

JAPAN'S (IN)ACTION ON THE UYGHUR QUESTION: NORMS OR INTERESTS?

Claudiu-Bogdan Aldea

Abstract:

As part of the liberal order, Japan benefited significantly from its economic and political integration. Its reactions to various challenges to the liberal order, however, have highlighted conflicts between strategic interests and norm adherence. The research focuses on one such case: the Uyghur abuses in Xinjiang, China. The aim of the research is to explore how Japan's cautious stance on the Uyghur question has evolved between 2014 and 2024, across the administrations of Shinzō Abe, Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida. Guided by Social-Constructivism and Role Theory, the paper tries to answer two research questions: How did Japan's discourse and policy responses to the Uyghur question evolve between 2014 and 2024? What factors influenced Japan's slow reaction to the topic despite increasing international pressure?

Keywords: Japan foreign policy, Uyghur question, Social-Constructivism, Role Theory