

THE INVISIBLE BARRIER TO TRADE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN: 'HORIZONTAL COMPETITION'

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Abstract: Japan's restrictions on the import of certain products have led to disputes with the U.S. These disputes have been addressed within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and considered a disagreement based on foreign trade policies. The foreign trade problem between Japan and the U.S. dates to the period between 1945 and 1951, during which Japan was under U.S. occupation. The US-led reform programs during the occupation period significantly affected the Japanese economy, politics, and society, profoundly shaping Japanese cultural life and making American culture predominant. This, in turn, led to the emergence of reactions against U.S. cultural hegemony in Japan. One of the most striking implications of these reactions is the restriction of U.S. imports into Japan, which is attributed to cultural barriers.

Keywords: Japan-US Foreign Trade, Securitisation, Societal Security, Horizontal Competition, Identity.

Rezumat: *Bariera invizibilă în calea comerțului dintre Statele Unite și Japonia: „conurența orizontală”.* Restricțiile impuse de Japonia la importul anumitor produse au dus la dispute cu SUA, abordate în cadrul Acordului General pentru Tarife și Comerț (GATT) și considerate drept un dezacord bazat pe politicile de comerț exterior. Problema comerțului exterior dintre Japonia și SUA datează din anii 1945-1951, perioadă în care Japonia se afla sub control american. Programele de reformă conduse de SUA în anii de ocupație au avut un impact semnificativ asupra economiei, politicii și societății japoneze, generând dominația culturii americane în detrimentul celei nipone. În consecință, acest lucru a dus la apariția

unor reacții împotriva hegemoniei culturale a SUA în Japonia. Una dintre cele mai izbitoare implicații ale acestor reacții poate fi observată în restricțiile asupra importurilor SUA în Japonia, barierele culturale fiind considerate determinante în cadrul acestor restricții.

INTRODUCTION

There is a long-standing competition between Japan and the U.S. One of the most critical events in which this competition was evident was undoubtedly World War II. During the war, Japan pursued an expansionist policy in its region. Under this policy, Japan first captured the Chinese island of Hainan and then headed for Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It also acquired strategic bases in French Indochina. In response, the U.S. froze all Japanese assets in the country and imposed an embargo on oil exports to Japan. The main event that escalated tensions between the U.S. and Japan during this period was the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbour base in Hawaii in 1941. The Battle of Midway and the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 then resulted in Japan's defeat by the U.S.

Following the defeat, Japan remained under U.S. occupation from 1945 to 1951. During this period, Japan was led by General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 transformed Japan from a ruthless enemy to a de facto ally in the eyes of the U.S. When the U.S. began to use Japan as a logistical base for the fight against communism, a peace treaty was signed between the two countries in 1951, and Japan gained independence. At this point, the Korean War was highly decisive for Japan's fate. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru even described the Korean War as "a gift from the gods." After gaining independence, the Japanese government gradually began to alter U.S. policies in the country and to implement protectionist measures in trade with the U.S. This situation has prompted discussions about U.S.-Japan relations. Although the issue was focused on Japan's protectionist foreign trade policy as the cause of the problem, it was ignored that the problem was fundamentally rooted in a cultural and, therefore, an identity dimension.

At this point, it can be stated that the issue between Japan and the U.S. within the framework of foreign trade coincides with the claim that some countries use horizontal competition as a "pretext" to put obstacles to foreign trade around the concept of 'Horizontal Competition' which is one of the threats defined by Ole Waever, one of the leading representatives of the Securitization Theory. According to the cited trade policy, countries invoke their traditions and cultures to justify protectionism, and it appears that Japan also invokes 'Cultural

Difference' as an argument in trade disputes. For this reason, Japan's presentation of 'horizontal competition' as a threat to prevent imports from the USA, particularly from the early 1970s to the late 1990s, was analysed within the scope of 'Securitisation Theory' in this study. Trade relations between these two countries have generally been evaluated with respect to agricultural products, particularly rice, beef, dried beans, and groundnuts. For this purpose, GATT reports and cultural and identity reasons articulated by the Japanese authorities to prevent imports were used, thereby attempting to explain how these reasons obstructed foreign trade by conflating them with Japanese cultural values. In this context, the study focused primarily on the 'Security Theory,' which constitutes the analytical dimension, and one of its sub-concepts, 'Societal Security.' Following this, Japan's efforts to prevent foreign trade between Japan and the U.S. by citing cultural barriers are analysed within the framework of 'Identity,' one of the reference objects defined within 'Societal Security,' and 'Horizontal Competition,' one of the threats described in the same framework.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: SECURITIZATION THEORY AND SOCIETAL SECURITY

SECURITIZATION THEORY

Securitisation Theory holds that, with the end of the Cold War, the scope of security studies should be extended beyond the use or threat of force to encompass non-state actors. Among the most prominent influences of new approaches is the theory of 'Securitisation,' developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and their collaborators, a body of work known as the 'Copenhagen School.'¹

The concept of security is generally interpreted in classical theories through the lens of national security. However, national security is neither fully guaranteed nor ensured within the borders of any state.² In this context, security

¹ Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe, *Güvenlik, Güvenlik Çalışmaları ve Güvenlikleştirme* [Security, Security Studies, and Securitization], in Evren Balta (ed.), *Küresel Siyasete Giriş: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kavramlar, Teoriler, Süreçler* [Introduction to Global Politics: Concepts, Theories, and Processes in International Relations], İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2014, p. 250; Michael C. Williams, *Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics*, in "International Studies Quarterly", Vol 47, 2003, no. 4, p. 511, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3693634> (Accessed on 12.11.2022).

