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THE FAILURE OF THE BALANCE OF POWER:

WARRING STATES JAPAN, 1467-1590

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
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Contrary to the predictions of balance of power theory that the balancing mechanism prevents the emergence of hegemonies in anarchic systems, and contrary to the absence of hegemony in the European system for the last five centuries, hegemonies have sometimes been established in non-Western historical systems. According to balance of power theory, when one state begins to seek domination, other states balance against the domination seeker to preserve their autonomy. However, scholars have noted how balance of power theory has rarely been tested outside of the European and modern international contexts.

English School scholars who have traced the development of the balance of power concept from its origins in Renaissance Italy to the 19th century Concert of Europe have found little evidence that the balance of power concept was known or understood outside of Europe. While the balance of power was well-known by Europeans and widely applied to the practice of European diplomacy, it was virtually unknown outside

of Europe. In the absence of knowledge of the balance of power concept, can states prevent the creation of hegemonies through balancing? This project finds that while actors naturally try to balance domination seekers individually, they will find it difficult to form effective, collective balancing coalitions without knowledge of the balance of power concept.

The project's argument is qualitatively tested with the Warring States Japan, 1467 to 1590. Warring States Japan is well suited as a case to test international relations theory. During this period, Japan was an anarchic system of independent, feudal domains ruled over by warlords who ruled them like miniature states. Japan was isolated from the rest of the world during this period so there was no external pressure on the warlords' decision making. For approximately 100 years after 1467, the system experienced a balance of power, as no warlord rose to create a hegemonic order. Then, from 1568 to 1590, Japan was unified by two warlords, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. This project studies the nature of the balance that existed before unification and the balancing efforts of the warlords in reaction to the unification process.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Balance of power theory is one of the oldest and most referenced theories of international relations scholarship. In its most basic form, it argues that the units of an anarchic multistate system will maintain their independence by balancing dominant powers that threaten to establish hegemonic orders over the system. Balancing is performed by the great powers of the system usually in the form of balancing alliances, but also individually. Hypothetically, through the balancing efforts of the great powers, the balanced, anarchic system and the independence of all of its units will be maintained.

Unfortunately, this description of great powers putting their differences aside to confront hegemonic threats does not always occur.¹ Great powers can have a hard time cooperating with each other to confront powerful threats. Great powers often have a hard time putting aside their differences. They buckpass the cost of balancing onto each other. They balance late or with insufficient effort. They pick the wrong targets to balance. Creating a balancing coalition is a collective action; these problems reflect the difficulties inherent in achieving collective action. They are problems of coordination, trust, and cooperation. The more war and insecurity there is in a system, the more difficult it is to overcome these difficulties.

This project argues that great powers do not always uphold the balance of power. In newly anarchic systems, those emerging from the break-up of a state or empire for instance, it is difficult for great powers to create collective balancing coalitions to uphold the balance of power against hegemonic threats. Actors in newly anarchic systems face a harsh environment where all actors are interacting with each other as independent actors

¹ A recent edited volume describes several cases from world history in which balancing did not prevent the establishment of hegemonic order, Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a.

for the first time. Upon the break-up of states and empires, there will frequently be a scramble for territory among the newly independent actors. The sense of security will be low and the possibility of state death will be high so every unit is involved in a fight for survival. Great powers will be created through expansion at their weaker neighbors' expense, and great power rivalries exist where this expansion drives great powers against each other. Great powers become absorbed in their own regional domination seeking and become less likely to focus on systemic hegemonic threats rising in other regions.

This does not represent the supposed anarchy of today's international system, in which states have a long history of relations with each other and have drawn probabilistic inferences about each other's likely day-to-day behaviors. State death is a very infrequent occurrence in the modern international system. Balance of power theory is based on imprecise assumptions and poor empirics. As Sheehan and Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little argue, balance of power has been empirically supported almost entirely with the European system between the 16th and 20th centuries.² The deductive logic of balance of power theory is simple and internally sound – states concerned for their long-term security will join together to balance hegemonic threats – but the oft-repeated claim of universal applicability for the theory has not been supported. This may be taken to mean that balance of power theory is a Eurocentric theory; that is, its assumptions are based on European behavioral values and as such, it may be that it can only be applied to the European continent and perhaps the modern international system which is so largely based on the European system.

² Sheehan 1996; Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007.

