate the dismissal of FM Tanaka had, and tried to implement countermeasures to win the public's support back (Iijima 2006: 107-110). It was, therefore, a clever strategic move to visit the Yasukuni Shrine in April in order to raise approval ratings from conservatives, since opposition towards Yasukuni was not very strong. From an international point of view, the chosen date for the visit was still safely distant from the thirty-year anniversary of Sino-Japanese diplomatic normalization in October of that year (Wan 2006: 246).

For the members of the LDP and close allies of Koizumi, the timing of the second visit to Yasukuni was a surprise. CCS Fukuda, LDP Secretary General Taku Yamasaki, and New Kōmeitō leader Kanzaki Takenori as well as Private Secretary Iijima Isao were only informed in the morning before his departure (Daily Yomiuri: 2002.04.22). The majority of the LDP as well as LDP Secretary General Koga Makoto - also Chairman of the JABF - supported Koizumi's visit during the Spring Festival and did not criticize the chosen date. They were convinced that all critical situations should be avoided on the sensitive day of August 15 (Daily Yomiuri: 2002.04.22).

In spite of that, sixty members of the Diet still visited the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, 2002, to clarify their standpoint that a visit on that particular date should be allowed and be possible. Moreover, these Diet members were convinced that Koizumi would visit the Shrine again in the following year, despite international criticism (Wan 2006: 247).

Once the Yasukuni visits became again an issue of mild discussion by the opposition, a private advisory body to the Chief Cabinet Secretary released a report in December 2002, "on how Japan should pay tribute to the memory of the war dead and pray for everlasting peace" (Daily Yomiuri: 2002.12.25). It was suggested that "a state-run facility not associated with any religion" should be established. The new independent facility was supposed to coexist with Yasukuni Shrine, whereby the former was to be a state-run facility and the latter a religious institution. However, according to lawmakers the report was not clear enough on how to realize such an alternative institution. Moreover, after the report was handed over to Prime Minister Koizumi, he still declared he would continue visiting the Yasukuni Shrine even if an alternative institution existed (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2002.12.25).

The third visit of the Yasukuni Shrine was on January 14, 2003 – again perceived as a surprise visit. As in the years before, it was a visit in Koizumi's official capacity as prime

minister. In order to circumvent complaints about the separation of state and religion, he avoided Shinto rituals during this visit. His official explanation was "It's a new year, and so with a fresh feeling, I'd like to realize anew the preciousness of peace and offer my prayers" (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.01.15).

The reactions from China and South Korea were once again very negative, and were commented by China as follows: "it seriously undermines the political foundation of China-Japan relations and hurts the feelings of the people of the victim Asian countries, including China as well" (Przystup 2003a). From a multilateral perspective, major hurdles of the Yasukuni controversy were once again faced during the ASEAN+3 summit in Bali, Indonesia on October 7, were China, South Korea and Japan were to discuss the Northeast Asian Free Trade Agreement. Herein, talks were overshadowed by complaints and remarks of the Chinese and South Korean side on the Yasukun visits. Sino-Japanese and Japanese-South Korean relations were questioned once more and Free Trade negotiations disturbed, since China made "a correct attitude toward history" a requirement for an adequate political foundation for Sino-Japanese relations and bilateral negotiations (Wan 2006: 251).

In an Upper House Budget Committee meeting on January 28, Prime Minister Koizumi once again reaffirmed his intention of visiting the Yasukuni Shrine every year, but without giving a clear statement on the date of future visits (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.02.02). He repeated his statement on June 19, adding that he did not believe the visits hurt Sino-Japanese relations (Wan 2006: 249). Although China was unsatisfied with the Yasukuni circumstances, bilateral meetings on high level, as for example between FM Li Zhaoxing and FM Kawaguchi and Prime Minister Koizumi, still took place. One reason for this was the North Korean abduction issue and Japan's negotiations with North Korea in the year 2003 (Wan 2006: 250). In October Prime Minister Koizumi declared for the third time his intention to visit Yasukuni Shrine the following year, and explained that in his view China should understand that his visits were not a revival of militarism, and that it was not his intention to disturb the Chinese-Japanese friendship (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.10.09).

Similar to 2002, there were almost no opinion polls in 2003 that posed questions on the Yasukuni visits. According to Ito (2008) no controversial issues regarding the Yasukuni visits were raised among the public, because the visit had already taken place in a surprise moment at the beginning of the year (Ito 2008: 47). However, Ito evaluated public opinion on the Yasukuni visits in the period January-June 2003 and June-November 2003. Alt-

hough his results were scarce, opposing opinions dominated over supporting opinions in the first half of the year, whereas in the latter half no public opinion trends could be recorded (cf. Ito 2008: 42). The *Mainichi Shinbun* conducted a poll on the Yasukuni visits on January 26, shortly after Koizumi visited the shrine. Results showed that public opinion was split with 47% approving and 43% opposing the visit (Mainichi Shinbun Poll: 2003.01.26). Overall, few public opinion polls lead to the indication that public opinion on the Yasukuni issue was not very present or vocal in 2003, and consequently, did not play a constraining role on the issue.

Since public opinion was split right after Koizumi's visit, and therefore, no strong opinion magnitude dangerous for Koizumi existed, he was able to continue with his plan. Moreover, support rates for the prime minister were still high in January, ranging at 60%, followed by a decreasing trend in February and March 2003 right after the visit, but recovering very fast by April, as can be seen in Figure 7.2:

**Figure 7.2: Support rates of the Koizumi Cabinet in 2003**
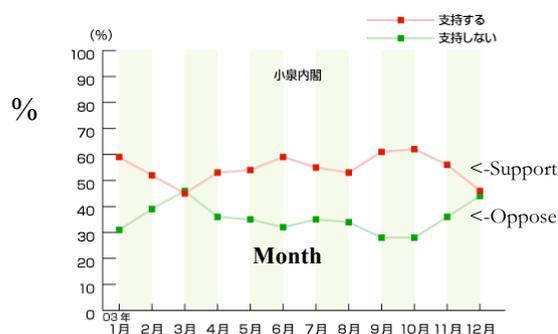


Source: NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute: 2003.

Although public opinion was not as vocal compared to 2001, a proof that public opinion was still an important variable in the decision-making process, is given by a comment of a close aid to the prime minister in the *Asahi Shinbun* in February 2003: "had the Prime Minister not visited the Yasukuni Shrine because of China, the Prime Minister's image would have been wounded, and he would have lost the support of public opinion" (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.02.02, translation by the author). It would have been a signal of backing down to foreign pressure, which represents weak leadership. Accordingly, public opinion

was still an important factor in the minds of the decision-making elite, and was taken into consideration.

Strategically speaking, Koizumi chose a wise date for his visit in 2003, because that year the Japanese public had already been confronted with new and severe decisions. First, there was the involvement of Japan in the Iraq War and the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq, followed by several plans for new emergency legislative and dispatch laws. Second, Prime Minister Koizumi was confronted with several unified local elections in the fall, followed by the Lower House elections - three important domestic key determinants concerning the good will of the public.

It can be assumed that Prime Minister Koizumi chose the date for the visit in the beginning of the year to avoid domestic discussions during the year, when major important decisions in other relevant fields had to be made, in which case public opinion would probably have to be led or be convinced of the validity of his decisions. According to public opinion theory (cf. Knecht and Weatherford 2006; LaBalme 2000), in this case, Koizumi tried to *anticipate* the reaction of public opinion because of other domestic issues. Hence, in this case as well, domestic issues were relevant for the decision-making process of timing the Yasukuni Shrine visits.

According to an article in the *Yomiuri Shinbun,* sources of the Prime Minister's Office had also indicated that the visit for the following year had already been scheduled in the second half of 2002. The reasoning behind this time schedule were domestic sentiments, on the one hand, but also the inauguration of two new administrations in China and South Korea in February and April 2003, on the other hand (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2003.01.15). This article is another proof for Koizumi's anticipation of public opinion, and of domestic influence in his decision-making on Yasukuni visits.

Unlike the visit in 2002, the secretary-generals of the three coalition parties were not informed in advance of the visit in 2003 (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.01.16). However, a general consensus in favor of the visits was reached among the ruling party members. According to an opinion evaluation by Ito (2008), in the period January-June 2003 and June-November 2003, supporters of the Yasukuni visit dominated over opposing opinions among members of the government (cf. Ito 2008: 52). This stance was corroborated by a visit of five members of the Koizumi Cabinet to Yasukuni on August 15, 2003 (Przystup 2003b).

The coalition partner New Kōmeitō, on the other hand, was very unsatisfied with the work of the LDP and Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine. In SG Kanzaki Takenori's view, the Yasukuni visits had caused only emotional harm. In his opinion, the whole handling of the Yasukuni issue so far had only changed the public's view towards China and South Korea. He believed the LDP's argumentation that China just "interferes in domestic issues" was no sufficient justification to ignore international criticism. In his view, although the declaration of the Yasukuni visits as a domestic issue had influence on Japan's international politics towards Asia, it was nevertheless, no proper excuse for the Prime Minister's visit (Ito 2008: 41-42). As a result, a cleft developed between the ruling coalition partners, in which, however, the majority party LDP represented a unified view, and supported the Yasukuni visits without showing significant negative effects on the work of the coalition.

In 2003 many intellectuals started to endorse the same arguments as Kanzaki had already propagated. Nonetheless, it was difficult to encourage a critical discussion among the public, because the public was split and there was no consensus or accepted notion on the issue (Ito 2008: 42). This fact also made it more difficult for the parties which opposed the Yasukuni Shrine visits to either form a coalition with the public against the visits made by the prime minister or to acquire momentum in mobilizing opposition.

In addition, younger LDP members, although supportive of the shrine visits, started being dissatisfied with the fact that Koizumi changed the date of his visit annually. In their view, the schedule of the visit should not have been affected by opinions in other countries (Daily Yomiuri: 2003.01.16).

The opposition parties, such as the DPJ, generally opposed the visits to Yasukuni Shrine by Prime Minister Koizumi and criticized him for visiting the Shrine before the inauguration of the new administrations in China and South Korea. Moreover, the DPJ, as well as the other opposition parties JCP and SDP, were in favor of the construction of the alternative independent memorial site that would coexist with Yasukuni (Asahi Shinbun: 2003.02.10). China's dissatisfaction with the present Japanese government as well as the DPJ's dissatisfaction with Koizumi, was reinforced by the meeting of the newly inaugurated President Hu Jintao with Kan Naoto of the DPJ in Beijing on April 16, 2003, before even considering a visit with Prime Minister Koizumi (Wan 2006: 249). For the DPJ, this was a welcome situation to strengthen their stance as opposition party against the LDP. However, it should be mentioned that this meeting was not initiated by the DPJ itself but rather by the Chinese side.

Figures 7.3 and 7.4 show, compared to the year 2001, media coverage of the Yasukuni issue dropped in the years 2002 and 2003:

**Figure 7.3 Keyword hits Asahi Shinbun 2001-2003**
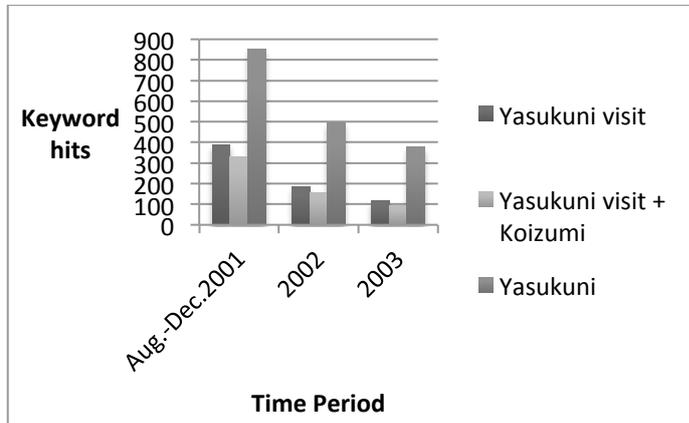


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Kikuzō visual II* databases.

**Figure 7.4: Keyword hits Yomiuri Shinbun 2001-2003**
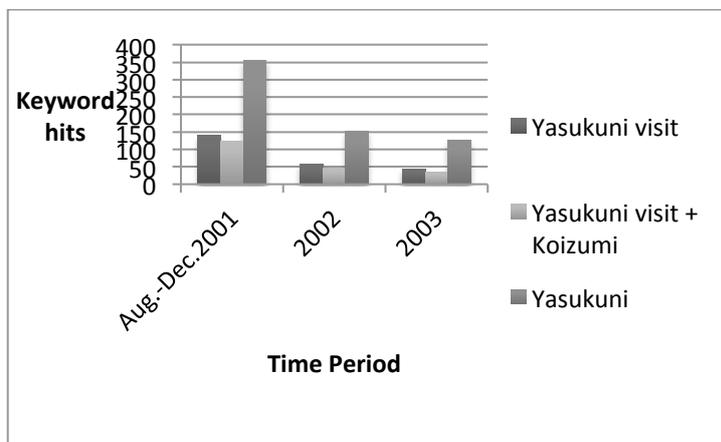


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Yomidasu Rekishikan* databases.

As can be seen in both figures, media coverage on the Yasukuni issue, and especially on Koizumi's Yasukuni visits, decreased in both newspapers. Throughout 2002 and 2003 the tone of argumentation among the newspapers did not change compared to the year 2001. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* basically still supported the Yasukuni visits, and continued to spread the argument that the shrine visits were a domestic issue and should not be interfered with by foreign countries (cf. Asano and Lee 2008: 40).

The *Asahi Shinbun,* on the other hand, continued its argumentation that the Yasukuni Shrine was a symbol of militarism, international sentiments had to be considered, and diplomacy with neighboring countries should not be jeopardized because it would harm Japan's national interest (cf. Asano 2008: 40 and Killmeier 2010: 344).

An analysis by Ito (2008) confirmed this trend, and found out that in the first half of 2003 media argumentation for or against the visit did not exist at all. A sophisticated argumentation only started in the latter half of 2003, when voices against the Yasukuni visits increased (Ito 2008: 51).

In sum, media coverage in 2002 and 2003 was not present to the extent that it could have framed particular trends of thought on the Yasukuni issue. The line of argumentation of each newspaper remained the same and still represented an ambivalent opinion, with the *Yomiuri* still supporting the visits and the *Asahi* opposing them.

In 2002 and 2003 the visible climate of opinion was more in favor of the Yasukuni visits than against it. One reason was that public opinion in both years was very silent on the issue and not really present. The few existing polls showed again an ambivalent opinion among the public. Although the public was well aware that historical issues, as in particular the Yasukuni visits, were a major reason for the deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations, public opinion was undecided on how to deal with the problem. The same trend was visible in the Japanese media. Media coverage in both years decreased compared with 2001. The strengths of arguments established, remained the same as in 2001, the media was still split.

The majority of the ruling LDP, on the other hand, approved both visits. Therefore, Kūki favoring the visit was more tenable than opposing views.


## 7.4. Koizumi's visit in 2004

Since Koizumi was reelected in 2003, whereby the ruling coalition of the LDP and the New Kōmeitō won 275 of 480 seats (Kabashima 2003), it became obvious that his Yasukuni visits had no effect on his public support rate. He, therefore, entered the new year on solid grounds, and visited Yasukuni again on January 1, 2004. It was his fourth visit to the controversial shrine. He signed the visitor's book as Prime Minister once more and commented:

> *He prayed for peace and prosperity (…) It is a Japanese New Year's Day custom to visit a shrine (…) I do not think people in any country will criticize others for paying respect to their history, traditions, and customs. (…) Japan's present-day peace and prosperity are not solely thanks to the people who are alive now but stand on the precious sacrifices of people who lived and died during the war against their will* (Przystup 2004a).