² Ole Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, in Ronnie D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *On Security*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 49-51.

theorists note that the essence of security studies is not only war, power, or related issues. Instead, they sought to construct a more radical view of security studies by examining threats to a reference object and the securitisation of those threats, both military and non-military.³ At this point, Açıkmese stated that, within the security framework, everything from A to Z can be framed as a threat. Securitisation theorists identify three essential elements of a securitisation act. The first is the reference object, which is the subject of securitisation. The second is the securitising actor who verbalises security; the third is the audience's acceptance of the existential threat claim and approval of the extraordinary measures.⁴ In other words, by using the word 'security,' a government official carries a particular outcome into a private sphere, thus gaining the opportunity to assert a special right to use whatever means necessary to hinder it.⁵ In this context, Waever answers the question of "what is security" by drawing on the language theory that security is a 'speech act.' Therefore, no issue is actually a security problem; security is a linguistically expressed matter.⁶

There are three critical steps in the securitisation of a problem: the first is a threat to the existence of an object; the second is the introduction of the danger into the state's political agenda through a 'speech act' by political elites, who demand urgent measures to combat it; and the third is the audience's approval of the claim about the threat's existence and its authorisation of urgent measures.⁷ Not every securitisation action necessarily succeeds. In other words, the issue is securitised only if and when the audience accepts it; otherwise, the process remains a 'securitising move.'⁸

While a 'security state' is defined as a situation in which a security problem exists but necessary measures are taken against it, in a state of insecurity, no measures are taken against an existing security problem. In this context, because treating every threat as a security problem does not enable it to be resolved through normal processes, Copenhagen School theorists suggest that security

³ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 4.

⁴ Sinem Akgül-Açıkmese, *Algı mı, Söylen mi? Kopenhag Okulu ve Yeni Klasik Gerçekçilikte Güvenlik Tehditleri* [Perception or Discourse? Security Threats in Copenhagen School and Neoclassical Realism], in "Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi", Vol. 8, 2011, no. 30, p. 59-61.

⁵ Ole Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p. 44-45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54-55.

⁷ Ole Waever, *Securitization: Taking Stock of a Research Program in Security Studies*. Unpublished Conference Paper, Chicago, 2003, p. 9.

⁸ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework...*, p. 4.

should be limited to issues related to the survival of the state. In contrast, other issues should not be securitised; therefore, they should be resolved within normal political processes.⁹ This concept, also referred to as 'de-securitisation,' in which a problem previously considered a threat is no longer a threat, can be understood as the antithesis of securitisation. At this point, it can be assumed that de-securitisation is a critical concept introduced into security terminology by the Copenhagen School.¹⁰

SOCIETAL SECURITY

Societal security, one of the sectors defined within the framework of securitisation theory, came to the forefront, especially with the intensification of ethnic conflicts in the territory of the dissolved USSR. Waever (2008: 158-159) lists the issues considered threats to societal security as follows:

1. 1. Migration – The People of X are invaded by the People of Y or lose their attributes due to the invading People. The People of X will no longer exist as they did before, as the other People will constitute the population. The identity of X is differentiated by changes in population composition (e.g., the migration of Chinese to Tibet and Russians to Latvia). 2. Horizontal competition – Although the People of X still live there, their lifestyle will change due to the prominent cultural and linguistic influences of the neighbouring culture Y. In addition, horizontal competition can be seen in cases where the cultural structures of occupied hostile societies are reconstructed by the victorious states (for example, the Americanisation of Japan and Germany). 3. Vertical competition – The People will stop seeing themselves as X because there is either an integration project (e.g., Yugoslavia, E.U.) or a separatist 'regionalist' project (e.g., Quebec, Catalonia, Kurdish). These projects pull them towards broader or narrower identities. 4. A possible fourth issue is population decline due to plague, war, famine, natural disaster, or extinction policies.¹¹

Migration and immigration issues, which are significant threats to societal security, are often treated as impediments to the normal flow of life in political and economic discourse and in everyday conversations. People may make

⁹ Ole Waever, *Securitization and Desecuritization*, p. 56.

¹⁰ Atilla Sandıklı, Bilgehan Emeklier, *Güvenlik Yaklaşımlarında Değişim ve Dönüşüm* [Change and Transformation in Security Approaches], in Atilla Sandıklı (Ed.), *Teoriler Işığında Güvenlik, Savaş, Barış ve Çatışma Çözümleri* [Security, War, Peace, and Conflict Resolution in the Light of Theories], İstanbul, BİLGESAM Publishing, 2012, p. 54.

¹¹ Ole Waever, *Toplumsal Güvenliğin Değişen Gündemi* [The Changing Agenda of Societal Security], in "Uluslararası İlişkiler", Vol. 5, 2008, no. 18, p. 158-159.

individual or societal decisions to relocate for various reasons, from economic opportunity to environmental pressure to religious freedom. Moreover, people may be forced to resettle as part of a state's political programme to homogenise its population.¹² There are two reasons for securitising migration: internal and external barriers. Internal boundaries are premised on the assumption that immigrants can threaten a country's peace in the near or long term. For this reason, it is anticipated that immigrants should not be granted equal citizenship rights to local citizens. External boundaries stipulate that immigrants will not be admitted or allowed to settle in the country because of the possibility that they may bring terrorism and crime with them if they are taken into the country.¹³

Another threat category, 'horizontal competition,' concerns the unintended effects of interactions between large, dynamic cultures and small, outdated cultures. It also applies to the reconstruction of occupied territories (such as the Americanisation of Japan and Germany) and to 'cultural barriers,' which are brought to the forefront as tools in contemporary trade policy. Within this framework, importing states resort to tradition to justify protectionism. At the same time, exporters seek to diminish the status of these cultural features to nullify this opportunity. This situation is evident in Japan-US relations. It can also be stated that Japan invokes cultural diversity as an argument in trade disputes (e.g., opposing rice imports on health grounds).¹⁴

Waever generally attributes 'vertical competition,' another threat category, to integration or separatist projects implemented within a state. If a state seeks to control some or all of the cultural reproduction mechanisms of the integration projects it has formed to create a common culture, different ethnic and linguistic groups living in that state may seek to pursue separatist projects. At this point, it can be asserted that vertical competition has two dimensions. First, the threat to the minority group is more abstract and manifests as people beginning to think of themselves as something else. Second, the political decisions taken deprive the minority group of the opportunity to control the mechanisms necessary to reproduce its cultural identity.¹⁵

Another issue considered a threat to societal security is 'population decline'

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

¹³ Selim Kurt, *Güvenlikleştirme Kuramı Açısından Rusya Federasyonu-Ukrayna Çatışmasını Anlamak* [Understanding the Russian Federation-Ukraine Conflict in Terms of Securitization Theory], in "Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi", Vol. 75, 2020, no. 1, p. 10, <https://doi.org/10.33630/ausbf.669998> (Accessed on 12.11.2022).