But English School theorists and constructivists have developed another interpretation.³ A sustained balance depends in large part on the development and spread among the great powers of norms related to diplomacy, a mutual respect for sovereignty, and the maintenance of the balance by the great powers to preserve everyone's independence. States in this argument have long histories of interactions with each other, and have moved past the Hobbesian anarchic environment that exists in newly anarchic systems. Once states begin to see that that peaceful coexistence can be more beneficial in the long term than continuous warfare, they can reach this stage in their relations with each other.

The preservation of the status quo then becomes the goal of the great powers, who see benefit in preserving most of the system's actors in order to preserve their own independence. The concept of the balance of power, developed in Europe over a long period of time, was instrumental in the preservation of the status quo by serving as a guiding philosophy in the long-term and as a coordination device to facilitate the formation of counter-hegemonic balancing alliances in the short-term. Anarchic, balanced orders may exist in the absence of such norms, but these balances of power are fortuitous, fragile balances that are not likely to be sustained. In the absence of the balance of power norm, and especially in newly anarchic systems, the maintenance of the balance of power becomes much more difficult and unlikely.

³ Bull 2002; Wendt 1999.

The Empirical Case

This argument will be qualitatively tested with the unification of 16th century warlord-ridden Japan by the warlords Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi.⁴ From 1467 to the late 16th century, during what is known as the Warring States (Sengoku) Period, feudal Japan was an autonomous, isolated multistate system broken up into independent domains, each ruled over by warlords or daimyo who frequently fought among each other over territory.⁵ This balanced, anarchic system was upended by a unification process that began in 1568 when Nobunaga began his domination seeking campaign by entering Kyoto, the traditional seat of governance.⁶ Unification was completed by 1590 when Nobunaga's successor Hideyoshi conquered the last remaining independent "great power" warlord clan. The great power warlords of Japan, those most likely to affect the structure of this system, reacted in various ways to the hegemonic efforts of the unifiers. While some balanced the unifiers, others buckpassed and bandwagoned. The three unification processes represent three cases, while the strongest of the warlords in each stage represent the units of analysis. Additionally, the decades preceding the beginning of the unification process will be described in order to establish that a balance of power existed among the "great power" warlords.

⁴ Japanese names are presented family name first and given name second. This tradition is followed in all English language treatments of Japanese history. Additionally, during much of Japanese history, many notable upper class figures followed a custom of changing their names at different points in their life. This paper will use the names by which these figures are most well known today. Many famous warlords are often referred to by scholars by their given names, so Oda Nobunaga is typically referred to as Nobunaga. The spelling of Japanese words and names will follow the Hepburn system, in which long o's and u's are represented by a bar over the vowel, as in the family name Mōri. Japanese words that are not proper names will be italicized. The exception to these rules will be words which have entered Western lexicon, which will be presented as they normally appear in English. For instance, shogun will be used instead of *shōgun*.

⁵ Sansom 1961; Sadler 1978; Elison 1981; Hall et al. 1981; Berry 1982, 1994; Totman 1983.

⁶ Following the practice of many Western scholars of Japanese history, specific dates are given according to the Julian calendar, which was in use in Europe at the time, Lamers 2000, 21. The Julian calendar differs from the modern Gregorian calendar by 13 days. Modern Japanese biographies typically use the medieval Japanese dating system which differs inconsistently from the Gregorian calendar.

Medieval Japan is well suited as a case to test international relations theory. First, the shogunate in power at the time had lost the capability to govern in 1467 when it could not prevent war from breaking out and devastating the capital of Kyoto. Moreover, though the Imperial Court continued to exist, the emperors were powerless, having yielded all power to the military class. Thus, the structure of anarchy existed, and the governing void was filled by well-armed warlords at the local level who ruled their feudal domains autonomously. Second, Japan was relatively isolated from the rest of the world during this period. China ended its trade with Japan during the several decades before the period under of this study, and the only foreigners in Japan were relatively small groups of missionaries and traders, most of them from the Iberian Peninsula. Needless to say, there was no external hegemonic pressure on the warlords' decision making. Third, it is well documented that a system of communication existed between the warlords. Warlords were fairly prolific at writing letters and correspondence between warlords fills volumes of archives at libraries in Japan. Waltz deems that only an anarchic multistate system composed of at least two units who wish to survive is necessary in order for a balance of power to hold.⁷ With many independent and heavily armed domains, the condition of anarchy, isolation from the outside world and any external balancers or hegemons, and a system of communication between warlords, Warring States Japan is a near perfect analogy for the international system to test balance of power theory. This point is not lost on Japanese scholars, who have made comparisons between the Warring States Period and the European state system.⁸

⁷ Waltz 1979, 121; 1990, 37.