To accommodate any criticism, he informed the chairs of each coalition party policy research council right after his visit, to deliver Chinese authorities his message that he still considered China to be one of Japan's most important partners (Wan 2006: 252).

As expected, China's reaction to the visit of January 1 was negative, with the result that no mutual high-level governmental visits took place in 2004. Premier Wen Jiabao and Koizumi did not meet at the ASEM summit in Hanoi in Ocotber. Since Koizumi made the announcement to continue visiting the Yasukuni Shrine right after the previous ASEAN summit in 2003. Premier Wen "felt a loss of face" and showed no interest for further bilateral visits (Wan 2006: 255). Moreover, strong civil anti-Japanese protests took place at the Chinese hosted Asia Cup Soccer Tournament in July and August, where Chinese citizens took the opportunity to protest angrily against Koizumi's Yasukuni visits and Japan's historical perception (Cheung 2006: 27).

Having China's and South Korea's criticism in mind, Koizumi tried to reassure them in his address during the war dead memorial ceremony on August 15, that he wished peaceful diplomatic relationships and no dispute with other countries. "Japan will further develop its friendly relations with countries all over the world, and as a member of the international community, actively contribute to establishing lasting world peace" (Koizumi: Address by PM Koizumi at the 59th Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead, August 15, 2004).
For 17,4% of the Japanese public, the Prime Minister's Yasukuni visits posed a constitutional problem. A slight increase compared to 2003, when 16,9% believed the visits were problematic (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2003.04.02 and 2004.04.02).

The *Asahi Shinbun* revealed a poll in April 2004, which once again showed an uncertain opinion trend, resulting in 42% believing the Yasukuni visits should be continued, and 39% they should be stopped. The same poll showed that 59% of LDP voters supported the visits, whereas 59% of New Kōmeitō voters and 54% of DPJ voters demanded a stop of the visits (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.04.20) Support was mainly provided by the ruling-LDP. Uncertainty continued in June: a *Nikkei Shinbun* opinion poll showed, that the Japanese public was still split on the Yasukuni issue although the opponents dominated. 38% supported the visits and 42% opposed them in June (Nikkei Poll: 2004.06.16-19).

The ambivalent public opinion continued to prevail until the end of 2004, at which time, according to a *Mainichi Shinbun* opinion poll, 46% favored a continuation of the visits and 40% opposed them (Mainichi Shinbun Poll: October 2004 in: Przystup 2005). Similar results were obtained in an *Asahi* opinion poll, in which 39% demanded a stop of the visits, and 38% believed the Prime Minister should continue his visits. However, the same opinion poll showed that the majority of the respondents in favor of the visits also believed China's and South Korea's sensitivity should be taken into consideration when visiting the shrine, whereas 64% of the respondents in the *Mainichi* opinion poll did not believe China's demands were reasonable. A *Nikkei* opinion poll in December 2004 revealed similar results, and showed that 48% supported the visits while 38% opposed them (Mainichi Shinbun Poll: October 2004 and Nikkei Shinbun Poll: December 2004, in: Przystup 2005; Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.11.30).

An analysis by Ito (2008) further demonstrates that in the period from November 2003 to April 2004, voices regarding the Yasukuni issue started to be more present compared to the beginning of 2003. Although both ends of the opinion scale started to become vocal, opposing opinions dominated over supporting ones until mid 2004, and then turned back to a more supportive stance (Ito 2008: 42). Figure 7.5, depicting public opinion trends measured by *Asahi*, *Nikkei* and *Mainichi Shinbun* polls, illustrates how undecided the Japanese public was in 2004:

**Figure 7.5: Do you support or oppose a continuation of the prime minister's visits to Yasukuni?**
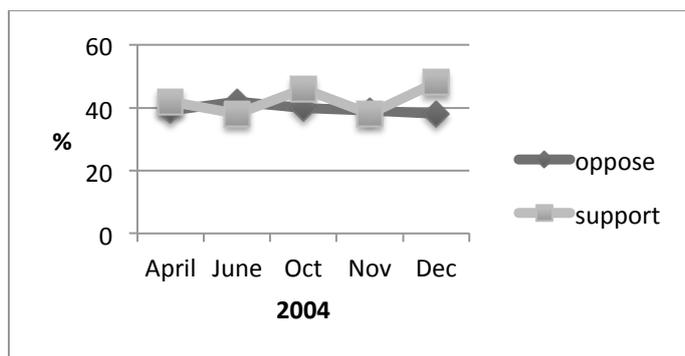


Source: Asahi Shinbun Poll 2004.04.20; 2004.11.30; Nikkei Poll: 2004.06.16-19; December 2004; Mainichi Shinbun Poll: October 2004.

What strengthened opposition were several district court suits in the first quarter of 2004 from petitioners who sought compensation, and claimed that Prime Minister Koizumi's visit in 2001 was unconstitutional and hurt their freedom of religion. In general, lawsuits were brought to six different district courts in Tokyo, Chiba, Osaka, Matsuyama, Fukuoka and Naha. The District Courts of Osaka and Matsuyama dismissed the Yasukuni suits. The Fukuoka District Court, however, declared the visits to be unconstitutional, but rejected compensation claims (cf. Okumura 2007). According to the judge "considering the possible influence on the public and judging from public opinion, the visit constituted religious activity by the state and its organs, banned by Art. 20 of the Constitution" (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.04.08).

In summary, we can say that although parts of the opposing public opinion began to become more vocal in the first half of the year and right after the visit had taken place, a strong and stable public opinion magnitude for opposition to the Yasukuni visits did not exist over the year in order to influence the prime minister not to visit the shrine. Throughout 2004 ambivalence was the overshadowing opinion result, with a slight increase in concern over international diplomacy issues. Moreover, the perception of China within Japan worsened, and resulted in 61% confirming that anti-Japanese demonstrations had created a certain negative feeling towards their view of China, and 34% answering it had not changed at all (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.09.01). The Cabinet Office annual opinion poll on foreign policy further revealed a drop of 10% of respondents having friendly feelings towards China than the year before. In 2004, 37,6% showed friendly feelings towards China and 58,2% did not (Cabinet Office 2004). This evolving negative public opinion trend encouraged Koizumi to continue his Yasukuni visits in order to show that he did not bow to China's demands. Nevertheless, 82% of the public still believed the Yasukuni visits by the prime minister and other officials influenced China's protests against Japan. This implied that although the majority of the Japanese public started to feel unsatisfied with Sino-Japanese relations and China's reactions, they admitted that the Yasukuni issue was a key factor. Ambivalence, therefore, also continued in this respect.

Lastly, Prime Minister Koizumi's support rate right after the visit was still very high, and showed exceptional 50% in his third year as prime minister (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.04.20). The Yakusuni visits and the diplomatic problems with China still did not seem to have an impact on the prime minister's popularity.

The Secretary Generals of all parties were only informed a few hours before Koizumi's visit to the shrine. Informing the New Koumeitou in advance was of major importance, because the LDP depended heavily on the cooperation with its smaller coalition partner in approving the dispatch of the SDF that year, and on gaining votes in the Upper House election in July.

An LDP official confirmed this assumption by admitting that Koizumi picked the early date right at the beginning of the year to prevent an impact on the decision to dispatch the SDF, which was scheduled between January and March of this year, and to leave enough time for the Upper House election campaign. Koizumi refrained from putting the Yasukuni issue on the election agenda. In order to prevent being accused of trying to win votes with the Yasukuni issue, he decided to keep an as long as possible time interval between his Yasukuni visit and the Upper House election (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.01.04). Besides the SDF dispatch order and the Upper House election, Koizumi had intended to draw final plans for the privatization of the three postal services (mail delivery, postal savings and insurance services) within the year, and was not at all interested in having other issues interfere with these plans, since he was keen to have the support of his own party and of the public. Once again, domestic issues and public support proved to be a relevant determinant when deciding the timing for the Yasukuni Shrine visit in 2004.

The LDP still had a very homogeneous opinion towards the Yasukuni visits and supported them. Especially the Fukuoka District Court decision that ruled Koizumi's visits unconstitutional, led to more advocacy in favor of the Yasukuni visits by high level LDP members as Kogo Makoto, former LDP Secretary General and Chairman of the Association of Bereaved Families or Yamazaki Taku, former LDP Vice President (Przystup 2004b). CCS Fukuda additionally declared that the Fukuoka District Court ruling "presented a view different from the government". Either way, district court rulings are not obligatory for the prime minister (Wan 2006: 254).

Prime Minister Koizumi's reaction to the district court judgment was similar. He could not understand the ruling, and said he would continue his visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in the same light, because his visits were "nothing but personal belief". At the same time he publicly stated for the first time since 2001 that his visits were made in a "private capacity" (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.04.09).

China's continuous opposition to the visits made LDP positions even stronger, and the opinion that the prime minister should not give in on China's demands, which was widely

represented among the Japanese public, was also encouraged by influential personalities among the ruling elite, especially by LDP Secretary General Takebe Tsutomu and LDP Deputy Secretary General Abe Shinzō - both personalities, well respected from the conservative public, because of their hard stance towards the North Korean abduction issue. To complement the support for the visits, five members of the Koizumi Cabinet visited the Yasukuni Shrine on the controversial date of August 15, 2004. In addition, 58 Diet members visited the Shrine in 2004 to demonstrate their position on the issue, and another 99 Diet members arranged visits for their staff (Przystup 2004c). In October 79 Diet members visited again the Shrine on the occasion of the autumn festival. This was a strong statement from the LDP in favor of the Yasukuni Shrine visits.

Among the ruling elites of the Koizumi Cabinet the position towards China was, therefore, quite congruent. In their view the Chinese anti-Japanese demonstrations had occurred "due to the continuous patriotic education purposely advocated by the Chinese regime under the leadership of Jiang Zemin" (Cheung 2006: 29). The general argumentation regarding China's criticism of the visits, was that China "should not interfere in domestic issues", and should not use the Yasukuni issue as a "foreign policy card" (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (1): 2005.05.25).

On the contrary, the coalition partner New Kōmeitō criticized the visit and endorsed the plans introduced by CCS Fukuda in 2002 to construct an independent alternative memorial site as soon as possible that would coexist with Yasukuni (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.01.08). The opposition party DPJ supported the alternative memorial site as well. The DPJ had claimed that, "the visit has resulted in damaging the national interest in its relation with China" (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.01.06).

Many within the government pledged for a fast construction of the new institution, however, the general LDP base was against the plans. Although the possibility to construct such an alternative memorial site was never rejected by the prime minister and his aids, the decision to fund such a project was continuously postponed, providing the undecided public opinion as a reason for their hesitance. Fukuda was quoted in 2004 as saying "it is meaningless if the memorial is built in an environment where it does not have unanimous support from the public" (Daily Yomiuri: 2004.01.08).

Although the New Kōmeitō criticized the Yasukuni visits, they did not condemn the mourning of war dead as such. The fact, that class A war criminals were enshrined at

Yasukuni, which lead to diplomatic tensions, disturbed the pacifist New Kōmeitō followers. Therefore, the domestic solution to build an alternative memorial was widely supported. At the same time, although the coalition party urged the prime minister to solve the diplomatic relations with neighboring countries, they never openly stated that the prime minister should literally "bow to other countries demands".

In 2004 the Yasukuni issue became more an issue of discussion when media coverage slowly increased again compared to the two years before as visible in Figure 7.6:

**Figure 7.6: Keyword hits Asahi Shinbun 2001-2004**
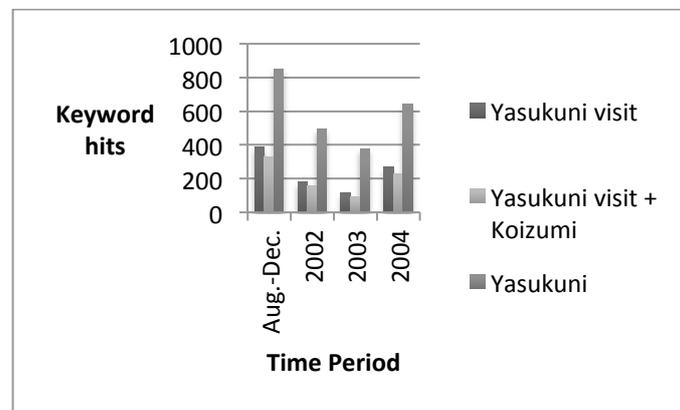


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Yomidasu Rekishikan* and *Kikuzō visual II* databases.

The reason why media coverage increased were the several court decisions on the Yasukuni visits by the prime minister, especially the decision of the Fukuoka District Court which had declared Koizumi's visit in 2001 to be unconstitutional. Both newspapers, the *Asahi* and the *Yomiuri* published editorials on the Fukuoka District Court decision. The *Yomiuri* took the opportunity to compare the Yasukuni visits with the official visits of politicians at Ise Shrine. The Ise Shrine is the most important Shinto shrine in Japan, and is also visited annually by officials. The *Yomiuri* doubted the unconstitutionality of the 2001 visit, and questioned the fact that the Ise Shrine visits were tolerated. In their opinion both visits were one and the same thing, and were made according to Japanese culture and customs. To emphasize this point, the newspapers repeated the argument "that it is a national issue how the prime minister of a country mourns war dead" (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2004.04.08; cf. Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai 2004c: 132+134). Furthermore, the *Yomiuri* argued in an

editorial on April 2004, that China only uses the Yasukuni issue as a "foreign policy-card" (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2004.04.04).

Not only the *Yomiuri*, but also the *Asahi* made an issue out of the comparison of the Yasukuni and the Ise Shrine visits. The *Asahi* argued that the unconstitutionality of the Ise visits was questionable as well, and further, that the Yasukuni Shrine was not the same as the Ise Shrine. Besides it argued, comparing the Ise visits with the Yasukuni visits was a drift in argumentation, because the Yasukuni visits were not only a problem of constitutionality but also a political and a diplomatic problem (Yomiuri Shinbun Ronsetsu Iinkai: 2004c: 133; Asahi Shinbun: 2004.04.08). Throughout 2004 the *Asahi's* coverage of the Yasukuni issue remained critical.

In terms of climate of opinion, we can say that a real Kūki still did not exist for or against the Yasukuni visits, because the public was still ambivalent, the media was still split in argumentation and was confronted with the government (mostly the ruling LDP), which was in favor of the visits. However, during 2004 a positive Kūki evolved around the argument "not to bow to China's demands". This argument was shared among the ruling-LDP as well as among the public and parts of the media, thus, indirectly developing Kūki for the prime minister, which meant acceptance of the Yasukuni visits and public tolerance of his action.


## 7.5. Koizumi's visit in 2005

By the end of 2004 the Cabinet's support rate was relatively low compared to the years before, ranging at 43% disapproving and 39% supporting the Koizumi administration (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2004.11.30). The year 2005, therefore, started with low public popularity, and additionally marked the first time in which opposition to the Yasukuni visits was stronger than in the years before, and made the whole affair a matter of concern for Koizumi.

At the same time, Sino-Japanese relations had been very strained since 2004, and almost no bilateral high official meetings were held. According to the Chinese side, the Yasukuni visits were the main reason for the deteriorated diplomatic relations. As a result, Koizumi did not announce a concrete date for his visit in 2005. Instead, he proclaimed throughout

the year that he would decide, "after making an appropriate judgment" (*itsu iku no ka tekisestu ni handan suru)* (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2005.05.17).

Twenty-one months after his last visit, the biggest time interval since 2001, Koizumi then visited the Yasukuni Shrine on October 17, 2005 for the autumn festival. For the first time, Koizumi's visit changed from official to a private visit. He neither signed the guest book nor entered the main hall of the shrine as he had done before. He officially declared afterwards, that he did not come in his official position as prime minister (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2005.10.18). The motive behind this were the various law suits in 2004 and 2005 against Koizumi, claiming violation of the constitution and of the principle of separation of state and religion, if his visits were made in his official capacity as prime minister. He also addressed China and South Korea in explaining that "I would like to keep explaining that Japan, as a pacifist nation, will never start war again and that it is reasonable to pay proper homage to the war dead" (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.18a).