¹⁴ Ole Waever, *Toplumsal Güvenliğin...*, p. 160-161.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

caused by plague, war, famine, natural disasters, or ethnic cleansing policies. It directly targets identity, as population decline threatens human life. In this context, policies aimed at destroying an identity or ethnic group, such as the Holocaust and genocide, are considered the main societal security issues. Birth rates also warrant consideration in population studies. Lower birth rates than competitors, or the threat of deterioration in socio-economic stability due to an unstable increase in birth rates, can cause anxiety, which may be regarded as a security problem.¹⁶

The reference objects identified within the scope of the societal sector and whose existence is threatened by the above four elements are 'identity,' 'religion,' and 'gender.' Identity is more important than the other two of these reference objects because of a series of developments since the late 20th century. The end of the Cold War placed ethnic-national security issues on the security agenda, and tendencies stemming from the weakening of political structures and individual insecurity in society triggered societal/identity security.¹⁷ Heywood defines identity as "a relatively stable and enduring sense of self. People have multiple identities, and these identities can come into conflict over time.¹⁸ However, a life without identity is unimaginable, as it entails the risk of marginalisation. There will be no 'me' or 'us' in an identity-free way of life, nor will there be any success of 'me' or 'us.'¹⁹ Because we have multiple identities, they are constantly changing and not stable or objective. However, when we securitise our identities, they become something inclusive that existed from the start. In this context, the national identity, which has been the source of political authority for the last 200 years and which motivates mass killings and racist acts, can be very easily securitised and can include all other identities in conflict situations.²⁰

ANALYSIS OF JAPAN'S RESTRICTIONS ON IMPORTS OF CERTAIN PRODUCTS FROM THE U.S. IN THE FRAMEWORK OF SECURITIZATION THEORY

Following the Second World War, Japan was invaded by the U.S., and it

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁸ Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics*, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2011, p. 183.

¹⁹ William E. Connolly, *Kimlik ve Farklılık: Siyasetin Aşmazlarına Dair Demokratik Çözüm Önerileri* [Identity and Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox], İstanbul, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 1995, p. 204-205.

²⁰ Ole Waever, *Toplumsal Güvenliğin...*, p. 155-156.

remained under U.S. occupation between 1945 and 1951. The Japanese government had to obtain the approval of U.S. General MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Tokyo, for all its decisions during the occupation years. SCAP sought to prevent Japan from becoming a war power again by containing its economic development; heavy industry was prohibited, and a significant portion of the existing machine park was sent to various Asian countries as war reparations.²¹ During this period, US-led reform programs had a significant impact on the Japanese economy, politics, and society. They had a profound effect on the social and cultural life of the Japanese.²² The purpose of these reforms can be summarised as integrating Japan's economic system into the U.S. financial system and applying cultural imperialism by adopting American culture into Japanese society.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Japanese development led to high growth rates, and the economy shifted from labour-intensive sectors to capital-intensive heavy industries. Japan leveraged the U.S. security umbrella by keeping defence spending to a minimum, thereby gaining economic power to compete with the U.S.²³ Twenty years later, Japan had become a "highly industrialised" country that uses sophisticated technology. The rapid post-war restructuring accounted for more than 10% of Japan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1955 and 1971.²⁴

Since the 1970s, Japan has assumed a position that threatens the U.S. due to its economic advantage in East Asia and its neo-mercantilist, comparative-advantage-based policies.²⁵ In this context, Japan's protectionist customs policies

²¹ Tezer Palacioğlu, *Hiçbir Sey Tesadüf Degildir: Japonya Örneğinde Dünya Ticaret Tarihi* [Nothing is a Coincidence: World Trade History in the Example of Japan], İstanbul, İTO Bilgiyi Ticarileştirme ve Araştırma Vakfı, 2018, no. 3, p. 83.

²² David J. Lu, *Japan. A Documentary History*. Vol. II. *The Late Tokugawa Period to the Present*, New York – London, M. E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 459.

²³ John Welford, *Empire in Eclipse. Japan in the Postwar American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*, London, Athlone Press, 1988, p. 111.

²⁴ Hülya Derya, *Almanya ve Japonya'nın Sanayileşme Sürecinde Korumacı Politikaların Önemi* [The Importance of Protectionist Policies in The Industrialization Process of Germany and Japan], in "Akademik Bakış Dergisi", 2015, no. 48, p. 107.

²⁵ Eyüp Akpinar, *ABD'nin Soğuk Savaş Döneminde Çin, Japonya, Güney Kore ve Kuzey Kore ile İlişkileri Bağlamında Asya-Pasifik Dengeleme Stratejisi* [Asia-Pacific Balancing Strategy in the Context of the USA's Relations with China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea during the Cold War Era], in "Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences", Vol. 19, 2020, no. 4, p. 1636, <https://doi.org/10.21547/jss.754055> (Accessed on 18.11.2022).

and export-based growth model in foreign trade have led to a U.S. trade deficit with Japan.²⁶ The U.S. has sought alternative solutions to turn this situation in its favour and limit Japan's commercial gains. However, since 1971, the U.S. has begun importing more from Japan than it exports to Japan, creating a chronic trade deficit (see Figure 1).²⁷