⁸ Kurosawa 2004.

The Warring States Period is an unofficial era designation that is ascribed to different endpoints by different authors. The formal period names encompassing this period are the Muromachi Period (1333-1568), the Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1568-1600), and Edo Period (1600-1868). All scholars date the beginning from the start of the Ōnin War (1467-1477), a war over control of the shogunate between two powerful warlord houses. The shogunate was not able to stop the fighting from devastating Kyoto and thus this war is generally seen as the end of the Ashikaga shogunate's authority.⁹ But there is debate over the end point of the era. Some end it at Nobunaga's entrance into Kyoto in 1568, others at Tokugawa Ieyasu's victory at Sekigahara in 1600, some at Ieyasu's establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate three years later in 1603, and yet others at the end of the Battle of Osaka in 1615, the last great domestic battle in which Ieyasu destroyed Toyotomi Hideyoshi's heir. The same historians are not always consistent either; the notable medieval historians John W. Hall, Keiji Nagahara, and Kozo Yamamura together describe the period as ending with Hideyoshi's unification in 1590, but Hall later stated that Japanese historians commonly end it at 1568.¹⁰ In actuality, there was in fact greater and more violent warfare between 1568 and 1590 than at any previous point in the period. This project will with Hideyoshi's unification in 1590, because this is the point at which the analogy to an international system ceases. It is true that when Hideyoshi died in 1598, more fighting erupted resulting in Ieyasu's victory at Sekigahara in 1600 and the establishment of his shogunate, but the country had been unified at that point for nearly a decade and the warlords knew the outcome of Sekigahara would decide the new hegemon. The conditions for a multistate system are

⁹ Ishida 2008, 2.

¹⁰ Hall, Nagahara, and Yamamura 1981, 9; Hall 1990, 225.

thus less applicable between 1598 and 1600, so Ieyasu's brief unification campaign is only briefly covered by this project in the concluding chapter.

A Brief Word on the Methodology

Methodologically, this research project relies on secondary historical sources written by Japanese historians in Japanese and English to gather the data to test the hypotheses. To minimize the possibility of duplicating errors from these secondary sources, multiple sources were often checked to verify relevant information, though multiple sources are not usually cited. I have cited the newest sources where possible. In some cases though, older sources are cited because newer sources were lacking or in order to diversify the citations. I have used Japanese sources for the hypothesis testing where possible, because of their greater attention for details.

For making graphs, I utilized a variety of sources, including historical books, maps, atlases, chronologies, and Warring States-specialty journals and websites. Sometimes, the data in these sources has been inconsistent in terms of territory controlled by warlords. In these cases, I have chosen to balance the most conservative estimates of warlord territory with the most common estimates.

Why is this Study Relevant?

This study is relevant for three reasons. First, it presents a critical study and test of balance of power theory. Why is that important? It is because scholars and policymakers still use balance of power terminology today. The administration of George W. Bush

administration included the balance of power in its 2002 National Security Strategy.¹¹ It still persists as one of the most cited theories in international relations scholarship.¹² Despite this continued usage, it remains a vague concept with multiple meanings.¹³ Moreover, despite its age, it remains largely untested outside of the European and modern international system. Alongside the recent volumes by Little and Kaufman, Little and Wohlforth, this project provides a further exploration into the meaning of the balance of power and the range of its empirical explanatory power.¹⁴ In particular, this project will explore the distinction between the automatic and manual conceptualizations of balance of power theory, the claims of universal applicability, and the English School's version of the balance of power.

Second, this study is useful for introducing a case of a multistate system that has not been studied in IR scholarship. Though it only lasted for 123 years and its "states" consisted of feudal domains run by warlord clans, Warring States Japan fulfills the structural conditions of a multistate system. This will be discussed in Chapter 5. Because there is only one modern international system with which to test systemic theories, it is imperative for IR scholars to uncover new cases of multistate systems even if they are as historic as this case. The exposure of Warring States Japan to Western scholarship also provides comparative scholars an empirical case to form and test theories of failed and warlord-plagued states.

