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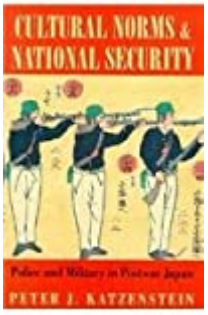


**Peter J. Katzenstein.** *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996. xvi + 307 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8014-3260-6.

**Reviewed by** Glenn Hook (University of Sheffield)

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The author of *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* does not regard himself as a Japan expert, but rather as a specialist in political economy with an interest in Japan. Although the reference section contains materials written in Japanese, he himself does not understand the language–he even admits to not knowing "which side is up in a Japanese newspaper" or "whether to read from right to left or left to right" (p. x). For access to the material and for insights into Japan, he has relied perforce on English-speaking informants. Reflecting this, the book is dedicated to two former Japanese Ph.D. students with whom he has collaborated.

What are we to make of this "newcomer" 's attention to our field? I believe there are three reasons why it should be welcomed. First, Katzenstein has broken out of the straight-jacket of "realism" and "liberalism" in his approach to national security in postwar Japan. Instead of the Procrustean bed of American orthodoxy, he places norms as central to our understanding of some of the more puzzling aspects of Japanese security from the realist or liberal perspective. Second, his book focuses on both specialised agencies of the state with a duty to protect the security of the citizenry, the police and the military. This is I think the first time the two have been addressed systematically in one English-language volume. Third, he treats his subject in comparative perspective. The insights he offers on German national security deepen our understanding of Japan. In short, despite the shortcomings of his not having first-hand access to Japanese material, Katzenstein still has produced a book Japan experts should find rewarding.

The book's thesis is that, in order to understand the reluctance of the police to use violence and the government to use the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) as a military instrument of state power, norms must be taken into account. In particular, the author is concerned with "constitutive norms"–that is, norms which "express actor identities that also define interests and thus shape behaviour" (p. 18). These norms, though contested and historically contingent, have crystallized in society at large, in the government, in the police and in the SDF in interests and patterns of behaviour giving precedence to nonviolent responses to policy issues. In the case of international terrorism, for instance, the government has been reluctant to abandon its nonviolent response, despite international pressure. In the case of domestic terrorism, the police have taken a "soft gloves" approach, although Katzenstein recognises that the target has been the left rather than the right wing, with this "anti-Left bias in the constitutive norm of collective identity ... uncontested" (p. 96). As far as the SDF are concerned, again the author

demonstrates how constitutive norms have served to restrict the service's military activities. The Japanese response to the Gulf War is emblematic of the policy rigidity likely when these norms are called into question.

In essence, then, Katzenstein seeks to demonstrate that, by taking constitutive norms into account, we can come to a deeper understanding of the security policies pursued by the Japanese governments and the actions taken by the Japanese police and SDF. Although I agree generally with his assessment of the importance of constitutive norms in these respects, a number of questions remain. I shall limit myself to three points related to external security. First, I am not quite sure he has grasped fully the degree to which the reluctance to use violence is rooted outside of government circles. More specifically, while it is true that the Yoshida doctrine did give greater emphasis to Japan becoming an economic rather than a military big power, enough of an attempt to take Japan down the road to "big powerism" has been made along the way. The failure of these attempts is related directly to the role played by public opinion, anti-nuclear movements, and broader social movements in constraining the government's security policies. Second, I also wonder to what extent Katzenstein views these norms as a by-product of the existence of the U.S.-Japan security treaty system. Would the ending of the alliance relationship alter fundamentally these constitutive norms, or is the commitment to non-violence more deep rooted than the commitment to the security treaty? Third, what are the costs of maintaining both the normative preference for non-violence as well as the U.S.-Japan security treaty system? More specifically, how should we evaluate the government's preference for "non-violence" when the costs in hosting U.S. bases are born mainly by Okinawa?

These and other questions remain. Nevertheless, *Cultural Norms and National Security* can be regarded as a major contribution to the study of Japanese national security and should be of interest to all those seeking to come to a deeper understanding of Japan.





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