The Chinese side, as expected, protested strongly and reacted by cancelling the foreign ministers meeting of October. Moreover, the timing of this years Yasukuni visit was chosen a year after the last ASEAN+3 meeting on November 30, 2004 but too close to the upcoming APEC summit in Pusan in November 18-19. As a result, President Hu denied meeting with Koizumi at all, only President Roh allowed a short bilateral talk. As in previous years, a summit of international importance for the Asia Pacific region was affected. This was accompanied by heavy protests by Chinese citizens in April 2005 comparable to the anti-Japanese demonstrations in 2004 (cf. Cheung 2006: 27). Koizumi's response to China's reaction was that "no foreign country should take issue with the way we express our condolences for the war dead" (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.18b). Domestically, it had been widely speculated beforehand when Koizumi would actually visit Yasukuni in 2005. There was no doubt among media or government elites that he would visit the shrine.

The year 2005 provided a picture of an insecure public opinion about Sino-Japanese relations. Strong Chinese protests had made the Japanese public more aware of the diplomatic problems the Yasukuni issue constituted. According to an *Asahi Shinbun* opinion poll in April 2005, 48% believed Koizumi should stop visiting Yasukuni and 36% believed he should continue. When asked if Sino-Japanese relations will take a positive turn in the future, the public was very ambivalent. 43% believed relations would be repaired somehow,

but 44% were not convinced. 56% of the public was very unsatisfied with the fact that Koizumi did not even attempt to offer an apology or compensation during the leadership conference that had just taken place on April 23, 2005, to improve dialogue between China and Japan (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.25; Ito 2008: 45). The public probably believed that this could have corrected the detrimental impression the Yasukuni visits had made. On the other hand, if asked whether they understood China's claim that "feelings of the Chinese have been wounded and that they wish a reconsideration of Japanese actions", 71% replied negatively, and only 19% positively. A clear opinion magnitude, that showed no supportive understanding of China's claims (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.04.25). Further-more, the anti-Japanese demonstrations that became more frequent, developed more and more into anti-Chinese sentiments within the Japanese public.

Although no understanding for China's sentmiments was present, a June poll showed that a majority of 52% still believed Koizumi should stop the visits and 36% he should continue (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.06.28). Gradually a more stable and clear opinion magnitude against the Yasukuni visit developed. The main reason for opposing the visit was that respondents considered it was important to be mindful of neighboring countries (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.06.28). The stable opinion magnitude changed back towards ambivalence in August, when the *Asahi Shinbun* asked the public on August 10 if the prime minister should continue the visits. 41% responded he should continue and 41% he should stop. The public was once again undecided (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.08.10). Opinion polls by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* revealed similar results. In May, 48% agreed with Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni while 45% disagreed (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.05.18). This can be partially accounted for by the fact that people who were against the Yasukuni visits changed their views and encouraged the visits in order "to defy China" or "so that China cannot use the Yasukuni-card anymore to intimidate the public", and the number of supporters decreased because of the heavy anti-Japanese protests in China and the deterio-rating relations (Ito 2008: 28).

However, the public was definitely against a visit on August 15, 2005. On August 17 the *Asahi* asked if it was fortunate or regrettable that Koizumi did not visit the Shrine on August 15. 61% answered it was fortunate and only 18% it was regrettable (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.08.17).

An *Asahi* poll of October after the visit asked the general public if Prime Minister Koizumi had to react to China's and South Korea's strong opposition to the visits: Ambivalence

among the public made public perception more insecure, and 53% answered he should react and only 35% said it was not necessary. Moreover, 65% were concerned over the deteriorating relations with China and South Korea. On top of that, 51% agreed to the idea of a new national institution to mourn the war dead, and only 28% opposed it (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2005.10.19). Clearly, public opinion in October had developed strong concerns over Japan's diplomatic relations with its Asian neighbors, and as a consequence favored cautious moves by the prime minister. However, if asked directly about the visit, as in August, the public remained ambivalent after all, and although it showed an opposing opinion at the beginning of the year (June/July), it changed back to ambivalence by the end of the year.

As in 2004, when six lawsuits at district courts had been rejected, three rulings by High Courts in 2005 were made against Koizumi's Yasukuni visit of 2001, however, all with different verdicts. A group lawsuit of 338 plaintiffs had made an appeal to the Osaka High Court claiming the visit had stressed them mentally, and demanded compensation from the government and the prime minister. On September 30, 2005 the Osaka High Court ruled Koizumi's visit to be official, and, as a result, declared it unconstitutional. The rational behind this ruling was that Koizumi had arrived with an official car and had never declared whether the visits were official or private. However, the judge denied the plea for compensation. It was the first such judgment made by a high court (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.01a). By comparison, the Osaka District Court had ruled the visit to be private in 2004. Moreover, the Tokyo High Court, which tried similar lawsuits, considered the visits to be nonofficial, and "noted that Koizumi's acts of worship at the shrine were based on his personal religious beliefs" (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.01a). The Takamatsu High Court passed judgment on whether damage had been done due to Koizumi's visit in 2001 and came to the conclusion that "damage had not been done, and did not address the constitutionality because a court could make judgments on constitutionality only when it was necessary to do so in settling a particular dispute", which was not the case at hand according to the judges (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.14).

Since domestic discussion over the Yasukuni issue had slowly grown, the LDP emphasized for the first time in their annual party meeting in January the importance of Yasukuni Shrine visits by LDP members and officially positioned itself (Wan 2006: 256). Further, on August 2, 2005 Diet members - the majority being from the LDP - formulated a statement,

in which Prime Minister Koizumi was requested not to bow to Chinese pressure, continue the Yasukuni visits and fulfill his promise to visit the shrine on August 15 that year. At the same time, 60 LDP members newly founded the official "group which supports the prime ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine" (Wan 2006: 257). On August 15, 23 former lower house members and 24 upper house members together with Deputy SG Abe Shinzou and Transport Minister Kawasaki Jirō visited the Yasukuni Shrine (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.08.16). What the LDP Yasukuni proponents continuously tried to sell to the public was that Prime Minister Koizumi's visits were made out of his personal belief. Moreover, in their view, the Yasukuni issue was solely a domestic issue, and had nothing to do with foreign policy towards China or South Korea. With these arguments they tried to counteract domestic and international criticism.

At the same time, although in a minority position, criticism also rose in June among LDP lawmakers. For example Kōno Yōhei, speaker of the Upper House and one of the pro-Chinese members of the LDP, tried to discourage Koizumi from visiting the shrine again, by telling him that he spoke to several former Japanese Prime Ministers, who all urged the prime minister to deal with the Yasukuni issue cautiously (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.06.09). What had even been more surprising, was the fact that even former LDP SG and chair of the Japan War Bereaved Families, Kogo Makoto, started to mitigate against his former statements and reminded Koizumi that "consideration and sympathy toward neighboring countries" need to be kept in mind (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.06.09). However, Makoto stressed at the same time that this was his own opinion, and did not represent the opinion of the Association of War Bereaved Families, who appreciated the Yasukuni visits (Tomisaka 2005: 148). Further, the Policy Research Council Chairman of the LDP as well as the General Council Chairman of the LDP asked Koizumi for cautiousness and thoughtfulness on the Yasukuni issue (cf. Daily Yomiuri: 2005.06.09). Additionally, the tensions with China caused by the Yasukuni visits, made the Horiuchi and the Ozato factions of the LDP, which were concerned with the bad influence of the visits on Sino-Japanese relations, to propose a discussion over a cooperation of their factions, in view of the party presidential election in September. This move would have strengthened the opposition against Koizumi and his proponents (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.06.28).

In contrast to the LDP, the New Kōmeitō enhanced its efforts during the year to prevent Koizumi from visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. New Kōmeitō voters were clearly against visits, as public opinion polls of the *Asahi Shinbun* had shown (cf. Asahi Shinbun Poll:

2004.04.20; 59% of the Kōmeitō voters were for stopping the visits). This trend strengthened in 2005. New Kōmeitō leader Kanzaki Takenori tried to convince the prime minister, that sentiments of other countries should be taken into consideration. However, he was cautious in confronting Koizumi directly with his argument, although he officially stated that the visits could damage the coalition (Asahi Shinbun: 2005.05.27 in: Ito 2008: 45); Daily Yomiuri: 2005.05.28; 2005.06.09). "I wish the visits at the Yasukuni Shrine would not be only his sole private conviction/belief rather the belief/wish of all" (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 20.05.2005; Ito 2008: 44). New Kōmeitō tried to pressure the LDP and Koizumi by threatening to risk the coalition, because it was well known that the LDP needed the votes of its coalition partner to win the absolute majority in the Upper House election. Furthermore, the small coalition partner strongly advocated the realization of the alternative memorial plans suggested by CCS Fukuda in 2002, and asked Koizumi to consider the construction of the alternative memorial facility in the state budget of FY 2006 (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2005.10.18b).

Despite opposition, the New Kōmeitō's comment after Koizumi's visit had taken place, was made in the same spirit as previous comments, by backpedaling with their threat that it would have hurt the coalition. Two days after Koizumi's visit Kanzaki stated at a press conference:

> *[…] it may have an adverse effect [on New Komeito's ties to the LDP], though it will not cause us to end our coalition with the LDP […] We are anxious about the prime minister's visits causing worse feelings between Japan and its Asian neighbors […] the prime minister should give detailed, convincing explanations about his real intentions* (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.19).

The opposition parties regretted Koizumi's visit as in the years before, and tried to press him to act cautiously. In their view relations with neighboring countries were the main concern. Moreover, they openly questioned Koizumi's qualification as prime minister (Daily Yomiuri: 2005.10.18b). Okada, from the DPJ, openly criticized all four visits and argued that "the fact that class A war criminals are enshrined at Yasukuni make him feel a sense of guilt, therefore he decided not to visit the shrine" (Asahi Shinbun: 2005.06.17 in Ito 2008: 45). At the same time, the DPJ declared China in their party platform to be an actual threat, and proclaimed, "that the bitter resentment felt by the Japanese and Chinese about each other has largely arisen from actions taken by China in recent years. China has rapidly stepped up its military preparedness. The country's demand for the prime minister to stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine is an act of interference in our internal affairs" (Daily

Yomiuri: 2005.01.25 and Przystup 2006a). This showed that the DPJ's opposing argumentation was fragmented and inconsistent as well. On the one hand they opposed the prime minister's visit, but on the other hand, they supported the LDP's definition of Yasukuni as a domestic affair.

Apart from the different Japanese parties, several important political individuals also critically raised their voice for the first time since Koizumi had started his visits. First and foremost former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhirō. In an interview of the *Koizumi Diplomacy Series* (*Koizumi gaikō*) in the *Yomiuri Shinbun,* Nakasone declared his opposition to Koizumi's Yasukuni visits. In his opinion "to identify the whole nation's thoughts with one's own belief, is a very important political factor. Therefore, it is bad to just pursue one's own belief, and not weigh the national interest as a maximum" (Yomiuri Shinbun: Koizumi Gaikō (19): 2005.06.22, translation by the author). He also recommended the removal of the Class A war criminals from Yasukuni Shrine. Further, he warned the LDP and Prime Minister Koizumi "to build a policymaking regime that can put the brakes on populism and bring more depth to politics" (Kajimoto: 2005.11.23). Former Prime Minister Murayama also commented in an interview with the *Asahi Shinbun* that "tensions among countries should not occur because of national sentiments […] the reason (for tensions) are the Yasukuni visits of political elites and the discount of the historical past" (Ito 2008: 44, translation by the author).

Although ignored by Koizumi in the first place, the numerous opposing voices that emerged during 2005, sustained the public's skeptical view over the visits and encouraged a growing Kūki against the Yasukuni visits.

As far as domestic political issues were concerned, Koizumi was strongly challenged in debates over his postal privatization bills – the heart of his economic reform plan. Together with the confrontation over the Yasukuni issue, the political atmosphere in the first half of 2005 was tense. However, Koizumi needed the support of his party, and had to avoid confrontation with his coalition partner the New Kōmeitō, if he wanted to win the elections in the second half of 2005. In addition, his postal privatization plans were insurmountably opposed within the LDP.

Having the elections and his reform plans in mind, Koizumi spoke of his intentions to visit Yasukuni only abstractly. Due to the criticism that arose from all sides of the domestic sphere - public opinion, former party members and prime ministers, coalition partners and

opposition parties - and the development of a very critical climate of opinion, he just commented he "would judge appropriately" without giving too many details, which would have caused people to speculate upon. By deciding not to make the Yasukuni visit an issue of debate in the upcoming election, he avoided the danger to be confronted with opposition in his further plans, because one great obstacle had been cleared away (Koizumi Speech: Dissolution of the Diet 2005.08.08). We can assume that by avoiding the issue and staying unclear over his intentions, Koizumi strategically *led* the public into the dark on the Yasukuni issue. As soon as he had won the elections with a huge majority of 296 out of 480 seats, had reshuffled his cabinet and had passed the postal reform bills in the Upper House on October 14, Koizumi visited Yasukuni Shrine two days afterwards, since it could not hurt him domestically anymore.

In 2005 media coverage of the Yasukuni issue reached its highest peak as depicted in Figures 7.7 and 7.8:

**Figure 7.7: Keyword hits Asahi Shinbun 2001-2005**
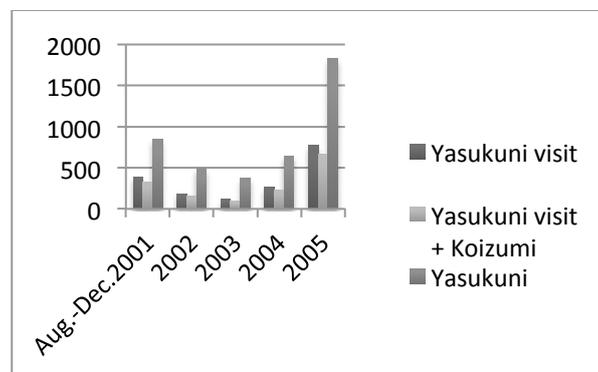


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Kikuzō II visual* database.

**Figure 7.8: Keyword hits Yomiuri Shinbun 2001-2005**
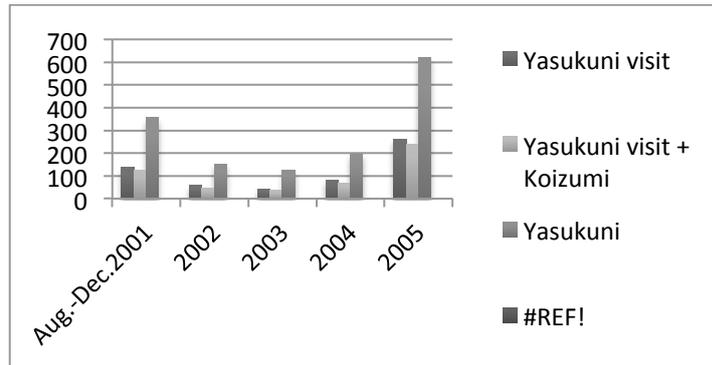


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Yomidasu Rekishikan* databases.