Third, through its engagement with the work of English School theorists, this project helps to bring that school of thought closer to the American IR community. It has

¹¹ Bush 2002.

¹² Bennett and Stam 2004, 37

¹³ Haas 1953; Claude 1962, 11-39; Wight 1966, 151; Zinnes 1967, 270-285; Sheehan 1996. This issue will be addressed in Chapters 2 and 3.

been long regarded that IR is an “American social science”; (Hoffman citation) American IR scholars must take it upon themselves to seriously engage theories from outside of our community to widen our knowledge. The movement back toward classical realism of Schweller and others would particularly benefit from increased engagement with the English School, which always found more in common with Morgenthau than Waltz.

Plan of the Dissertation

The plan of the dissertation is as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the balance of power literature, with the focus on the manual versus the automatic conceptualization of the balance of power, and the English School (and Wendtian) explanations of the manual, institutionalized European balance of power. Chapter 3 first presents the argument and hypotheses of balance of power theory with discussion of the specific form of the theory to be used. Then, I present an argument for why international actors sometimes fail to uphold the balance. I argue that the degree of a system’s anarchy has the overall effect of inhibiting the efforts to build timely, effective, balancing coalitions. I argue that due to the insecurity actors feel in such extreme systems, they will focus their security on their immediate regions, which leads distance and the presence of rivalries to determine their reactions to domination seekers. Chapter 4 is a short chapter that will justify using the Warring States case for an IR argument, and then explain the operationalization of the variables.

¹⁴ Little 2007a; Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a.

Chapter 5 is the first empirical chapter. This will cover the years 1467-1567, in which I will provide evidence of international anarchy and a balance of power before the unification process. The next one, Chapter 6, will cover the years 1568-1582, in which Oda Nobunaga conquered most of Central Japan. The third and last empirical chapter, Chapter 3, will cover the years 1582-1590, in which Toyotomi Hideyoshi took over from Nobunaga and proceeded to conquer the remainder of the Japan. The conclusion briefly discusses as an epilogue the last part of the unification process, Tokugawa Ieyasu's takeover of power after Hideyoshi's death. Then the rest of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the results of the empirical chapters and implications. An appendix and the bibliography end the dissertation.

Chapter 2 – A Review of Balance of Power Theory

As one might expect from a concept as old as balance of power theory, so many scholars, practitioners, and analysts over the centuries have tried to place their own personal stamp on the theory that it has become difficult after all these centuries to tell exactly what it stands for. What is the definition or statement of the theory? How does it work in practice? Is it a phenomenon that automatically takes shapes and reformulates itself, or does it require the diligent concern and manipulation of policymakers and diplomats? Is it a universal theory of international political behavior, or is it bound to the European context? Almost every work on the balance has taken note of its ambiguity. Jack Levy, for instance, writes, “There is no single balance of power theory, but instead a multiplicity of theories... The confusion is all the greater because balance of power theorists cannot even agree on what it is they are trying to explain.”¹⁵ That these basic issues are still debated is an obstacle to further research on the balance of power. For any scholar seeking to contribute to scholarship on the theory, it is incumbent to first explicitly choose and state a definition and address the greatest conceptual and empirical issues.

The task that will be considered first then is pinning down an exact definition of the term “balance of power” and a statement of the theory. Critics have argued that there exist too many varieties and statements of the theory. Ernst Haas, for instance, identified eight different meanings of the term, while Martin Wight identified nine, and Dina Zinnes listed ten.¹⁶ Some of these even contradict each other. To arrive upon a definition and statement of the theory, we should seek the definition and statement that shares the

¹⁵ Levy 1989, 229.

¹⁶ Haas 1953; Wight 1966, 151; Zinnes 1967, 270-285.

greatest consensus among scholars. In future scholarship on the balance of power, alternative definitions and statements should be retitled or restated to distinguish between alternatives and the true definition and statement.

Next, we will consider a central debate in the balance of power scholarship: The question over whether the balance of power is an automatic, mechanistic phenomenon in which a balance, upon being upset, is automatically restored without the efforts of states, or whether the balance can only be maintained through the balancing efforts of states. These two forms were identified by Inis Claude as the automatic and the manual conceptualizations, respectively. A third form is the semi-automatic form, in which only one state, denoted the “balancer,” works to maintain the balance of power.¹⁷ The question over whether policymakers work with each other or not to create and maintain a balance has driven much of the debate on the balance of power. The automatic form originated from the arguments of Enlightenment-era scholars who thought of the balance as a natural law akin to laws of physical science, and it gradually gained prominence over the past two centuries, peaking with the publication of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.¹⁸ But the sparse theorization of the means by which a systemic balance is maintained in most automatic balance or power theories has attracted much criticism, which has drawn scholars to look to the manual form, such as that represented by English School scholars,¹⁹ and other alternative theories and approaches.²⁰ This debate is also related to the debate in the 1990s over whether automatic forms of balance

¹⁷ Claude 1962, 43-51.