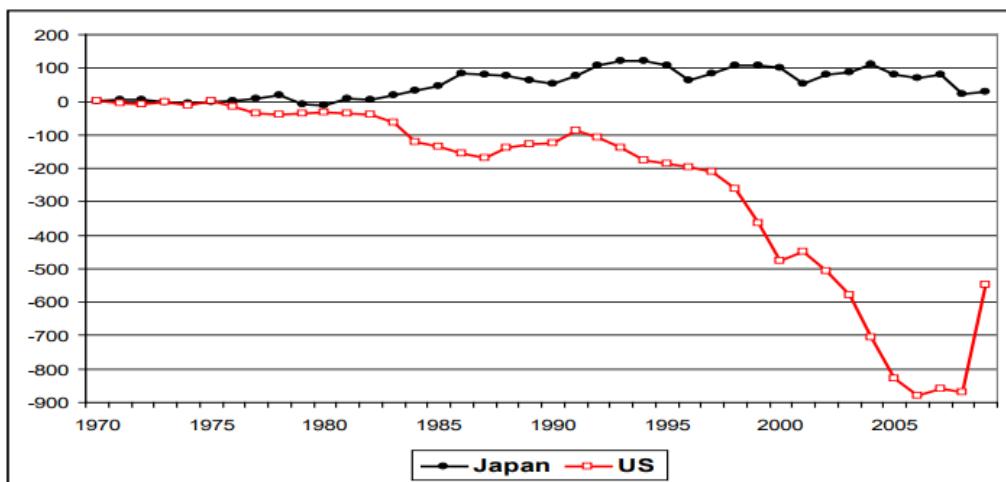


Figure 1: Trade Imbalances of Japan and the US, 1970-2009 (Billion US\$)

Source: Masahiro Kawai, Shujiro Urata, *Changing Commercial Policy in Japan during 1985-2010*. ADBI Working Paper 253. Tokyo, 2010.

This situation strained bilateral relations with the U.S., and the U.S. administration began to exert political pressure on Japan to share the military burden and to open the Japanese market to U.S. goods. By the 1980s, the economic dimension of U.S.-Japanese relations had become increasingly controversial. After independence, the Japanese government gradually assumed an active role in regulating and guiding markets. It implemented protectionist measures until local sectors developed, as it sought to prevent the U.S. from penetrating its system through globalisation. Globalisation was widely perceived in many parts of the

²⁶ Yu Takeda, *Economic Superpower in an Age of Limits: The Locomotive Strategy and U.S.-Japan Relations, 1977-1979*, in "The Journal of American-East Asian Relations", Vol. 21, 2014, no. 3, p. 279-284, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18765610-02103003> (Accessed on 18.11.2022).

²⁷ Jennifer M. Miller, *Let's Not be Laughed at Anymore: Donald Trump and Japan from the 1980s to the Present*, in "The Journal of American-East Asian Relations", Vol. 25, 2018, no. 2, p. 143, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26549240> (Accessed on 23.11.2022).

world as a threat to national cultures and, therefore, to traditional forms of identity. In this context, Japan also raised cultural barriers in its foreign trade as a form of resistance against the cultural effects of globalisation.

As Ole Waever points out, states that implement neo-mercantilist economic policies, in particular, offer cultural barriers to foreign trade as an 'excuse' within the framework of horizontal competition to reduce their imports. According to the trade policy in question, the state invokes tradition to justify protectionism. It is also likely that Japan invokes cultural differences in trade disputes.

In Japan's attempts to securitise foreign trade between Japan and the U.S., 'horizontal competition,' one of the categories of threats identified in the framework of societal security, has come to the fore. Horizontal competition, in general, is defined as changes in people's lifestyles resulting from the prominent or dominant cultural and linguistic influences of others living in the same geography, as well as the reconstruction of the cultural structures of occupied hostile societies by victorious states (for example, the Americanisation of Japan and Germany).

In addition, within the framework of 'horizontal competition,' which is also used to eliminate cultural barriers utilised in contemporary trade policy, importing states emphasise cultural values to justify the protectionism they apply. At the same time, exporters seek to weaken local cultural values to exploit this opportunity.²⁸ In Japan-U.S. relations, Japan brought cultural barriers to the fore to justify protectionism as an importing state, while the U.S., as an exporting state, tried to weaken local values through globalisation. In other words, Japan invoked cultural differences as a rationale in trade disputes, whereas the U.S. opposed this.²⁹

From the mid-1980s, the U.S. government increasingly pressured Japan to open its domestic market to U.S. products and services and to implement structural reforms in its domestic economic policies. In 1987, the U.S. filed a formal complaint under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) against Japan's protectionist policies on various agricultural products, including rice, in an effort to pressure the Japanese government to open its agricultural market. The GATT panel found that Japan's quotas on some agricultural products, including rice, violated Article XI of the GATT.³⁰ Under pressure from the U.S., the

²⁸ Ole Waever, *Toplumsal Güvenliğin...*, p. 158-160.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁰ James R. Moore, *Unlocking the Japanese Rice Market: How Far Will the Door be Opened?*, in "Global Business and Development Law Journal", Vol. 9, 1996, no. 1, p. 274,

Japanese government has agreed to change the quotas affecting most agricultural products, but has argued that its restrictions on imports of specific products constitute justified exceptions to the general prohibition on quantity restrictions under GATT.³¹ These agricultural products are 'beef', 'dried beans', 'groundnuts', and especially 'rice'. Japan has invoked cultural differences to justify prohibiting the import of these products.

Japan's import quotas are classified in the Planned Import Quota, Miscellaneous Import Quota, Special Quota for Okinawa, and Other Special Purpose Quota. In the import announcements published every six months, it is stated which type of quota will be applied for each item (see Table 1, 2, 3 for quotas for beef, dried beans and groundnuts).

At this point, it can be stated that rice is an agricultural product closely associated with Japan (see Figure 2 for Japanese rice production, consumption, stocks, and trade). Since 1979, the Japanese government has banned rice imports (see Figure 3). Japan places quantitative limits on all rice imports and permits only its state trading enterprise, the Japan Food Agency (JFA), to buy rice.³² Japanese consumers and taxpayers spend nearly \$25 billion to support their domestic rice growers financially and to insulate them entirely from the realities of the global market.³³

Table 1: Prepared Beef (Unit: '000 tons)

Fiscal Year	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Domestic Production:					
of beef	483	505	539	556	559
of prepared beef products	148	159	154	153	N/A

(Unit: tons)

Planned quota (boiled beef)	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,700	4,500
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<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/globe/vol9/iss1/10/> (Accessed on 23.11.2022).