At the same time a great drift from earlier argumentation in both major newspapers became apparent. Up to 2005, the *Asahi* continuously opposed the Yasukuni visits and linked militarism, war history accomplishment, and bad diplomacy towards Asian countries with the shrine visits of Prime Minister Koizumi. However, article analysis by Killmeier and Chiba (2010) and Asano and Lee (2008) have shown, that the *Asahi Shinbun* commenced to change their coverage from 2005 onwards. Although still opposing the Yasukuni visits, Killmeier and Chiba have argued that the *Asahi's* coverage became more "fragmented" in the years 2004-2006, by criticizing the mourning of war class A war criminals on the one hand, but taking up the "domestic issue" argument, on the other hand, and questioning whether Japan should really bow to demands of other countries (Killmeier and Chiba 2010: 345). In 2005 the *Asahi* started to acquire an ambivalent school of thought in its articles, without in principle following a clear opposing or supportive argumentation.

   The Yomiuri's change in article coverage was more obvious. Although supporting Prime Minister Koizumi's visits for the past years, the *Yomiuri* indirectly withdrew its uncondi-tional support for the visits in a bilateral dialogue between the Chief editors of the *Yomiuri Shinbun* Watanabe Tsuneo and of the *Asahi Shinbun* Wakamiya Yoshibumi. Watanabe officially issued his personal opposition for future visits to the Yasukuni Shrine. Although never literally mentioning in its articles that the Yasukuni visits should stop, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* started instead to advocate in several articles for the alternative war memorial plan introduced by CCS Fukuda in 2002. At the same time, a one-year series of articles on war history was introduced, for the purpose of promoting historical awareness in Japan (Wakamiya and Watanabe 2006). Whilst indirectly effecting a different sort of coverage,

Killmeier and Chiba (2010) highlight that even though the special series on wartime history was promoted by the *Yomiuri*, "the Yasukuni representations remained consistent in its regular news coverage, providing a patriotic view of wartime history" (Killmeier and Chiba 2010: 346).

Moreover, an analysis by Asano and Lee (2008) showed that until 2005, 71% of all articles related to the Yasukuni issue mainly dealt with the diplomatic dispute. This trend changed in 2005, when the issue of breach of the constitution and the perception of history surfaced in the articles (Asano and Lee 2008: 46).

In summary, the media coverage of the Yasukuni issue increased to top levels in 2005, and at the same time the focus of argumentation changed, with the result that for the first time the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* views on the issue almost coincided, and indirectly reflected a unified voice, namely that Koizumi's Yasukuni visits were critical and should not be continued.

Although Koizumi was of the opinion, that "it did not matter when he goes because he would be criticized anyway" (*itsu itte mo hihann sareru, itsu itte mo onaji da*) (Ito 2008: 47, translated by the author), the time interval between his visits in 2004 and 2005, was the largest ever. This was due to the fact that for the first time Kūki in favor of the visits had dropped, and criticism prevailed, dictated by the two main determinants, public opinion and the media. Public opinion had changed, and so did the way of argumentation in the *Asahi Shinbun* and *Yomiuri Shinbun*. Support was withdrawn and caution was widespread. Even consensus among the ruling elites of the LDP started to weaken and criticism arose also from former Prime Ministers. This "cautious" Kūki made Koizumi choose the time of his visit in 2005 for the end of the year, leading to the biggest time gap between successive visits ever. A Kūki analysis by Ito (2008) from 2003-2005 (Figure 7.9) vividly depicts this assumption:

**Figure 7.9: Kūki development regarding the Prime Minister's visits to Yasukuni Shrine**
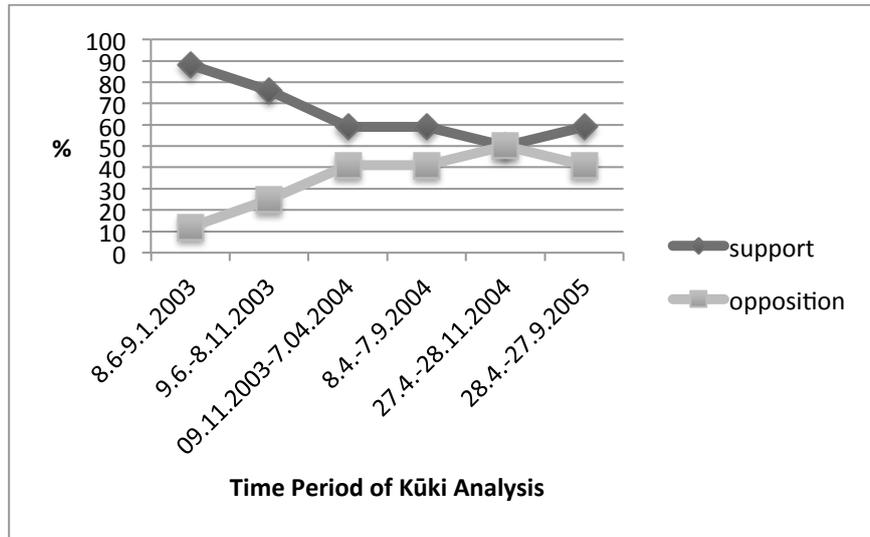


Source: Figure translated and reconstructed from Ito 2008: 58.

Although Kūki for caution was present, it was more a weak form of "one should not do what people do not like" (Ito 2008: 28). As Professor Soeya Yoshihide from Keio University in Tokyo said: "at this point in time public opinion supported the shrine visits not because of Yasukuni as such, but because of the China-factor and China protesting against the visits" (Interview: 2010.09.13). Moreover, the Kūki to defy China's demands grew in favor of Koizumi and his visits. Accordingly, in the long run, although general opposition grew and the essence of Kūki had changed, which made the decision for the timing of the visit more difficult, it was no strong Kūki clearly asking for a halt of the visits, that could really have stopped future visits to Yakusuni, since the anti-China sentiment-Kūki was stronger. Moreover, the majority of the LDP still supported prime ministerial visits.

## 7.6. Koizumi's visit in 2006

The last visit of Koizumi Junichirō in his tenure as prime minister was a showdown and the final delivery on his election promise in 2001 to visit the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15 – and so he did. It was the only promise left to be fulfilled by Koizumi. At the beginning of the year, prior to his visit, Sino-Japanese relations had improved for the first time since one year. High-level bilateral meetings had not taken place since the end of 2004. On May 23, 2006 the foreign ministers meeting of China and Japan resumed again. Although the

Yasukuni visits were a major issue of discussion both countries agreed on expanding bilateral cooperation (Przystup 2006b).

Nonetheless, Koizumi visited Yasukuni on the most critical date, as far as diplomatic relations with China and South Korea were concerned, and his statement was fully broadcasted by NHK. It was Koizumi's close assistant Iijima Isao's wish not to conceal any of the Prime Minister's emotions while he spoke, therefore, he had ordered to broadcast the whole interview (Iijima 2006: 315). In his speech he once more pledged the importance to contribute to world peace, and referred to Japanese military aggression during World War II causing damage to neighboring countries. Moreover, he stated it was a responsibility to pass lessons learned to the next generation (Iijima 2006: 316-317).

At the beginning of the year public opinion polls were focused already more on Koizumi's successor than on Koizumi himself. However, the Yasukuni issue was still a very present problem among the Japanese public. When asked in January if the next prime minister should visit Yasukuni, 46% answered he should better not visit, and only 28% replied in favor of a visit. For 71% of the respondents the Yasukuni issue was a concern that had to be considered in the upcoming elections.

However, the public was unsure of how to deal with the issue. When asked if discussion of the visits by the next prime minister was necessary, 46% answered yes and 46% answered no. The indecision among the public was visible, which precisely reflected the public opinion magnitude observed in 2001-2006 (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.01.31). The critical trend towards visits by the future prime ministers changed by May 2006, when the *Asahi Shinbun* asked the public if it supported or opposed visits of the Japanese prime ministers to Yasukuni Shrine. 50% supported them and only 31% opposed them. When asked how the government should react to Chinese and South Korean criticism, 51% replied the government should only react to a certain extent, while 41% were of the opinion that the government should react strongly. 37% of the respondents still believed that Yasukuni was the right place to mourn the war dead. Only 19% responded that class A war criminals should stop being enshrined at Yasukuni, and 19% were in favor of an alternative institution (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.05.02). Once again ambivalence was present. In July, the conviction that the next prime minister should not visit the Yasukuni shrine increased again. 60% believed the next prime minister should better not visit the shrine and only 20% believed he should. Even among the LDP voters the opinion against future visits increased and reached the majority level. When polled if Koizumi should fulfill his plan to once again

visit Yasukuni before his tenure as prime minister ended, 57% believed he should better not visit and only 29% believed he should. Nevertheless, even among supporters of the visit, the majority was against a visit on August 15, 2006 (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.07.25). After Prime Minister Koizumi made his visit on August 15, the *Asahi Shinbun* surveyed the public's viewpoint on Koizumi's visit. 49% replied that it was good that he had visited, and 37% he should not have visited. Similar results were obtained by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* poll, in which 53% supported Koizumi's visit and 39% opposed it (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2006.08.17). However, when asked whether the next prime minister should visit or not, a similar trend as in the months before was recorded: 47% believed the next prime minister should not visit Yasukuni and 31% he should visit (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.08.23). The results of the Asahi opinion polls revealed that the majority of the public tolerated Prime Minister Koizumi's visits, albeit with ambivalence as in the years before, but was definitely against visits of future prime ministers.

According to *Yomiuri Shinbun* polls, 61% of the public believed that the Yasukuni visits were at least (partially) responsible for the cancellation of high-level meetings between China and Japan. Moreover, 53% believed that Sino-Japanese relations were in a precarious state. Only 44% did not think so (Yomiuri Shinbun Poll: 2006.04.25).

Domestically, although being confronted with lots of criticism, Koizumi had nothing to lose. His tenure as prime minister ended in September, he had passed his postal reform bill already in 2005, and major focus was concentrated on his successor and the future LDP presidential elections. As in the years before, the political elite in 2006 was split among LDP members, who supported the Yasukuni visits, and opposition party members who were against the visits. A survey in March 2006 conducted by Ryu (2007: 717) showed, that 53% of the LDP supported a continuation of the Yasukuni visits by the prime minister and 77% of non-LDP members opposed a continuation. The main reason for supporting the visits was that it was the proper way to mourn the war dead (53%), while 39% of the opposition said they were against a continuation, because of the worsening relations with neighboring countries (Ryu 2007: 719). Whereas the LDP members believed that China and South Korea protested because they wanted to promote domestic nationalism (50%), the opposing non-LDP members believed that this protest was due to the enshrinement of class A war criminals at Yakusuni (Ryu 2007: 722). As already visible in the opinion process until 2005, the LDP members believed the Yasukuni Shrine was the appropriate memorial

to mourn the war dead whereas non-LDP members, who represented the opposition camp, supported the idea of an alternative memorial site (60%) (Ryu 2007: 723). As a result, the ruling-LDP still delivered a homogenous view on the Yasukuni issue and supported it, whereas the other parties remained in opposition.

Unlike the years before, the business community commented the Yasukuni Shrine issue for the first time with the remark, that deteriorated relations with China due to the Yasukuni visits of the prime minister, might hurt bilateral economic relations and the Japanese economy. The Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Dōyūkai) called for a new Yasukuni policy, and advocated for the alternative memorial facility that had been suggested by other instances before. Keizai Dōyūkai took the initiative to formulate an open statement to the Chinese people asking for understanding, and suggested several proposals for bilateral cooperation that could be pursued (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2006.05.10). Koizumi's reaction to the business community's criticism not to visit Yasukuni because it hurt bilateral business relations was: "I have clearly rejected that idea on the grounds that it is different from politics" (Deans 2007: 277).

Although media coverage fell a little in 2006 compared to 2005, it was still very high and outweighed the coverage in 2001 as depicted in Figures 7.10 and 7.11:

**Figure 7.10: Keyword hits Asahi Shinbun 2001-2006**
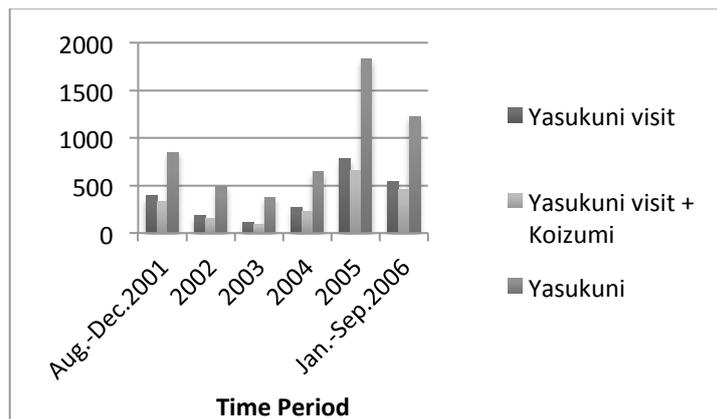


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Kikuzō II visual* databases.

**Figure 7.11: Keyword hits Yomiuri Shinbun 2001-2006**
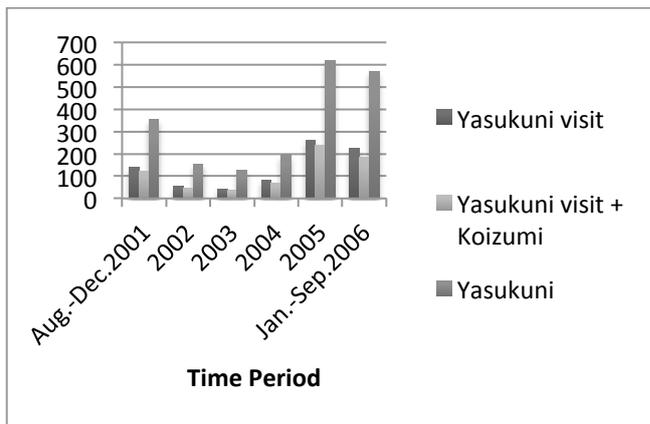


Source: Research conducted by the author via *Yomidasu Rekishikan* databases.

In general, the tone of argumentation did not change much in 2006. Both major newspapers remained ambivalent in their view, and did not share a complete common ground, despite slight changes in the tone and way of argumentation.

What enhanced the discussion and made the Yasukuni issue a more controversial topic for Koizumi was the publication of the „Tomita Memorandum" by the *Nikkei Shinbun* on July 20, 2006 (cf. Nikkei Shinbun: 2006.07.20). The Tomita Memorandum were notes by a former grand steward of the Imperial Household Agency named Tomohiko Tomita, who had documented that late Emperor Hirohito (1926-1989) had stopped visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, because of dissatisfaction with the fact that World War II class A war criminals were enshrined there (Nikkei). Since all news media published the memorandum, a national debate on official visits to the Yasukuni started again and dominated the public's attention (Yomiuri Shinbun: 2006.08.16).

This was greatly reflected in the public's opinion on future visits. According to an *Asahi* poll in July 2006, 63% of the respondents said that the remarks of the late emperor should be taken into consideration when deciding to visit Yasukuni. The Tomita Memo also made LDP supporters change their view on future visits of a prime minister. In July 2006, 42% still supported the visit and 34% opposed it. This trend changed in July. Only 32% were left believing the Yasukuni should be visited, whereas 47% opposed it (Asahi Shinbun Poll: 2006.07.25). Nevertheless, Koizumi ignored these feelings and admitted that the disclosure of the memorandum had no effect on his decision, because visiting the Yasukuni Shrine was a personal and individual decision (Przystup 2006c).

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When counting the articles published on the issue, we observe again that the *Asahi* tried to discuss the issue openly in seven articles between July 20 and August 16, 2006, whereas the *Yomiuri Shinbun* only published one article on the topic. Both newspapers returned to their original standpoint, the *Yomiuri* being supportive of the governments handling of the issue and the Asahi being critical.

Kūki was critical during 2006. Up to July, but especially in July, after the disclosure of the Tomohita Memo, public opinion preferred no visits to Yasukuni, particularly when brought in association with future prime ministers' visits. However, if asked directly whether Koizumi should cancel his visit or not, ambivalence and/or support from public opinion and the media dominated the climate. This was due to the still prevailing climate of opinion "not to bow to China's demands". However, if a new beginning was to be made with a new prime minister, then the whole discussion on the Yasukuni visits should be terminated.