¹⁸ Claude 1962, 43; Waltz 1979.

¹⁹ Bull 2002.

²⁰ Wendt 1992, Ruggie 1986, Cox 1986 Schweller 1994.

of power theory, such as neorealism, can be revised to allow theorization of unit-level behavior.²¹

The empirical path of criticism has focused on whether balance of power theory is a universally applicable theory of international political behavior. Waltz notably claims that a balance of power will hold in any anarchic order composed of two or more units who seek to survive.²² “Universal” in this context means thus that balance of power theory applies without spatial or temporal restriction in any multistate, anarchic system. Yet, critics have cited a notable lack of empirical validation outside of the post-Westphalian European and modern international systems. Many scholars claim that the balance of power is purely a European or Western phenomenon, or that the theory would be more accurate if a scope condition restricting it to continental systems were applied.²³

If this is so, then we should ask what occurs in non-European anarchic systems, or anarchic systems in which statesmen are not aware of the balance of power concept and are unable to create one. The English School of IR emphasizes that some level of hierarchy is typical.²⁴ The English School scholar Adam Watson for instance conjectures that anarchic international systems display a propensity to hegemony in his comparative historical work.²⁵ Accordingly, we will look into a system level argument using relying on the ideas of the English School in the next chapter.

The plan of this chapter is as follows: The first section will look into the definition issue and explicitly state a definition of the term “balance of power” and the most standard statement of balance of power theory. The next section will look into the

²¹ Christensen and Snyder 1990; Elman 1996a; Waltz 1996.

²² Waltz 1979, 121; 1990, 37.

²³ Levy 2003, 146.

²⁴ Watson 2009 [1992], 123; Buzan and Little 2000, 373.

theoretical debate over the automatic and manual forms of the theory. The third section will address the empirical support for balance of power theory and critiques of the universal claim. The results of the theoretical and empirical debates suggest that the most valid balance of power argument is a manual version restricted to the modern European system. In other words, the contention that the balance is a European phenomenon which was sustained by the deliberate efforts of statesmen, an English School argument, has the greatest support. The fourth section lays out the evidence for this argument. The conclusion suggests that the English School argument for international systems of Watson and Buzan and Little may provide the best alternative argument to the standard balance of power theory for describing systems in which the balance of power has not been institutionalized. This will lead into the argument developed in the next chapter.

The Definition Issue

What is the balance of power? Though the concept is one of the oldest in international relations scholarship, it is probably the hardest to define, or rather to “choose” a definition, since there are so many prevailing definitions. A.F. Pollard noted more than eighty years ago that many scholars have used the term “balance of power” in multiple and often contradictory uses, sometimes even within the same publication.²⁶ Claude provides a telling description of the trials one must go through when reading a typical work on the balance,

The frustrations of the student who seeks to understand and evaluate the concept of the balance of power are almost intolerably heightened by the tendency of many writers to slide blissfully from one usage of the term to another and back again, frequently without posting any warning that plural meanings exist...One can expect,

²⁵ Watson 2009, 123.

²⁶ Pollard 1923, 58.

on occasion, to encounter two different usages in the same sentence...One may be called on to match his wits with authors who use balance of power to mean equilibrium, any configuration of power, the struggle for power, and a system of international relations.²⁷

Claude singles out A.J.P. Taylor and Hans Morgenthau in particular for committing these transgressions.²⁸ Of the nine definitions that Wight uncovered in the literature, he found that three common meanings of balance of power indicate an even distribution of power, the status quo distribution, and a predominant distribution of power or “favorable” to one state or alliance.²⁹ One can easily note that the first and third meanings are contradictory and that the second one can indicate any possible distribution of power.