³¹ GATT Panels (L/6253-35S/163), *Japan-Restrictions on Imports of Certain Agricultural Products*, 1988, p. 23, https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/gatt_e/86agricl.pdf (Accessed on 10.11.2022).

³² Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, *U. S.-Japan Rice Trade: Hearing before the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, United States Senate*, 99th Cong., 2nd (Serial No. 97-1051), Washington, DC., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1987, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951003079356z&seq=8> (Accessed on 10.12.2025).

³³ Toshio Shiraiwa, *Analysis of Japanese Exports and Imports of Rice*, Master of Science (Applied Economics), University of North Texas, 2003, p. 19.

Actual imports of boiled beef	4,362	4,154	4,009	4,422	N/A
MIQ allocations	2,524	2,554	2,825	2,870	2,920
Actual imports under MIQ	2,301	2,474	2,318	2,394	N/A
Okinawa quota (canned beef)	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100
Actual imports into Okinawa	935	716	787	643	N/A

Source: GATT Panels (L/6253- 35S/163), Japan-Restrictions on Imports of Certain Agricultural Products, 1988.³⁴

Rice has been essential to Japanese culture and to its development. In early Japanese settlements, there was substantial evidence of rice's importance in Japanese culture. Throughout Japan's history, rice has been an indicator of wealth. For example, in Japanese Feudal society, rice revenues, rather than direct land ownership, determined power in early Japan. Taxes were collected in the form of rice, and rice was also used as a method of payment to control and appease political forces. Many traditional events and ceremonies can be traced to rice cultivation, and it is well documented that rice plays a central role in Japanese religious ceremonies. Further evidence of rice's deep entrenchment in Japanese culture is that 'gohan,' the term commonly used in Japan to denote 'meal,' is the Japanese word for cooked rice.³⁵

³⁴ The Law Concerning Price Stabilisation of Livestock Products established a price stabilisation scheme for beef, intended to expand domestic beef production and consumption. The price stabilisation system is operated by the Livestock Industry Promotion Corporation (LIPC), which purchases domestic beef at central wholesale markets whenever the price of beef falls, or is likely to fall, below the minimum stabilisation price, and sells domestic and imported beef whenever the price exceeds, or is expected to exceed, the maximum stabilisation price. LIPC also releases beef to the market when beef prices are within the stabilisation range, in its efforts to stabilise beef production and consumption. Data on Japanese beef and beef product output are presented in Table 1. LIPC maintains a monopoly under the Livestock Products Price Stabilisation Law to import beef, whereas users and traders may import specific categories of beef and beef products. The tariff category for meat of bovine animals, prepared or preserved (16.02 ex), includes a wide range of products such as seasoned beef, boiled beef, canned beef, etc. With respect to these products, a planned quota has been established for boiled beef; canned beef entering Okinawa is subject to its special quota; and all other prepared beef products are included in the Miscellaneous Import Quota (MIQ). Allocation of the Planned Quota, Okinawa Quota and MIQ is made to LIPC, end-users and traders based on their past performance. The import quotas ("permitted imports" under the MIQ) and actual import amounts are indicated in Table 1.

³⁵ James R. Moore, *Unlocking the Japanese Rice Market...*, p. 276.

Table 2: Dried Leguminous Vegetables³⁶ (Unit: '000 tons)

Crop Year (CrY-Oct.-Sept.) or Fiscal Year (FY)	1965	1970	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Target planting acreage Hokkaido ('000 ha.) (CrY)					70.0	63.0	57.3
Actual planting acreage Hokkaido ('000 ha.) (CrY)	131.8	115.2	65.1	71.0	69.4	59.4	52.6
Total actual planting area ('000 ha.) (CrY)	234.6	182.2	97.1	101.9	99.4	87.9	80.2
Domestic production ('000 tons) (CrY)	279.0	254.6	157.7	98.2	173.1	145.2	131.7
Planned import quota (FY)	173.5	154.8	112.5	117.3	122.6	120.1	116.9
Okinawa quota			3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Total actual imports	148.3	153.8	143.7	143.9	124.9	119.4	131.9
Small red beans							
-Quota			28.7	33.7	27.8	11.1	23.5
-Imports			36.2	37.5	31.4	10.2	25.4
Peas							
-Quota			18.0	18.7	17.2	22.4	19.4
-Imports			21.2	25.0	19.6	22.6	26.0

³⁶ Measures concerning the production of dried leguminous vegetables have been in force since 1960. Production has declined since 1960, although cultivation increased from 1981 to 1983. In 1984, MAFF, acting under the authority provided by the Agricultural Basic Law to adjust supply and demand, issued a directive on Planned Production of Legumes in Hokkaido to the governor of that prefecture. Hokkaido produces 80 per cent of total domestic production and ships 90 per cent of total domestic shipments. MAFF establishes a target cultivation area for total dried leguminous vegetable production in Hokkaido for five consecutive years, based on Hokkaido's draft target cultivation plan, submitted in cooperation with the cooperatives, and taking into account short- and long-term supply-and-demand estimates and legume price trends. The initial target area is reviewed and revised annually based on the previous year's production level. The cooperatives then apportion the targeted cultivation area to individual farmers and are responsible for reporting any excess cultivation and generally for marketing the dried leguminous vegetables of the farmers. The MAFF directive provides that farmers whose cooperatives report them as exceeding the target area in two consecutive years may be penalised by removal from the list of those eligible to receive government or Hokkaido Prefecture subsidies or loans. Small red beans account for more than half of Japan's dried legume production; French beans are also produced in significant quantities. Table 2 indicates target and actual cultivated acreage in Hokkaido and in Japan, and actual production of dried leguminous vegetables.

Broad beans							
-Quota			16.2	12.9	13.1	16.1	15.8
-Imports			15.1	15.8	11.5	15.4	15.1
French beans and others							
-Quota			49.6	52.0	64.5	70.5	58.2
-Imports			71.2	65.6	62.4	71.2	65.4

Source: GATT Panels (L/6253- 35S/163), Japan-Restrictions on Imports of Certain Agricultural Products, 1988.