For his final visit in 2006, Prime Minister Koizumi *ignored* all opinion trends. He was not confronted with big risks for his position, because his tenure was about to end. Yet, he was able to fulfill his original promise to visit the shrine annually, and additionally to visit it on August 15, 2006, thus remaining credible to the Japanese public.

## 7.7. Analysis

In the previous section, I have reconstructed the annual visits of Prime Minister Koizumi to Yasukuni Shrine under special consideration of public opinion as a determining variable in the process to decide whether and when to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. This section provides an analysis of this process with a special emphasis on the explanatory variables that link public opinion and Prime Minister Koizumi's reaction.

### 7.8.1. Was public opinion an important variable in the decision-making process?

In order to answer this first question, we must compare the original plans of Prime Minister Koizumi with the actual demands of public opinion.

*What were the original plans of Prime Minister Koizumi?*

The original plan of Prime Minister Koizumi was to annually visit the Yasukuni Shrine on August 15, the day of Japan's surrender in World War II, in his official capacity as Prime Minister. According to his statement, his visits were private and were made to express feelings of respect and gratitude to the war dead.

*What were public opinion's demands?*

Public opinion showed very mixed signals regarding the Yasukuni issue. What was clear, was that the public preferred Yasukuni Shrine visits on any date, other than August 15. The majority clearly rejected this particular date. Furthermore, they demanded cautiousness by the prime minister in his diplomatic behavior towards the Asian neighboring countries, which could also implied stopping the Yasukuni visits as prime minister, evidenced in several answers in opinion poll as to whether the future prime minister should visit Yasukuni Shrine. However, public opinion also demanded strong leadership and was against bowing to foreign pressure.


*Where the planned activities retracted or softened?*

Prime Minister Koizumi fulfilled his plan to annually visit the Yasukuni Shrine throughout his tenure as prime minister. Apart from his last visit in 2006, he did not manage to visit the shrine every year on August 15. Instead his visits turned out to be on various dates, announcing them on short-notice. Moreover, year after year, his visits turned from official to private, and from exercising all Shinto rituals to exercising no ritual at all at the end.

As a result, on the one hand, public opinion was *no* important variable in the decision-making process of *deciding for or against the visit* to Yasukuni shrine, but on the other hand, one can say that public opinion played a relevant role in the decision-making process of choosing *the timing* of the visit. When taking this aspect into consideration, public opinion *was* an important variable in the process and had a *constraining* function to that effect, as the prime minister was not able to visit the shrine annually on August 15, as originally planned. He had to change the date of his visits every year and adjust the timing according to public opinion and domestic circumstances. The relative importance of these factors will be discussed in the sections to follow.

*7.8.2. What factors may account for this outcome?*

The following Table 7.1 summarizes the outcome and value of the relevant explanatory factors or conditions, defined in the theoretical chapter, that linked public opinion and the decision-maker in this case study.

*What was the value of each explanatory condition in this case?*

**Table: 7.1: Result of Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni Shrine**

| Case Study | Outcome | Opinion Magnitude | Consensus/ Disagreement among elites | Opinion Coalition - Building | Domestic incentives | Kūki | Decision Stage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Yasukuni visits of Prime Minister Koizumi | Original course remained. Public ignored. Constrained in timing of visit | Ambivalence Issue public given but very weak from opposition site. Strong in support of visits | Elite consensus among the LDP given! | Given among supporters of visits. Opposition parties fragmented in argumentation, did not form an opinion coalition with each other and with the opposing parts of public opinion | High | No Kūki at first against the visits. Kūki "do not bow to China's demands" established. Kūki reversion from ambivalence to anti-China stance | No effect either at the beginning or the end, only in timing. |

*Opinion majorities and magnitudes*

In several interviews with Japanese officials or journalists the most frequent answer to the question whether public opinion was a relevant factor in the Yasukuni shrine visits issue was: „public opinion was split. Opponents and supporters were divided 50:50" (Interview Soeya, Yoshihide: 2010.09.13). The case study analysis conducted above confirms this statement. Public opinion is only powerful if a strong opinion magnitude of over 50% over a long time period is given for one position. In the case of the Yasukuni Shrine issue this was not the case. Public opinion magnitudes were split and therefore according to Graham's theory (1994: 197) insignificant for the prime minister's reaction. Moreover, in the years 2002 and 2003 even not measurable, as is clearly seen in Figure 7.12:

**Figure 7.12: Do you support or oppose the Yasukuni visit of the prime minister?**
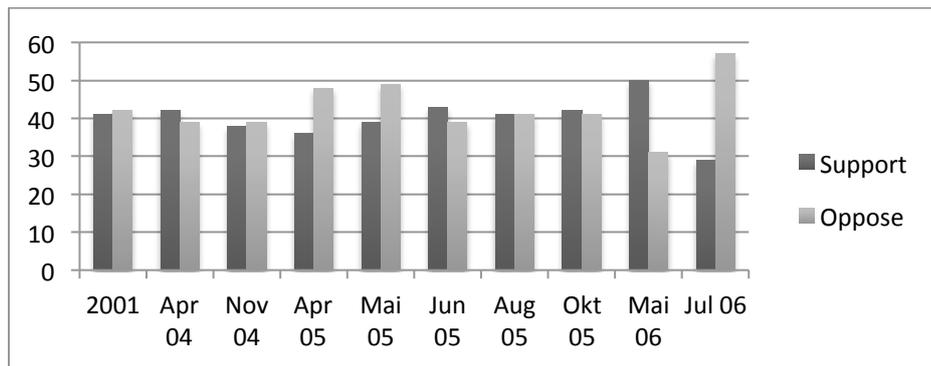


Source: Asahi Shinbun monthly opinion polls.

Figure 7.12 depicts that public opinion appeared to be extremely undecided. Opposition arguments, as mirrored in public opinion surveys, were very limited and did not last over a long time period. On the one hand, public opinion required caution from the prime minister with regard to Sino-Japanese and Japanese-South Korean relations, but on the other hand, they did not expect the prime minister to stop his visits because of foreign countries demands. The public was aware that the Yasukuni Shrine increased problematic Sino-Japanese and Japanese-South Korean relations, but was undecided how to cope with this perception.

Second, issue publics for and against the Yasukuni visits existed. However, issue publics in favor of the visits strongly dominated over those against the visits. The opposing issue public was not vocal and not organized enough compared to the Association of War Bereaved Families (JABF), which was strongly connected to the political elite.

Strong opinion magnitudes well over 50% existed only with regard to the negative perception towards China, and no sympathy for China's demands. Moreover, as in 2001, an important opinion magnitude (65%) existed against a visit on August 15.

*Consensus or disagreement among elites*

Among the ruling LDP, no general opinions against the Yasukuni visits existed apart from an insignificant minority. Traditionally, the LDP is well connected with the *Japan Association for War Bereaved Families* (JAWBF). This was also very well visible since LDP Secretary General Kogo Makoto (SG 2000-2001) was also the Chairman of the JAWBF and Secretary General Takebe Tsutomu (SG 2004-2006) and also Abe Shinzō (Deputy Chief Cabinet

Secretary 2001-2003, LDP SG in 2003 and Chief Cabinet Secretary 2005-2006), were members of the Diet Member's Group visiting the Yasukuni Shrine. Over the whole period, consensus among the ruling-LDP existed to support the prime minister's visits, even if demands for caution with regard to diplomacy towards the Asian neighboring countries were expressed as well.

Only the smaller coalition partner New Kōmeitō voiced opposition among the ruling elite, and threatened to end the coalition, but with no eventual consequences at the end. They also believed that it was important to consider diplomatic relations with China and South Korea, but at the same time, shared the opinion with the ruling LDP that Yasukuni was a domestic issue and China should not impose demands on Japan. Therefore, the domestic solution of building an alternative memorial to mourn the war dead was very much promoted by the New Kōmeitō and the opposition party the DPJ, who shared New Kōmeitō's stance. However, both parties failed to advance the construction plans introduced in 2002, to finalize implementation of the project. Instead they relied on actions of the LDP, which generally opposed the plans, and postponed discussions annually without openly claiming that the project could not to be realized.

From a theoretical standpoint, no differences among the ruling elites - and most of all within the LDP which held the majority - existed on the Yasukuni issue, and, therefore, the LDP's position was already very strong and difficult to offend. Opposition came only from opposition parties, which, however, were inconsistent in their argumentation for being against the Yasukuni visits, on the one hand, but sharing the LDP's thought, that Japan should not back on Chinese pressure, on the other hand.


*Opinion coalition-building abilities*

In this case study, opinion coalition-building abilities existed, most of all between the public supporters of the Yasukuni Shrine visits and especially between members of the JABF (Nihon Izokukai) and conservative LDP grandstanders of the Koizumi Cabinet, such as Kogo Makoto, Takebe Tsutomu or Abe Shinzō. They well represented the JAWBFs opinions, and encouraged Prime Minister Koizumi to continue visiting the shrine.
Opinion-coalitions for opposition were scarce, since currents of opinions of the New Kōmeitō and the opposition parties, such as the DPJ, were mixed, and public opposition was not as well organized and vocal as the JAWBF.

*Domestic incentives*

In this case domestic incentives were very relevant when taking public opinion into consideration. I argue that this was the most relevant factor in forming the role that public opinion played in affecting Koizumi's decision-making process of *timing* his visits. Moreover, the argumentation that the Yasukuni visits were made for domestic reasons was enforced, since the consequences towards China and South Korea were completely ignored by Koizumi. Summarizing several interviews taken by the author, most of the interviewees believed, that the Yasukuni visits were strategic. As a result, Koizumi's priorities laid more in his personal and domestic political belief than in the international consequences of his actions. This is most evidenced in disturbed negotiations on multilateral platforms, such as the APEC, ASEAN or ASEM summits. The timing of Koizumi's Yasukuni visits heavily influenced negotiations on these platforms. Although experts from MOFA tried to elucidate the Chinese side, Prime Minister Koizumi stayed with his own convictions (Interview Anonymous D and Anonymous G).

Despite existing consensus among the ruling-LDP, public opinion and mass media were ambivalent, and also opposing political parties as the New Kōmeitō or the DPJ, were unable to form consensual opinion coalitions with the opposing public. At the same time Prime Minister Koizumi, having the realization of his domestic reform plans in mind, very well anticipated public opinion. The conducted process-tracing shows that the dates of the visits were chosen carefully in order not to impair the political climate among the ruling-LDP and the coalition partners, but especially to maintain the support for the cabinet by public opinion. Specifically, since he confronted the public with various significant political decisions and domestic reforms, such as the dismissal of the very popular Foreign Minister Tanaka, the Iraq Law and dispatch order (2003 and 2004), the postal privatization discussion and bill in 2004 and 2005, and numerous elections, a careful consideration of the public's perception was necessary. To fulfill these plans despite opposition from LDP members, who strongly disagreed with his policies and, furthermore, without negative consequences for his public support rate, he needed strength as prime minister to pass his decisions. With the Yasukuni visits he proved great leadership, because he did not break his promise, and gained a strong support base within the ruling LDP, which helped him to convince opponents of his domestic reform plans.

*Kūki*

The Japanese media's coverage of the Yasukuni issue was intermittently very high especially in 2001, 2004 and 2005. The topic definitely opened an issue for debate. Notably, the surprise visits in 2003 and 2004 enhanced the interest of the media (Uesugi 2006: 161, 162). Just as public opinion, the Japanese media were also split in their position on the Yasukuni issue. Consensus among the press did not exist. The newspapers were split in traditional political directions. Altogether, no collective opinion could be shaped to force the Yasukuni issue into either an opposing or supporting frame. This is well illustrated in the following analysis by Asano and Lee (2008), depicted in Figure 7.13, in which it becomes obvious that the Japanese print media frequently changed their standpoints of argumentation as well:

**Figure 7.13: Monthly percentage of changes in standpoints (2001-2004)**
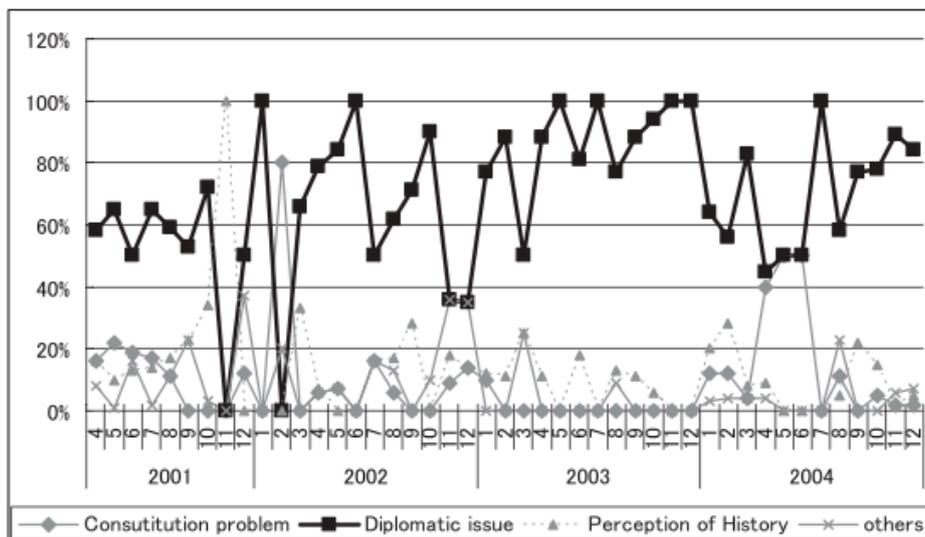


Monthly percentage of changes in standpoints, as discussed in major newspapers during the Koizumi period

Source: Asano and Lee 2008: 47.

As with public opinion, argumentation that opposed the Yasukuni Shrine visits was inconsistent, weak in strength, and represented a mixed view. Real opposition was never formed. Instead, arguments were weakened by remarks such as: "isn't it better if the prime minister would stop his visits, when China reacts that negatively?!", as for example in the

year 2005. Mass media reflected the same argumentative strength as public opinion. On the one hand, insecurity existed if the visits took place, on the other hand, the frame "China should not interfere with domestic issues" was very present. As a result, media and public opinion together were not able to form Kūki that pressured Prime Minister Koizumi to stop the visits. Instead, the only existing Kūki was ambivalence at first, which at the end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 switched to a Kūki representing an anti-China sentiment, supporting the trend not to bow to China's demands and unable to stop the Yasukuni visits for this reason.

The only periodical exception in which both tone of coverage changed and public opinion's opposition grew was in 2005, effecting the longest time gap of 21 months between the 2004 and 2005 visits. At this point in time, the *Yomiuri Shinbun* had withdrawn from its usual direction of argumentation and started to approach the *Asahi's* strength of thought. That year indirectly presented a unified media coverage, emphasizing that the Yasukuni visits were regarded as critical. This resulted in the formation of a critical Kūki towards "caution" together with public opinion.

In summary, in this case study, ambivalent Kūki turned to an anti-China sentiment Kūki over time, which was maintained until the end of Koizumi's tenure, paired with a short-term Kūki for caution in 2005.

*Decision stage*

In this case study we can conclude that Prime Minister Koizumi only lost authority during different stages of the decision-process, in choosing the timing of the visit. This results from the fact, that the timing had already changed when the Yasukuni Shrine visits were put on the agenda in 2001. From that point in time he lost authority to decide, whether he would visit on August 15 or not. According to theory of decisions stages (cf. Chapter 2), public opinion has the greatest effect when an issue is put on the agenda. Therefore, throughout the process of visiting the shrine annually, public opinion succeeded in determining Koizumi's options of timing. Accordingly, the variation in degrees of autonomy between decision stages, affected the manner - not to visit on August 15 - of his visits but did not cancel them as such.