To clear the confusion, Zinnes and Sheehan have tried to uncover the original and most common meaning of balance of power. Zinnes states that the balance of power most commonly stands for a “particular distribution of power among the states of that system such that no single state or existing alliance has an 'overwhelming' or 'preponderant' amount of power.”³⁰ This comes closest to describing an even distribution of power, since that “precludes any one state or alliance from achieving preponderance, though the definition of a lack of preponderance may be more accurate since a group of more than two great powers may see equality only between two and weakness between the others.”³¹ Levy, for instance, uses “lack of hegemony” in his definition of balance of power

²⁷ Claude 1962, 22. Claude often speaks in terms of a “balance of power system,” in which most of his references are to the long European balance of power, Claude 1962, e.g. 20-25. I agree with Levy however that this concept should be dropped, as it “generates additional conceptual baggage and provides no value-added over a view of the balance of power as a theory of behavior...Systems are not real; they are analytical constructions that theorists use to describe and explain reality,” Levy 2003, 151, n. 7. This project will not refer to “balance of power systems.”

²⁸ Claude 1962, 23-27; Taylor 1954; Morgenthau 1973.

²⁹ Wight 1966, 151.

³⁰ Zinnes 1967, 272; Sheehan 1996, 4.

³¹ Sheehan 1996, 16.

theory.³² Zinnes is careful to note that in the case of multiple great powers, “any distribution is permissible as long as the power of each unit – state or alliances of states – in the system is less than the combined power of all the remaining units.”³³ Zinnes's definition of the term “balance of power” will be the meaning whenever it is referred to in the project.

Consensus notwithstanding, use of the other meanings still persists. Haas and Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little have noted how the balance of power has been used by politicians in propagandistic ways to soften language describing policies that favor predominance of power.³⁴ For example, the George W. Bush administration wrote in its 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy that “we seek...to create a balance of power that favors human freedom.”³⁵ Nicholas Spykman accurately states that the “truth of the matter is that states are interested only in a balance which is in their favor.”³⁶ So, one might think that politicians are the most to blame for using the balance of power to signify a predominant distribution instead of an even distribution, but scholars have been just as guilty.³⁷

Moving forward, several scholars argue that the most common statement of balance of power *theory* is that hegemonies do not occur in multistate, anarchic systems, because states, particularly great powers, will balance to prevent any single state from achieving hegemony over the system.³⁸ This goal is alternately stated as the preservation of independence; states are assumed to value their preservation as their primary goal and

³² Levy 2003, 131-133.

³³ Zinnes 1967, 272; Sheehan 1996, 4.

³⁴ Haas 1953; Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007.

³⁵ Bush 2002.

³⁶ Spykman 1942, 21.

³⁷ Claude 1962, 15-16.

³⁸ Gulick 1955, 30-34; Levy 2003, 131-133; Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 22.

will thus work to maintain the balance of power, the particular distribution of power in which no one state dominates the others.³⁹ In this project, “balance of power theory” will refer to this statement of the theory.

As Claude notes, some scholars have argued that the purpose of maintaining a balance of power is the maintenance of peace.⁴⁰ But as the statement of the theory reads, states balance to prevent hegemony and war can be a means by which the balance of power is preserved.⁴¹ An equal distribution of power and the threat of balancing by others can inhibit domination seeking warfare however. As Claude states, “The implications of war should be serious enough to stimulate preventive measures, but mild enough to enable statesmen to invoke the threat, and on occasion, the actuality of force...this is not a formula for perfect peace, but rather for reasonable stability and order with no more than moderate use of violent techniques.”⁴² Though some scholars have continued to measure the correlation of peace and (usually dyadic) parity, often in order to compare the results with that of the correlation between peace and a preponderance of power, these works do not correctly test balance of power theory as it is commonly stated.⁴³

Most forms of balance of power theory are great power theories; that is, they are primarily concerned with the actions of the great powers, which they recognize as the movers and shakers responsible for the shape of the international system.⁴⁴ The many conceptualizations of “great power” though are almost as convoluted as that of the balance of power. This project will rely on the discussion of great powers from Levy.⁴⁵

³⁹ Preservation is alternatively termed as survival or the maintenance of independence or autonomy.

⁴⁰ Claude 1962, 51-66; also noted by Gulick 1955, 35-36; Levy 2003, 131.

⁴¹ Gulick 1955, 36; Claude 1962, 52; Mearsheimer 2001, 156.

⁴² Claude 1962, 54.

⁴³ for instance, Moul 1985, 1988.