In addition, a scientific study on rice found that Japanese consumers are sensitive to 'rice type' and consider this an essential criterion when evaluating rice. Therefore, they believe that locally produced rice is superior.³⁷ It is sad that dependence on imported rice is a political, social, and traditional issue rather than an economic issue. Rice in Japan is, and has been, sacred and represents the nation's soul. The Japanese have grown rice for more than a thousand years. The Japanese strongly believe that they can produce sufficient rice to be self-sufficient and that Japanese rice is of the highest quality. They believe that high-quality Japonica rice served in school lunches must continue to preserve the traditional Japanese style, although this will make the lunches more expensive than necessary. In this way, the government contends blandly, children will better understand the importance of rice in Japanese tradition.³⁸ In the case of rice, the Japanese government has used these arguments to justify its protectionist import policy by highlighting cultural values in the context of 'horizontal competition,' which is presented as a threat to societal security.

Another product on which Japan has imposed import restrictions from the U.S. is beef. The U.S. observed that there were no governmental measures to restrict beef production in Japan as required by Article XI:2(c) (i); the Livestock Products Price Stabilisation Law maintained prices at five times world levels by strictly restricting imports. The quota for beef products was less than one per cent of total beef imports and a fraction of domestic consumption; the share of imports relative to production was held well below what would prevail in the absence of restrictions. The U.S. noted unfilled demand for meat products, as evidenced by

³⁷ Qianhui Gao, Shoichi Ito, Kolawole Ogundari, Hisamitsu Saito, *Evaluating Welfare Effects of Rice Import Quota in Japan: Based on Measuring Non-Tariff Barriers of SBS Rice Imports*, in "Sustainability", Vol. 8, 2016, no. 8, p. 7, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8080817> (Accessed on 29.11.2022).

³⁸ Toshio Shiraiwa, *Analysis of Japanese...*, p. 23.

rising demand for non-quota substitutes and increased imports following quota liberalisation for other meat products (see Table 1 and Figure 4).³⁹

Table 3: Groundnuts⁴⁰ (Unit: '000 tons)

Calendar Year	1965	1970	1983	1984	1985	1986
Target planting area (8 prefectures)				27,3	26,8	25,3
Actual planting area (8 prefectures)	59,3	55,7	27,8	26,9	25,1	22,7
Actual planting area – Nationwide (CrY: Oct.-Sept.)	66,5	60,1	29,7	28,7	26,8	24,3
(Unit: '000 tons)						
Production	-In shell	136,6	124,2	49,4	51,3	50,5
	-Shelled	80,7	78,3	31,2	27,4	31,9
Import quota (FY)	27,0	54,0	62,4	56,0	58,0	55,3
Actual Imports	25,1	59,0	59,8	62,9	57,2	56,5

Source: GATT Panels (L/6253-35S/163), *Japan-Restrictions on Imports of Certain Agricultural Products, 1988*.

³⁹ GATT Panels (L/6253-35S/163), *Japan-Restrictions on Imports...* p. 36.

⁴⁰ Measures concerning groundnut production have been in force since the 1960s. The area planted to groundnuts has declined since then. Production measures were reinforced in 1984 as programmes to reduce rice cultivation increased farmers' interest in peanut production. Under the Agricultural Basic Law, MAFF directed the Principal Groundnut-Producing Prefectures Liaison Council (comprising eight prefectures accounting for 94 per cent of total domestic production) to implement restrictive measures on groundnut production. Before the annual seeding period, MAFF determines the desired planting area for the eight prefectures, based on cultivation plans submitted by the eight prefectural governments, in cooperation with producer associations, and taking into account long-term supply/demand projections and short-term trends such as groundnut prices. The Government's decision on the target planting area is then communicated to the Liaison Council, and subsequently to the member prefectures and to the agricultural associations and cooperatives. The associations and cooperatives then apportion the total targeted cultivation area for each prefecture among individual farmers. Cooperatives are responsible for reporting any excess cultivation and, generally, for marketing farmers' groundnuts. Guidelines are also set by MAFF and the governments of the eight prefectures, which are authorised by the Agricultural Cooperative Law to supervise agricultural cooperatives. In the case of farmers whose cooperatives report that they exceeded their target area in two consecutive years, the MAFF directive indicates that such measures may include removing the farmer from the list of those eligible to receive subsidies or loans from the Government or the prefecture. The target cultivation area, the actual cultivation area, and production levels in Japan are presented in Table 3.

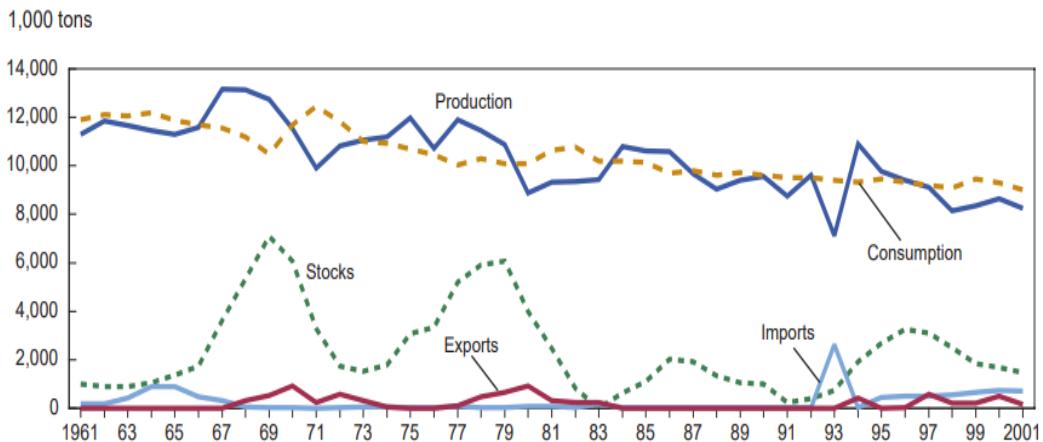


Figure 2: Japan: Rice production, consumption, stocks, and trade

Source: Economic Research Service, USDA. (2003). *Rice Sector Policies in Japan*.