### 7.8.3. Conclusion

*Which combination of conditions was given?*

Prime Minister Koizumi neither followed public opinion nor cancelled the Yasukuni visits. He *ignored* public opinion in eschewing to visit Yasukuni, but was *constrained* in his decision *when* to visit. Public opinion, therefore, was an important determinant in choosing the timing for his visit. The most valuable parameters for this purpose were consensus among the ruling LDP and strong domestic incentives. What weakened public opinion was the fact that both public and media were ambivalent, showed insignificant opinion magnitudes for one or the other direction, and were unable to form a Kūki against the government, which supported the visits. Instead, Kūki with negative sentiments towards China was established, guided by the position not to bow to China's demands. This Kūki backed Koizumi's position to continue his visits. At the same time he had the support of his party, which was an important factor for his reform plans. Opposing parties were too fragmented and unable to form opinion coalitions with each other and with the opposing public – instead, opinion coalition abilities were strong among pro-visit opinions. The greatest obstacle for this part of public opinion that opposed the visits and intended to influence Koizumi to stop visiting Yasukuni, was the lack of any domestic consensus, and, therefore, lack of opinion coalition-building, which in the long run strongly weakened his opponents.

# 8. CONCLUSION

In the previous three chapters I examined three cases, each in the field of Japanese foreign policy decision-making, in which public opinion existed, was vocal and was assumed to interfere with Prime Minister Koizumi's intended political course. In each of these three cases, which can be categorized as the most important and domestically most discussed issues in foreign policy of the Koizumi administration, I examined the decision-making process and outlined the impact of public opinion on Prime Minister Koizumi's decisions and his reaction in each process. In this final chapter I will unite the conclusions of the three case studies, to arrive to an answer to the research problem of this study and a more general answer to its central topic: Against all doubts by the dominating elitist view, does public opinion have an impact on governmental behavior in Japanese foreign policy-making?

I will start with a brief summary of the case studies and their outcomes. Thereupon, I will make a focused and structured comparison (George and Bennett 1997) in order to outline similarities and differences in results. Lastly, I conclude with three propositions and with a general conclusion on the causality of the explanatory conditions, which explain when Prime Minister Koizumi was most likely to follow public opinion. Finally, I will discuss further research perspectives and implications.

## 8.1. The outcomes of the cases

The three cases analyzed in chapters five, six and seven have a surprising outcome: public opinion was indeed an important determining variable in all three cases! This is a most extraordinary result, as critical voices of the elitist view and supporters of the "iron triangle" directive policy-making style would have predicted that public opinion had no impact, especially under a prime minister, who was supposed to be one of the most dominating prime ministers, who sometimes sought to ignore the public. Despite this finding, it must be distinguished to what degree and with what kind of impact public opinion was an important determining variable in the decision-making process. In this regard, the impact of public opinion was not the same and varied in all three cases.

Only in one case (the North Korean normalization process and the abduction issue) did public opinion cause a complete withdrawal from Prime Minister Koizumi's originally

planned course. The second case (the Iraq War and the SDF dispatch) has illustrated how public opinion, although not in full impact, determined the decision-making of Prime Minister Koizumi in limiting his plan to give full military assistance to US-troops in Iraq immediately. Instead, the Japanese SDF's mission was turned into a mission with mainly humanitarian assistance tasks. His political directive was constrained. Since public opinion neither managed to prevent the establishment and ratification of the Iraq Special Measures Law nor the implementation of the SDF-dispatch order to Iraq, public opinion had only a constraining and an indirect impact. Indirect, because Prime Minister Koizumi made efforts and invested strength during the process to change the public's mood, and led or educated them in favor of his decisions, which had already been made beforehand.

The third case (the Yasukuni Shrine visits) almost revealed harmony between public opinion and Koizumi. When testing this process, however, the outcome very much depends on the initial question asked. In this particular case the outcome revealed two possible options: When asked if public opinion was an important determinant in deciding to quit the Yasukuni visits, public opinion was ignored and had no impact, because Prime Minister Koizumi visited the shrine every year during his tenure. But, when asked if public opinion was an important determinant in deciding *when* to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, since the issue of the date of the visit became one of the biggest disputes on the domestic sphere, but also guided the diplomatic dispute between China and Japan and ROK and Japan, we can claim, that public opinion *was* a determinant in the process and had a constraining impact. This can be explained if we take into consideration Koizumi's original intention to visit the shrine annually on August 15, the day of Japan's surrender in World War II. This intention was retracted every year, with the exception of his last visit as a Prime Minister in 2006. Moreover, the character of his visits changed from official, with full Shinto rituals in the first cases towards private visits in 2005, without Shinto rituals. It, thus, very much depends on the objective and scope of the visits, through which the questioning differs. For this reason, this case study provides two results, which are, however, affiliated with each other.

All case study results agree with the pluralist view, that public opinion is an important determinant in foreign policy-making and clearly contradicts those voices in FPA of Japan which focus upon the sole hegemonic role of the bureaucracy and the "Iron Triangle", and the consequential subordination of civil society and public opinion to an elite minority (cf. Drifte 1996; Green 2001). The outcome of the case studies rather illustrates that special

focus must be laid on trends and developments of the Japanese public opinion, and especially trends and developments of the domestic sphere and state-society relationship, particularly in foreign affairs. In the next section I will turn to these factors that were relevant for the outcomes of the case studies.

Table 8.1. provides an overview of the three cases in terms of the final result of the decision-making process (here: the reaction Prime Minister Koizumi chose), and the kind of impact public opinion had on the process.

**Table 8.1: Results of the case studies**

| Case Study | Koizumi's reaction | Public Opinion's impact as a determinant | Development of planned political course |
|---|---|---|---|
| North Korea normalization/ Abduction issue | Following | Full impact | Against his orginial intentions, he abandoned his original course almost entirely |
| Iraq/SDF dispatch | Compromising, Leading/educating | Constraining and indirect impact | Intended course weakened |
| Official Yasukuni Shrine visits (Timing of visis) | Ignoring (Compromising) | No direct impact (Constraining impact on timing) | Intended course maintained (Intended course weakened) |

The North Korean normalization process and the issue of the abductions stand out as the one case in which public opinion was fully incorporated in decision-making, and was followed by Prime Minister Koizumi. This case is quite unique, because it is the first time, in which public opinion succeeded in obviously altering the government's course over a longer time period. On each of the other issues, Koizumi implemented, although with various limitations, most parts of his planned policies.

Overall, the outcomes of the three cases highlight the importance of public opinion in foreign policy processes vis-à-vis governmental behavior. In the following, I will comparatively discuss the test results of the linkage conditions, derived from theoretical assump-

tions of public opinion research approaches in chapter two, to explain the outcomes of the cases.

## 8.2 Explaining the outcomes – the linkage conditions

In chapters one and two I have argued on the basis of FPA approaches that the influence of actors in foreign policy-making, in this case public opinion, depends on the domestic political environment as well as on domestic processes and circumstances that indirectly connect the public and the decision-maker. This connection may be compiled of a framework of domestic variables, which depending on the strength of each variable, may link public opinion to governmental behavior in foreign policy processes.

In chapter two I discussed an analytical framework that was derived from various approaches of public opinion research and FPA. This framework sought to specify the linkages between public opinion and governmental behavior - here the prime minister - in foreign policy-making. Table 8.2 provides an overview of the outcomes of all cases under consideration of the value of each explanatory variable (linkage condition):

**Table 8.2: Value of the linkage conditions**

| Case Study | Reaction of Koizumi | Opinion Magnitude | Consensus/ Disagreement among elites | Opinion Coalition - Building | Domestic incentives | Kūki in favor of public opinion | Decision Stage | Public Opinion as a determinant |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Korea | Following | Strong / long term | Disagreement | Existed | High | Existent | Strong in negotiating process | Full impact |
| Iraq/SDF | Compromising, Leading/ educating | Strong / long term, ambivalent / short term. | Disagreement turned to consensus | Non-existent | High | Non-existent on long-term/*Kūki* of caution and ambivalence | Constraining before implementation process | Constraining, indirect impact |
| Yasukuni (timing) | Ignoring (Compromising) | Ambivalent (strong) | Consensus (disagreement) | Existent (Existent) | High (high) | Non-existent (non-existent, only cautious) | No effect (only in timing in the negotiating process) | No direct impact (Constraining impact) |

After testing the validity of linkage conditions introduced, I have concluded that it depends on *the strength and combination of these linkage conditions*, to what extent public opinion determined Koizumi's reaction. Moreover, that there has to be at least *a combination of more than two* linkage conditions to reach any kind of impact. In the following, I will discuss the value of the explanatory variables discovered in all three case studies, which will help us derive a set of propositions that will answer the research question.

## The linkage conditions

### Opinion magnitude

The first case study presented the relative strength of opinion magnitudes, and according to Graham's theory had the degree of important and substantial impact (cf. Graham 1994: 197) demanding a solution of the abduction issue and a hardline stance towards North Korea. This opinion magnitude lasted over a long-term period and did not show major changes. As Graham (1994) predicted, public opinion was able to defeat or deter opposition, here Koizumi's strategy to continue the normalization process, and implement the strategy of engagement and dialogue. The only point in time when ambivalence was measurable in public opinion, was with regard to Koizumi's second Pyongyang visit. In this subcase, mass public was divided, which meant that the strong issue public (the Kazokukai and Sukuukai) rejected Prime Minister Koizumi's decision, whereas the general public supported it.

In case study three the overall impression was, that an ambivalent opinion trend - which meant no opinion magnitude for one position existed - dominated the process. This ambivalence was strongly present with regard to the manner and timing of the Yasukuni visits. The only long-term stable opinion magnitude measurable in this case was a strong negative perception towards China among the Japanese public.

In the second case study (Iraq), on the one hand, long-term and strong opinion magnitudes existed against war in general and against Japan's active participation of military actions in combat-zones, including the SDF dispatch for military purposes. This resulted from the general pacifist opinion magnitude prevailing in Japan and was explained in chapter 3. However, this case also indicated short-term ambivalence, on the other hand, especially resulting from the general support of the US-Japan Alliance (see chapter 3, subsection 7.3.3.) and the support for humanitarian assistance in Iraq, since the mission

was backed by the UN Resolution 1483 (Chapter 6, subsection 6.3.). UNPKO missions are generally supported by the Japanese public.

Altogether, we can summarize that case study one revealed strong long-term opinion magnitudes, case study two long-term opinion magnitudes paired with short-term ambivalence, and case study three long-term ambivalence.

*Consensus or disagreement among elites*

Since Prime Minister Koizumi could not count on a stable support base within his own party, as was described in chapter 4, and was merely confronted with opposition most of the time, reaching consensus first with his own party and second with his coalition partners, was a sensitive issue. Consensus or disagreement within the ruling party (LDP) is of importance for this study, since it represents a domestic condition, that can determine if public opinion was a necessary ally or opponent of Koizumi.

The only real agreement among the LDP was with regard to the Yasukuni Shrine visits by Prime Minister Koizumi. The majority of the party members supported his visits in his official position as prime minister, and even on the sensitive date of August 15. However, in this case he was confronted with opposition from his coalition partner New Koumeitou. This party was divided in its argumentation, on the one hand, opposing the shrine visits, because of the enshrinement of WWII class A war criminals and at the same time unsuccessfully supporting the plans of an alternative war memorial, but on the other hand, supporting the opinion Japan should not bow to foreign countries' demands. This ambiguity in its opposing position weakened New Kōmeitō, and did not result in significant effects on the coalition.

In contrast to the third case study, the case study on North Korea illustrated disagreement in opinions within the LDP. Discordance was very strong over a long-term, separating the party into the dialogue faction and the pressure faction. Influential and high-ranking LDP members of the pressure faction, such as Abe Shinzō, held strong opinion-coalitions and close contact with the mass public, which favored pressure. Especially the close connection of organized issue publics, such as the Kazokukai and Sukuukai with Diet members from the LDP, but also from opposition parties, enhanced the strength of public opinion and weakened members of the dialogue faction (here Koizumi) within the LDP, even more.

Koizumi did not manage to overcome disagreements within his party in this regard, hence, the party remained continuously split over the North Korean issue over a long time period. Lastly, the second case study (Iraq) was an example of an in-between-result of this variable. Considering consensus or disagreement first among the LDP, and second, between the coalition partners, it can be concluded that both factors were present. Disagreement existed between Koizumi and factions of the LDP, as well as between Koizumi and the coalition partner the New Kōmeitō on supporting the Iraq war, and on the draft of the Iraq Law. However, after adjustments and compromises were made, which were also in agreement with public opinion trends, final settlement was reached in both matters. Koizumi was able to represent a united government appearance when political decisions were presented to the public. However, the degree of agreement within the LDP was not as strong as in the third case study, since disagreement could occur any time again, whereby further changes of plans would have been necessary. We can say this case study represented a weaker form of agreement compared to case study 3.

*Opinion-coalition building abilities*

In the first case study, as a result of the close ties between the Kazokukai and the Sukuukai and ruling-government members, on the one hand, and shared opinions for pressure between mass public and the general pressure faction of the LDP, on the other hand, we observe strong opinion-coalition building in favor of the pressure strategy and the solution of the abduction issue also supported by the mass public. This opinion-coalition runs contrary to a more diplomatic negotiation-process favored by Prime Minister Koizumi. Moreover, opinion-coalitions in favor of mass public were enhanced through the support of the largest opposition party DPJ, which favored pressure, and the ruling coalition partner New Kōmeitō, which did not have a clear opinion, but tended towards pressure. These opinion-coalitions strengthened the opinion trend for pressure and weakened Koizumi's position.

The value of the explanatory variable opinion-coalition abilities was relatively low in the second case study. Although a form of collective issue public was present, such as the anti-war movement, or collective opinions, such as the opposition to the SDF dispatch, neither opinion-coalitions with members of the ruling elite nor with the opposition parties were established. Public opinion rather appeared to be an insecure variable to form opinion-

coalitions in this case study, compared to the other two case studies in which short-term opinion ambivalence made coalitions difficult. Issue publics were not strong and cohesive to the same extent as in the other two case studies, the latter being organized and strategically interconnected with government members. As a result, the formation of opinion-coalitions was difficult. Even the opposition parties were not able to ally with an opposing public, since the basis of argumentation for opposition differed. Both opposition parties, as well as public opinion were incoherent in claiming their opinions, instead, ambivalence was very present.

Finally, in the third, as in the first case study, once again strong opinion-coalitions existed between a well organized pro-Yasukuni visits issue public (the JABF), the pro-visits mass public and influential conservative members of the LDP such as, Kogo Makoto or Abe Shinzō. Since opposition parties were fragmented in argumentation and were not able to form opinion-coalitions with each other, they did not manage to form opinion-coalitions with the opposing mass public either. The same holds true for the LDP's coalition partner New Kōmeitō. We can conclude that the formation of opinion-coalitions was more present in cases, where an increasing possibility for nationalistic tendencies was provoked.


*Domestic political incentives*

In all three case studies I observed that the degree of domestic incentives was uniformly high. As introduced in chapter 4, subsection 4.4, the heart of Prime Minister Koizumi's general political agenda were domestic reforms, and above all the postal privatization reform (cf. Koizumi reforms). Results of all three case studies show, that because of his domestic agenda, Koizumi ruled out certain courses of action since the lack of support would have also eliminated the prospects of success for his domestic reform agenda. One outstanding example is the watering down of the Iraq Special Measures Law, which had to be redrafted and attenuated, out of concern that the pacifist public would not agree and also would not be easily guided to accept active participation of Japanese military in combat zones.

At the same time, Koizumi decided to introduce certain foreign policy-measures, because of the awareness, that the public demanded political action, which he could not give on the domestic front. This was particularly visible with his decision to visit Pyongyang in North Korea for the second time. This decision was announced in a time period when his political aids confirmed "he could only score in foreign affairs" (cf. Asahi Shinbun

2004.05.31). Moreover, since Koizumi had realized that the North Korean issue had become very salient for the public, the LDP and the opposition party DPJ put the abduction issue on the agenda of their party manifestos for election, and even turned the abduction issue into an election issue. Hence, the impact the North Korean abduction problem and public opinion could have had on Koizumi's domestic agenda was calculated. As Midford and Scott (2008: 128) and Midford (2011: 24) have stated, "the fear, about the consequences of defying a stable opinion majority for other important issues", in this case the domestic agenda, was very high.

  Most of all, the timing of foreign policy decisions was adjusted by domestic issues to avoid risks of non-acceptance by the public. This included the ratification and enactment of his domestic reform bills but also electoral prospects. The best example for this argument was the scheduling of the timing of Yasukuni Shrine visits, as the conducted case study has shown. Not only the Yasukuni case, but also the Iraq case study confirms this way of thinking. This was visible with the timing of announcing the enactment of the Iraq Law or the timing of the Basic Plan's announcement and the actual dispatch order for the SDF to Iraq.

As a result, against the background of Koizumi's wide domestic agenda, domestic incentives were a strong and relevant linkage variable in all three cases.


*Kūki / climate of opinion*

When looking into Ito's (1996, 2002) triangular Kūki model, built from the actors public opinion, media and government, and which represents "a climate of opinion with strong political and social pressure requiring compliance […] to a certain specific opinion, policy or group decision" (Ito 2002: 266 and 268), it can be concluded that only in the first case study (North Korea), Kūki in favor of public opinion was fully established and grew steadily. High media coverage existed for each subcase tested, and the majority opinion accounted in the two relevant sectors of the Kūki-model: public opinion and media. Additionally, the pressure faction of the government shared the same opinion as media and the public and let the intensity of Kūki in favor of public opinion escalate in each subcase.

  In addition, in the Yasukuni Shrine case the presence of a strong Kūki was observable as well. However, Kūki in this case has to be distinguished from the Kūki in case study one. Since the public showed only ambivalent opinion magnitudes towards the Yasukuni

Shrine visits, it cannot be claimed that the resulting Kūki was absolutely in favor of public opinion. In this case an initial Kūki ambivalence, turned into a Kūki "be cautious with the visits" and further to a strong Kūki "do not bow to China's demands". Here, the resulting and effectul Kūki underlines very clearly the ambivalent public opinion, since there existed no clear message to visit or not to visit the shrine. Instead, the Kūki represented by the public only demanded caution at the beginning. Eventually, Kūki then turned out to benefit Prime Minister Koizumi's course, since a Kūki "do not bow to China's demands" merely implied not stopping the shrine visits. As a result, the final Kūki established, made the decision easier for Koizumi to continue his course, show great leadership, and stick to his promises, since he - and presumably so did the public- considered the visits to be a domestic issue in which foreign countries should not interfere.

Finally, in the case study on Iraq, the value of Kūki was the lowest. No strong or long-term Kūki in favor of public opinion could be measured. In subcases 1 and 2, the media were either split or presented a homogenous elite view in their coverage. At the same time, public opinion too often appeared to be ambivalent. In other words, no Kūki established of media and public opinion, that could have benefited the public, was existent. The only exception was in regard of the timing of dispatch order. Here, short-term Kūki for "caution" established out of media and public opinion, since both parties were concerned over the local security situation in Iraq. As a result Kūki for caution helped to delay Koizumi's dispatch order.

*Decision stage of a process*

Lastly, analyzing the public's impact at different decision stages of a process helps to find out at which process phase the public can be most effective in securing its interests. Furthermore, with the help of this explanatory variable it can be shown, that public opinion still has an impact on the decision-process, even if it did not influence or change the outcome of the process as such. Case study one and three have shown that the actual course of Prime Minister Koizumi was retracted the most, when public opinion had an impact at the first process stage, when an issue was put on the agenda and was being negotiated. In the case of North Korea, the public succeeded in convincing Koizumi not to send the abductees back to Japan, but instead repatriate them permanently. This lead to a violation of agreements with North Korea, and resulted in the first halt of the normaliza-

tion process after the Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. In other words, the process was already severely redirected at the beginning, leaving no possibilities for further diversion. Instead, the change in course grew steadily in strength from stage to stage of the process.

In the Yasukuni Shrine case study, this proposition is not applicable to the question of whether a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine was tenable or not, since Koizumi continued to visit annually. Instead, the full impact at the first stage can be focused to the timing of the visit. Since Koizumi was not able to visit Yasukuni on August 15, when the shrine visits were put both on the domestic and on the public's agenda, and the visits were negotiated openly, he was not able to change his course in the years to follow.

Case study 2 revealed a different result. Public opinion had no effect at the beginning of the process, when the support for the Iraq war was decided. It only showed a constraining impact, when the Iraq Law was being negotiated. Moreover, the effectiveness of public opinion was demonstrated in the end, just before implementation of the dispatch order of the SDF to Iraq, which had to be delayed. In this regard, public opinion was effective in constraining the decision when to approve and release the dispatch order.

## 8.3. An answer to the research question – the reasonable model of causes

In the following, I will provide an overall summary of the comparison of the three cases, which forms the answer to my research question. In chapter one, section 1.3 this question was formulated as follows:

*Under what conditions can it be assumed that public opinion was a determining variable in foreign policy decision made by Prime Minister Koizumi?*

Public opinion was successfully incorporated in Prime Minister Koizumi's reaction to the *maximum* extent when at least the combination of more than two linkage conditions of long-term and with high value existed. Namely, when *strong long-term opinion magnitudes* together with *long-term disagreement among elites*, and an *intensive* Kūki in favor of public opinion was given. The impact was fully strengthened by success during the first decision-stage and the existence of opinion coalitions.

As a result of the comparative case study analysis of the three cases conducted, an overall conclusion of linkage combinations can be made. Based on this study's findings, Table 8.3 represents a general model of causes, which summarizes the relevant combination and

strength of linkage conditions necessary for achieving a successful "full impact", an "intermediate constraining/indirect impact" or "no impact":

**Table 8.3: General model of causes**

| Koizumi's reaction | Public Opinion as a determinant | Opinion Magnitude | Consensus/ Disagreement among ruling elites | Opinion Coalition – Building in favor of public opinion | Domestic incentives | Kūki in favor of public opinion | Decision Stage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Following | Full impact | Opinion magnitudes have to be strong for a long-term | Long-term Disagreement of ruling elites has to be present | Opinion-Coalitions have to be existent | Domestic incentives have to be very high (purposely an election topic) | Kūki in favor of public opinion has to be existent | Strong in negotiating process, that is in first decision stages |
| Compromising | Constraining | Opinion magnitudes have to be strong on long-term BUT short-term ambivalence may also be given | Unstable consensus of ruling elites is present. Consensus is reached only after adjustments were made | Existent /non-existent | Domestic incentives have to be high | Kūki of ambivalence is present | Efficiency measurable in other than first decision stage |
| Leading/ Educating | Indirect impact | Strong opinion magnitude OR public opinion of ambivalence is given | Consensus among the ruling elites exists | Non-existent | Domestic incentives have to be high | Non-existent or Kūki of ambivalence is present | No effect OR split opinion during implementation process of a decision |
| Ignoring | No direct impact | Strong opinion magnitudes OR long-term ambivalence among public opinion is present | Strong consensus of ruling elites (without making any adjustments) | Non-existent | Domestic incentives have to be high | Non-existent | No effect on any decision stage is measurable |

According to this model, the most influential conditions for public opinion are either a full impact or at least a constraining impact, since they have the ability to change the political course of the decision-maker. The leading/educating category can be regarded as the weakest. It still confirms a certain impact of public opinion, but only indirectly, since the outcome of a decision is not changed. In such a case, public opinion is at least considered

through efforts by the decision-maker to convince the public of the correctness of the decision that has already been made.

In conclusion the following propositions can be inferred as an answer to the research question:

1. Public opinion at maximum fully impacts the decision-maker's decision, when there exists full value in *all* linkage conditions tested, but *at least* when *strong long-term opinion magnitudes* together *with long-term disagreement* among elites, and a intensive Kūki in favor of public opinion exists. In such a case the decision-maker is most likely to follow.

2. Public opinion constraints the decision-maker's decision, when strong long-term opinion magnitudes with occasional short-term ambivalence, exist, and the degree of consensus among elites is weak. Additionally, when domestic incentives are present and of high value, and public opinion manages to show effectiveness in other than the first decision stage of a process. In such a case the decision-maker is most likely to compromise.

3. Public opinion at minimum indirectly impacts the decision-maker's decision, when there exists at least an ambivalent opinion magnitude over a long-term, a tendency towards a Kūki of ambivalence, together with high domestic incentives. These values of linkage conditions make the decision-maker to at least consider public opinion and invest strength in leading/educating the public towards his decision.

## 8.4. Conclusion and implications

Domestic conditions help determine how decision-makers respond to public opinion when formulating foreign policy. Although the impact of public opinion may vary, it does so based on *the combination and intensity of the value of each condition.* "This very much depends on the circumstances in which a decision is made" (Foyle 1999: 284). In this study I have presented a new combination of linkage conditions, associating assumptions of western theories with a Japanese approach. This model was tested on three cases related to Japan's foreign policy. As a result, propositions 1, 2 and 3 described above, outline the necessary combination for each kind of impact. The model has shown that these combinations of conditions facilitate the public's impact. Moreover, that not only strength but also the *time*

*period of strength* are important for the outcome, whether a variable is strong on long-term or not.

Albeit the impact of public opinion is the greatest when all conditions are present in full value, these propositions also give answer on the *causality and interdependence* of the explanatory variables and lead to the conclusion, that the tested linkage conditions can also be categorized in four levels of importance. The more important a condition is, the more substantial it is for the general model of causes in generating the impact of public opinion:

The key variables defined in this study, the so called linkage conditions of *first category*, are the degree and timeframe of opinion magnitudes and the degree of agreement and disagreement among elites. Short-term weaknesses of both of these explanatory variables cause the strength of each variable to change immediately and as a result, the process changes as well. Even if agreement among elites existed, no matter how intense negotiations and adjustments among elites were to proceed, the value of agreement among elites would not have the same strength and would be in danger to be weakened compared to a long-term homogenous agreement. The same holds true for long-term opinion magnitudes. If long-term opinion magnitudes are paired or disturbed with short-term ambivalences, the value of the overall long-term opinion magnitude is automatically weakened and so is the explanatory strength of this condition.

Linkage conditions of the *second category*, that can successfully improve and regulate the degree of conditions of first category, can be defined when intensive Kūki either in favor of public opinion or in favor of the government exists. Most of all the degree of agreement or disagreement among elites can be vehemently changed if a strong Kūki in favor of public opinion exists. Moreover, especially in cases were opinion magnitudes are not strong over a long-term and are disturbed by short-term weakness, Kūki can alter the process and the final reaction of the decision-maker. For example, the strength of Kūki that greatly changed the government's position was in case study three on the Yasukuni Shrine visits. Thus, the conditions of the second category can powerfully strengthen the conditions of first category and define the public's impact.

Conditions of *third category* are efficiency on the first decision-stage, since the greatest impact on the general political course is guaranteed when it is successful on the first decision stage, at the time an issue is being negotiated as well as when opinion-coalitions with influential elites of the ruling party exist. Opinion-coalitions have shown, that they can

additionally turn the public's impact to their advantage since the impact of the public is weaker, when opininion-coalitions do not exist.

Lastly, linkage conditions of the *fourth category* are domestic incentives and at least Kūki of ambivalence. Domestic incentives, especially during the Koizumi era, were of major importance, because of his wide domestic agenda. Domestic incentives represented a condition that reinforced the importance of public opinion in Koizumi's decision-making to a full degree. For this reason this linkage condition should be considered as an important variable of the model of causes that determines governmental behavior. However, since domestic incentives were present in all three cases to the same degree, this variable cannot be regarded as a key linkage condition responsible for variation in this study. Despite its great relevance for all case studies, it is categorized as a linkage condition of fourth category although its strength and value should not be underestimated.

The following Figure 8.4 summarizes the degree and causality of these linkage conditions that also may condition each other's strength:

**Table 8.4: Categories of linkage conditions**
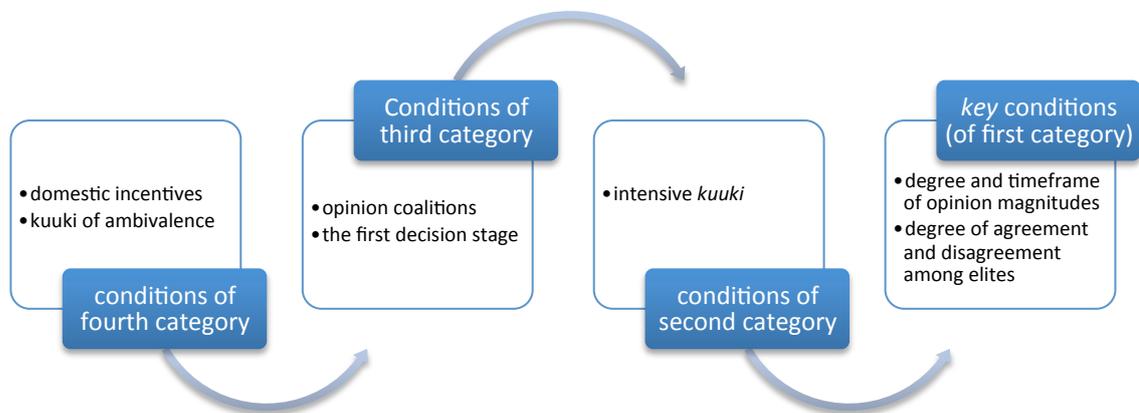


As a result, it can be concluded that the pivotal variables of the present linkage condition model are *the degree and timeframe of opinion magnitudes* and *the degree of agreement and disagreement among elites*. In other words, not only strong opinion magnitudes are important as Graham (1994) has asserted, but also the timespan of intensity. Regarding the consensus or disa-

greement among elites (cf. Powlick and Katz 1998; Midford and Scott 2008; Midford 2011), here as well, it depends on the degree of consensus or disagreement and if this degree is easily weakened through other conditions, as for example in the second case study of Iraq where agreement was reached only after adjustments were made. This agreement can be described as weak. Or else, if agreement or disagreement are strong and stable, as in the first case study of North Korea, where disagreement was stable.

In summary, complementary to conducted studies of previous researchers, the present new model of causes has combined different theoretical approaches and has additionally shown the importance of causality and interdependence of the models explanatory variables. That is the importance of degree and combination of condition variables. Thereby, not only *necessary combination models* but also *key condition variables* could be identified, which are the linchpin of the present model. These are the *degree and timeframe of opinion magnitudes* and *the degree of agreement or disagreement among elites*. Variation in the decision-maker's reaction can be explained by the degree of these two variables. Their degree, in turn, is determined by condition variables of the second category, in this case Kūki, of third category opinion coalitions and first decision stage, and fourth category domestic incentives.


*8.4.1. Linkage process and state-society relationship in Japan*

As a general answer to the question of the linkage process between public opinion and foreign policy-making in Japan, I can conclude that although the administration of Prime Minister Koizumi was supposed to be dominated by a top-down leadership-style implying more prime ministerial power with a powerful leader (cf. Uchiyama 2010; Iijima 2006; Shinoda 2005) rather than a bottom-up leadership in the traditional Japanese sense, I have identified, that public opinion was an important determinant in all three cases studies analyzed according to domestic circumstances.