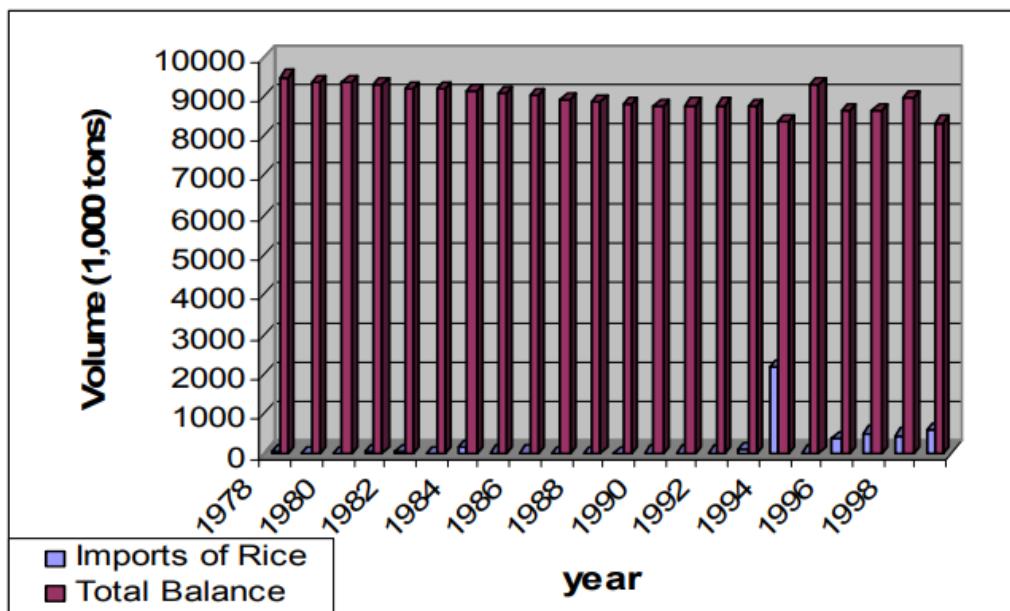


Figure 3: Japanese Imports of Rice and Total Balance

Source: Toshio Shiraiwa, *Analysis of Japanese Exports and Imports of Rice*, p. 20.

Historically, the dominant source of animal protein in Japan has been fish and shellfish. Regarding meat consumption, Japan has the shortest history

among Asian countries. For example, meat-based dishes are not commonly served at traditional festivals, and Japanese consumers consume more seafood than meat. Therefore, the restriction on meat imports is justified because replacing seafood, which holds an important place in traditional Japanese culture, is undesirable. At this point, it is observed that the factors related to Japanese beef purchasing behaviour are classified into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic quality values. While the inherent quality value is associated with the meat's external appearance and fat ratio, the extrinsic quality value includes socio-economic factors such as information about the farmer, brand, and production area. The socio-economic factors are stated as follows: Japanese consumers are the most challenging and demanding consumers in the world; they prefer only the best in quality and service, and 'domestic production' is a crucial factor in the Japanese people's meat purchasing behaviour. For these reasons, although the retail price of domestic beef is higher than that of imported beef, Japanese consumers seem to prefer domestically produced beef.⁴¹ In this context, most Japanese consumers agree that Japanese products are superior and that foreign products are unsuitable.⁴² For example, this is evident in an interview with the former head of the Association of Agricultural Cooperatives. President Shizuma Iwamochi told a group of foreign journalists that "the Japanese cannot digest foreign beef because their intestines are different from those of Westerners."⁴³ The Japanese government has invoked Japanese consumer habits to justify quotas on beef imports, emphasising that Japanese society, which already consumes very little meat, is highly selective in its meat consumption. At the same time, an inference has been drawn about the physiological structures of the Japanese and the reasons why imported meat was not preferred. In fact, it can be stated that what Japan wants to do in the framework of horizontal competition by restricting meat imports is to protect seafood, which is an essential part of its culture, against meat, which is one of the building blocks of American culture, and to try to restrict meat entry into the

⁴¹ Keisuke Sasaki, Michiyo Motoyama, Genya Watanabe, Ikuyo Nakajima, *Meat Consumption and Consumer Attitudes in Japan: An Overview*, in "Meat Science", 2002, no. 192, 3-4, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.meatsci.2022.108879> (Accessed on 26.11.2022).

⁴² Paul A. Herbig, Frederick A. Palumbo, *Japanese Consumer Protection*, in "Journal of Consumer Marketing", Vol. 11, 1994, no. 1, p. 12, <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363769410053655> (Accessed on 26.11.2022).

⁴³ Glenn D. Hook, Julie Gilson, Christopher W. Hughes, Hugo Dobson, *Japan's International Relations: Politics, Economics and Security* (3rd ed.), London, Routledge, 2011, p. 12.

country under different pretexts. In this context, as Ole Waever says, "Some countries present horizontal competition as a cultural barrier to their foreign trade."