I can, therefore, assert, that public opinion was and is a relevant factor in foreign policy decision-making in Japan, even if a strong leadership with a strong political agenda existed. Public opinion was interested and challenged authorities. At the same time the new administrative system of 2001 made it possible to bypass usual authorities and target the prime minister directly. This was also made possible by the change in the decision-making style of the prime minister who used strategies and measures unusual for an LDP presi-

dent, such as bypassing his own party or discussing draft bills with coalition parties first. Moreover, the significance and importance of public opinion was incorporated officially in his strategies for leadership, and, therefore, had a particular standing. Both factors turned out to be advantageous for the linkage process.

In this study, public opinion also turned out to be a constraining determinant. However, at the same time it was also used as a tool by the prime minister. This is most evidenced in the category of "leading/educating impact". This fact coincided with Prime Minister Koizumi's preannounced strategy, to show strong leadership, go public and make information transparent, but maintain consistent policy when the public was divided (see Chapter 4, subsection 4.3 and Midford and Scott 2008: 145). On the one hand, public opinion was considered and efforts were made to convince the public, but on the other hand, the public was used as a great tool to pressure intraparty opponents, and was led towards the desired direction after a decision had already been made by Koizumi (e.g. the Iraq Law or the humanitarian aid granted to North Korea after the second Pyongyang visit, see Chapters 5.2.3. and 6.3). Nevertheless, even if public opinion was used as a tool, it could be considered as a determinant of the process (cf. LaBalme 2000).

### 8.4.2. The elitist vs. the pluralist view

Third, discussing the elitist vs. the pluralist view of public opinion in foreign policy-making, this study gives supplementary evidence for the validity of the pluralist approach and agrees with this theory's proposition that domestic determinants, especially public opinion, are important and determining variables in foreign policy-making. As the conducted case studies have shown, public opinion is vocal and is present even if it is traditionally assumed that it would not be. It depends very much on the perspective of each process and on the research objective asked to what extent public opinion is strong or weak (see for example the Yasukuni case study).

Further, as Shapiro (1988: 243-244) has concluded, public opinion is stable, and only changes when the information given is changed. This assumption is also applicable to the cases of Japan. A good example is the case study on Iraq. In this case, public opinion revealed a very ambivalent opinion magnitude, however, this fact was paired with constant information change due to Prime Minister Koizumi's various efforts and changing argumentation in order to convince the public of his intended course.

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The traditional approach of the elitist view seems to be outdated on the basis of this study's findings. The relationship between state and society has changed continuously. This study has shown, that developments are based on changes introduced already in the 1990s. First due to institutional changes, as described in chapter 3 section 3.2, but also due to changes of the public's expectations of the governing elites. Volunteerism and participation increased (chapter 3.4.1). Traditional structures, as the strong bureaucracy, do still exist and are still perceived as strong actors by the public, however, they start to be bypassed by a public which directly interacts with the prime minister and his Cabinet, since structures of the new administrative system of 2001 do allow this step (see figure 3.3). New forms of contact between public opinion and government were at hand. With Prime Minister Koizumi, foreign policy has changed as well. These changes brought foreign affairs "closer to home", and as a result the public became more aware and was present. Public opinion is interested in security policy (figure 3.15) and in foreign affairs with its neighbors (section 3.7.3.4). All these factors combined show that a trend exists and this trend gradually increases making the perspective of the pluralist view for the case of Japan even more important.

Finally, this study supplements the present results of the pluralist view and highlights a new model of causes for governmental behavior. In particular, it gives additional information of strength, combination, causality and interdependence of linkage conditions in regard of public opinion and foreign policy decision-making processes.

### 8.4.3. Advantages and disadvantages of public opinion research in foreign policy-making

Analyzing foreign policy from the perspective of public opinion approaches has the advantage, that in contrary to approaches that state "the external affairs are shaped by invariant motives revolving around power and security and by countries' structural positions in the international stystem" (Nincic 1992: 772), public opinion research calls the attention to domestic trends, insights, thoughts and impressions deemed not relevant for decision-making to begin with or which are easily overlooked.

As Foyle (1999: 279) has stated, public opinion research on foreign policy-making processes has the advantage that "not only can the means that states use to achieve their goals be affected systematically […], but also the goals and objectives themselves may be partially determined by domestic variables rather than just by state power […]".

Public opinion research contributes to the multifactorial and multidimensional approaches of FPA, reveals an actor-specific approach and constitutes a great alternative to approaches of Internatioanl Relations (IR) theories. Without doubt public opinion and lawmakers conduct a mutual observation process not only in domestic issues but in foreign affairs as well. Studying public opinions in foreign affairs has the advantage to broaden the picture of knowledge of public opinion and of lawmakers, since "public opinion is related with a nation's democratic ideals" (Hee-Suk 1980: 157). For this reason as Mendel (1961: 41) has already stated, "the power of public opinion should be understood, weather it is one's purpose to follow or to change them".

This study supports the argumentation of the pluralist view, that the analysis if, how and when a decision-maker reacts to or follows public opinion can contribute to the general understanding how policy-making is shaped, and may provide useful guidance for overcoming impediments in policy-making, on the one hand, or chances for successful democratic ruling, on the other hand (Holsti 1992; Foyle 1999).

As an explanatory approach, public opinion research has also a shortcoming: Public opinion as a source is very difficult to grasp. When using it for analysis, the researcher has to be aware, that results do not absolutely mirror what the public thinks, instead, the researcher can only make assumptions based on the data available.

In the case of Japan, a great number of public opinion polls were available, however, one has to be aware of the differences in questioning and wording of each poll that can influence the answer of respondents. Accordingly, it is only possible to filter out trends.

Furthermore, the interaction of media and public opinion is difficult to distinguish. Research results are easily mixed and the possibility of misinterpretation is high. It, thus, depends very much on the preciseness of the research question, and how the variable media is used in each analytical approach in order to avoid false results.

### 8.4.4. Research perspectives and implications

The administration of Prime Minister Koizumi revealed an extraordinary political time period for Japan. Prime Minister Koizumi is considered as one of the strongest leaders the country has ever had, with one of the longest administrations until today. Koizumi can be regarded as an exception however, for he can also be interpreted as part of a pattern of a trend, that already started in the 1990s as was elaborated in chapter 3. The Koizumi era

undoubtedly represented the beginning and continuation of an era on which the present political system of Japan is based (cf. Interview Iio Jun: 2010.09.01).

Recent events in Japan, such as the dispute over the US bases in the prefecture of Okinawa and the US-Japan relation, and, above all the domestic political developments since the disasters of March 11, 2011 and the subsequent atomic disaster of Fukushima have shown, that the above-mentioned trend of public participation and change in state-society relationship further continues. Protests against the restarting of nuclear power plants take place at an increasing rate, even resulting in the re-establishment of a political party *midori no tō* (the greens)[41]. Scholars have even commented, that these protests become different, not only in number but also in intensity. Direct messaging offers a means of new communication, thus making confrontation a more frequent observed occurrence. People directly voice their being "against something", in this case, against the restart of nuclear power plants (Williamson 2012). Dissatisfaction with governing elites grows steadily, with the result that people become more vocal and present. TV-journalists have oftentimes commented these protests as a new phenomenon. However, this can be interpreted as an extension of an existing trend, but also as a clear deviation from the traditional relationship between the public and the government, which clearly demonstrates the relevance and necessity for further studies on public opinion and policy-making in Japan. Since interest in public activity in domestic issues and also in foreign affairs steadily increases, it becomes more relevant to analyze governmental behavior in this regard. The model applied in this study supplements existing research on public opinion by combining western and Japanese approaches of public opinion research and presenting a model that gives answers to strength, combination, causality and interdependence of explanatory variables that link public opinion and the decision-maker in foreign affairs. Thereby key condition variables were identified, which are the linchpin of the present model. These are the degree and timeframe of opinion magnitudes and the degree of agreement or disagreement among elites. The present model should be examined on different issues and expanded with different conditions. Performing further comparative research, for example a comparison of administrations, could increase the model of reasonable causes that helps to understand governmental behavior. Moreover, through additional comparison, the value of each

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[41] The green party of Japan was established on August 28, 2012. The party is based on the political organization *midori no mirai* (green future) established in 2008, which was a merger of several environmental organizations. Its main policy is to increase the use of renewable energy sources and the termination of nuclear power.

explanatory variable tested in this study, such as for example domestic incentives, that was of the same value in all three case studies of this thesis, could be further examined and additional evidence for relevance could be given. In addition, the tripolar-Kūki model has shown great explanatory strength, and should be added to further comparative analysis of issues and cases as a supplementary perspective to the general study of climate of opinions.

With further emphasis on the analysis of causes, policy-makers could benefit from the improvement in policy-making and state-society relationships, against the background of numerous short-term prime ministerial administrations that came to power in Japan since 2006, and the norm of democracy of a country could be established on a solid ground. With the general analysis of public opinion in Japan, further assets to comparative opinion research in different countries can be supplied, and the benefit for democratic policy-making can greatly be enhanced, because as Ambassador Nishimura Mutsuyoshi, Special Advisor to the Cabinet, has stated in an interview „public opinion is important in order to make policy transparent [...] even though it depends on the judgment of the leader (how to incorporate public opinion), the huge value of public opinion is to make policy honest!" (Interview: 2010.09.08).

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# LIST OF INTERVIEWS

| Name | Institution | Date of Interview |
|---|---|---|
| Anonymous A | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan | 28.07.2010 |
| Anonymous B | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan | 26.08.2010 |
| Anonymous C | Journalist, Mainichi Shinbun | 25.08.2010 |
| Anonymous D | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan | 29.07.2010 |
| Anonymous E | Journalist, Yomiuri Shinbun | 02.08.2010 |
| Anonymous F | Embassy of Japan, Berlin | 10.06.2010 |
| Anonymous G | Cabinet Office, Japan | 03.08.2010 |
| Bessho, Kōrō | Former Executive Assistant to Prime Minister Koizumi | 03.08.2010 |
| Campbell, John C. | Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan | 06.09.2010 |
| Ide, Keiji | Councillor, Minister's Secretariat, Minstry of Foreign Affairs, Japan | 05.08.2010 |
| Iio, Jun | Vice-President of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Prof. of Government | 01.09.2010 |
| Michishita, Narushige | Prof. and Director of Security and International Studies Program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies  (GRIPS), Tokyo | 30.07.2010 |

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|---|---|---|
| Mizutani, Akira | Prof. at Hitotsubashi Universtity, former MOFA | 06.08.2010 |
| Nishimura, Mutsuyoshi | Ambassador, Special Advisor to the Cabinet, Cabinet Secretariat | 08.09.2010 |
| Saaler, Sven | Professor, Sophia University, Tokyo | 20.07.2010 |
| Soeya, Yoshihide | Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, Keio University, Tokyo | 13.09.2010 |
| Tadokoro, Masayuki | Prof. of International Relations, Faculty of Law, Keio University, Tokyo | 21.07.2010 |
| Yamauchi, Hiroshi | Director, Intelligence and Analysis Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan | 27.01.2010 |

# LIST OF INSTITUTIONS

| English term | Japanese term in transcription |
| --- | --- |
| Administrative Reform Council | Kyōseikaikakukaigi |
| Advisory Councils | Shingikai |
| Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea | Kazokukai |
| Cabinet | Naikaku |
| Cabinet Office | Naikakufu |
| Cabinet Secretariat | Naikaku Kanbō |
| Cabinet Legislation Bureau | Naikaku hōsei kyoku |
| General Association of Korean Residents in Japan | Chōsen Sōren |
| General Council of the LDP | Somukai |
| Headquarter oft he Abduction Issue, Government of Japan | Seifu Rachi Mondai Taisaku Honbu |
| Japan Defense Agency | Bōeichō |
| Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) | Chōsenhantō Enerugī Kaihatsu Kikō |
| Lower House | Shūgiin |
| Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry | Tsūsanshō |
| Ministry of Finance | Zaimushō |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MOFA | Gaimushō |

| Ministry of Health and Welfare | Kōseishō |
|---|---|
| National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea | Sukuukai |
| National Diet | Kokkai |
| Non Governmental Organization (NGO) | Hieiri Soshiki |
| Non Profit Organizaton (NPO) | Hiseifu Soshiki |
| Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) | Keizaikyōryoku Kaihatsu Kikō |
| Policy Affairs Council (PARC) of the LDP | Seimu Chōsakai |
| Press Clubs | Kisha Kurabu |
| Prime Minister's Office | Sōrifu |
| Prime Minister's Official Residence | Kantei |
| SCAP | Rengōgun Sōshireikan |
| Six Party Talks (SPT) | Rokukakokukyōgi |
| The Parlamentarian League for Early Repatriation of Japanese Citizens Kidnapped by North Korea | Rachi Giren |
| Upper House | Sangiin |
| World Trade Organization (WTO) | Sekai Bōeki Kikō |

# LIST OF LAWS, BILLS AND TREATIES

| English term | Japanese term in transcription | Year | Number |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law | Tero taisaku shochihō | 2001 | No. 113 |
| Bill Concerning the Special Measures on the Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance Activitis and Security Support in Iraq | Iraku jindō fukkōshien tokubetsu sochihō | 2003 | No. 137 |
| Bill that prohibited designated ships to enter Japanese ports | Tokutei senpaku nyūkō kinshi hōan | 2004 | No. 125 |
| Central Government Reform of Japan | Chūōshūchōsaihen | 2001 | --- |
| Electoral Reform Act, includes:<br>a: Revision of the Public Office Election Law<br>b: Revision oft he Political Funds Control Law<br>c: Law to assist political parties | Senkyo seido kaikaku hōan<br><br>a: Kaisei kōshokusenkyohō<br><br>b: Kaisei seiji shikinkiseihō<br><br>c: Seitō joseihō | 1994<br><br>1993<br><br>1993<br><br>1994 | a: No. 100<br><br>b: No. 89<br><br>c: No.5 |
| Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law | Gaikokukawase oyobi gaikoku-bōekihō | 2004 | No. 228 |
| Information Disclosure Law | Jōhō Kōhaihō | 1998, 2001 | No. 42 |
| Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship | Nichū heiwa yūkō jōyaku | 1978 | --- |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Japanese Civil Code | Minpō | 1896 | Act No. 89 |
| Law to Ammend the Cabinet Law | Naikakuhō no ichibu kaisei suru hōritsu | 1999 | No. 88 |
| Law to Establish the Cabinet Office | Naikakufu sochihō | 1999 | No. 819 |
| Law on Liability for Oil Pollution Damage | Senpaku yudaku songai haijō hoshōhō | 2005 | No. 915 |
| National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) | Bōei keikaku taikō | 1976, 1995, 2004 | --- |
| Non Profit Organization Law /NPO Law | Tokutei hieiri katsudō so-kushinshō | 1998, 2001 | No. 7 |
| Pyongyang Declaration | Pyongyang sengen | 2001 | --- |
| Self Defense Law | Jieitaihō | 1954 | No. 165 |
| UN Peace Keeping Operati-ons Law / UNPKO Law | Kokusai rengō heiwa iji katsudō ni tai suru kyōryoku ni kan suru hōritsu | 1992 | No. 79 |
| U.S.-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Serving Agreement | Nichibei buhhin ekimu sōgo teikyō kyōtei | 1999 | -- |
| U.S.-Japan Defense Guide-lines | Nichibei bōei kyōryoku no tame no shishin | 1996 | -- |
| U.S.-Japan Joint Declaration on Security | Nichibei anzen hoshō kyōdōsengen, 21 seiki ni mukete no dōmei | 1996 | --- |
| U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty | Nichibei Sōgo Anzen Hoshō Jōyaku | 1960 | --- |