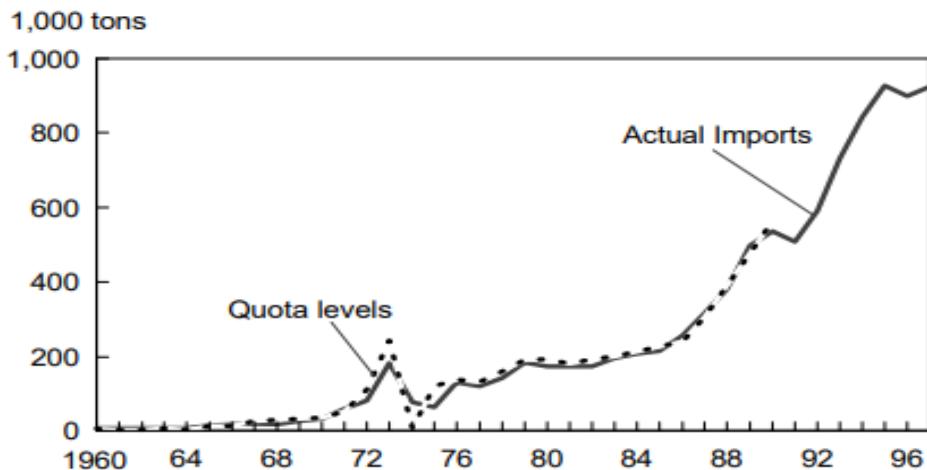


Figure 4: Japan's beef imports, 1960-97

Source: *Regional Trade Agreements and U.S. Agriculture/AER-771/ Chapter 9.*

'Dried beans' and 'groundnuts' are two other products for which Japan has imposed import restrictions. The U.S. questioned the reason for Japan's restrictions on imports of dried beans and groundnuts through GATT, and Japan "indicated that the long-term trend of demand for dried beans was declining or stagnant because the caloric intake per person in Japan was approaching its maximum limit."⁴⁴ For groundnuts, it is stated that "long-term declines in consumption were due to the caloric intake per person in Japan approaching its maximum limit, as well as consumers' preference for varied and less fatty foods."⁴⁵ The regular, healthy diet and low weight ratios that characterise traditional Japanese culture indicate that Japan pays attention to per capita calorie intake. In its counterargument to the GATT, Japan notes that demand for dried beans and groundnuts has declined as per capita calorie intake approaches its maximum. Therefore, this is immaterial, and the justification primarily concerns the structure of Japanese culture.⁴⁶ In addition, several studies have

⁴⁴ GATT Panels (L/6253-35S/163), *Japan-Restrictions on Imports...* p. 32.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁶ Ana San Gabriel, Kumiko Ninomiya, Hisayuki Uneyama, *The Role of the Japanese Traditional Diet in Healthy and Sustainable Dietary Patterns around the World*, in

consistently found low-calorie intake among men and women in Japan, compared with those in China, the U.S., Italy, or the U.K.⁴⁷ The traditional Japanese diet, with its emphasis on rice, vegetables, and fish, and very little fat, is conducive to maintaining a lower-calorie intake.⁴⁸ Since products with high fat content cause obesity and excess weight, the Japanese suggest creating a 'well-balanced diet' through the consumption of traditional foods.⁴⁹ Beyond excessive calorie intake, there is another reason why they want to avoid importing beans. For Japan, this agricultural product is also culturally valuable. In the rituals that the Japanese consider sacred, bean-based products are used. In the preparation of these products, domestic beans are preferred. This is because, in Japanese culture, it is common to assume that local products are superior and that foreign products are unsuitable. The Japanese Consumer Association has even warned consumers that imported food items may be unsafe, of poor quality, or of poor value for the Japanese consumer.⁵⁰ In this context, Japan has sought to justify its foreign trade policies by invoking horizontal competition and numerous cultural pretexts in the importation of dried beans and groundnuts.

In its broadest sense, culture is the way of life of a people, encompassing their beliefs, values, and practices. What is perceived as a threat to culture is also a threat to identity. As a result, Japan has always pursued a foreign trade policy aimed at protecting its identity by asserting its cultural values. It can be argued that Japan has invoked cultural and identity arguments to justify this policy,

"Nutrients", Vol. 10, 2018, no. 2, p. 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu10020173> (Accessed on 22.11.2022).

⁴⁷ Beifan Zhou, Jeremiah Stamler, Barbara Dennis, et al., *Nutrient Intakes of Middle-aged Men and Women in China, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States in the Late 1990s: the INTERMAP Study*, in "Journal of Human Hypertension", Vol. 17, 2003, no. 9, p. 623-630, <https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.jhh.1001605> (Accessed on 14.11.2022); Ronghua Zhang, Zhaopin Wang, Ying Fei et. al., *The Difference in Nutrient Intakes between Chinese and Mediterranean, Japanese and American Diets*, in "Nutrients", Vol. 7, 2015, no. 6, p. 4661-4688, <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu7064661> (Accessed on 14.11.2022).

⁴⁸ Benjamin Senauer, Masahiko Gemma, *Why Is the Obesity Rate So Low in Japan and High in the U.S.? Some Possible Economic Explanations*. The Food Industry Center University of Minnesota, 2006, p. 8, <https://doi.org/10.22004/AG.ECON.14321> (Accessed on 22.11.2022).

⁴⁹ Genaro Castro-Vázquez, *Ethno-essentialisms of the self: A critique of the Cultural Scripting of Obesity in Japan*. in "Sociology of Health & Illness", Vol. 43, 2021, no. 3, p. 9, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13256> (Accessed on 20.11.2022).

⁵⁰ Paul A. Herbig, Frederick A. Palumbo, *Japanese Consumer...*, p. 6.

thereby highlighting 'horizontal competition' as an 'invisible' cultural barrier in its foreign trade.

CONCLUSIONS

From a foreign trade perspective, the causes of the issue examined in this study date back to the Second World War. Japan was occupied by the U.S. from 1945 to 1951, but gained independence through a peace treaty signed in 1951. During this period, several U.S.-led reform programmes were implemented, which had a significant impact on the Japanese economy, politics, and society, and a profound effect on the social and cultural life of the Japanese.

After independence, the Japanese government gradually altered policies under which the U.S. played an active regulatory and guiding role, and protectionist measures were implemented in foreign trade with the U.S. These developments have led to a controversial trade relationship between the U.S. and Japan. In particular, the U.S. side was disturbed by Japan's protectionist policies, which it claimed were beneficial, and it expressed this discomfort even within the framework of the GATT. Although it was emphasised that the leading cause of the problem was Japan's protectionist foreign trade policy, the identity and cultural dimensions underlying this policy, particularly within the context of the agricultural products examined, require further attention.

Therefore, when the problem is examined in the context of 'horizontal competition,' one of the threats identified in the field of societal security, it is also found to have identity and cultural dimensions. Although Japan signed a peace treaty with the U.S. in 1951, it did not accept the cultural imperialism the U.S. had practised during the years of occupation. In addition, the country's economic recovery efforts led to the implementation of an import-substitution policy, resulting in a foreign trade deficit with its trading partners. In this context, Japan resisted the cultural influences of globalisation by erecting barriers to prevent the import of products it considered essential to its own culture in its trade with the U.S. after independence. At this point, it can be asserted that Japan presented U.S. products as a threat through the securitisation of its identity and sought to reduce imports of these products by taking various measures.

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