⁴⁴ Aron 1967, 94-95; Waltz 1979, 72-73; Mearsheimer 2001, 5.

⁴⁵ Levy 1983.

Based on an assumption of the dominance of security-related issues, a great power is defined as a unit in an international system with a relatively high level of military capabilities, self-sufficiency in security, and the ability to project military power beyond their borders (and presumably beyond the territories of adjacent units). Additionally, the interests and objectives of great powers are system-wide, and they defend these interests more aggressively than lesser powers; they are involved in a disproportionate number of alliances and wars as well as in international negotiations and organizations.

Furthermore, great powers are perceived as such by other great powers and lesser units. Finally, great powers are further identified as such by formal criteria, such as through recognition in international organizations, institutions, and treaties.⁴⁶

Great power-centric balance of power theory predicts that it is great powers that will balance against the accumulation of power in one state or alliance. It is often argued that small states are prone to bandwagon with powerful states to avoid almost certain defeat should the powerful state choose to fight them.⁴⁷ Therefore, the inclusion of small states, which are more numerous than great powers in any system, in an argument on balancing will likely result in a prediction biased toward bandwagoning behavior. It should be noted however that some balance of power theory scholarship does not distinguish between great and non-great powers. Those that do not however are prone to underestimating the frequency of balancing in the system since they will include small states that are more likely to bandwagon or buckpass.

⁴⁶ Levy 1983, 16-18.

⁴⁷ Rothstein 1968; Handel 1981; Schweller 1994.

Balancing comes in different forms. An actor will usually first send clear signals to the rising power that expansion will be opposed, even if war is necessary.⁴⁸ This signaling can be performed by building up arms (internal balancing) and/or entering into an alliance (external balancing) with other great powers to maintain power relative to a rising power and to deter attack.⁴⁹ If a certain balancing action, such as internal balancing, does not provide sufficient deterrence to the rising great power, then balancers should proceed to other balancing measures, such as external balancing. These actions alone can sometimes deter expansionist activity, but if they fail to deter a rising power's domination seeking, then balancing can be further performed by attacking the rising great power to stall its rise and even roll back its power.⁵⁰ Balancing is argued to involve a situation in which the balancer is not under immediate direct threat; responding to a direct attack from the hegemonic threat should not be considered balancing but rather self-defense.⁵¹ This is unless balancing occurred before the attack, in which case the attack by the hegemonic threat is possibly a reaction to the target's balancing.

Balancing can also be performed through preventive war, that is, by attacking the rising power before it achieves a greater level of power.⁵² However, the inclusion of preventive war introduces an extra layer of complication to the issue of balancing. Though the initiator of a preventive attack may have the intention of balancing, the preventive attack itself could be seen as a case of expansionist domination seeking. This complication can be added to the natural uncertainty that accompanies the decision to initiate a preventive war, the uncertainty regarding whether a rising power will continue

⁴⁸ Mearsheimer 2001, 156.

⁴⁹ Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001, 156-157; Elman 2003, 8.

⁵⁰ Levy 2003, 134-135.

⁵¹ Schweller 1994, 83; Levy 2003, 135.

to rise and whether that rising power will have the intention to seek hegemonic domination once it has the capabilities to do so. As Levy points out, these issues force the analyst to thoroughly and qualitatively engage the historical literature and primary sources if possible.⁵³

The two most common alternative actions of balancing are bandwagoning and buckpass, also known as free riding. These together will form the values of the dependent variable. Bandwagoning is defined as militarily aiding or joining the hegemonic threat.⁵⁴ Buckpassing or free riding refers to doing nothing when others are balancing.⁵⁵

The Automatic versus Manual Conceptualization Debate

How is the balance of power created and sustained? There have been broad disagreements between authors about the level of analysis and detail of theorization needed to explain this process. Claude identified three versions in the literature of this process: The automatic, manual, and semi—automatic conceptualizations.⁵⁶ The automatic form depicts the balance of power as a mechanical operation in which imbalance is automatically reset without the efforts of states. The automatic form originated from the arguments of Enlightenment-era scholars who thought of the balance as a natural law and akin to equilibria in the physical sciences and Adam Smith's invisible hand analogy in economics.

This association of the balance of power with a state of equilibrium in nature was not entirely new. In Renaissance Italy the concepts of balance and equilibrium were

⁵² Levy 2003, 136-137.

⁵³ Levy 2003, 137.

⁵⁴ Schroeder 1994a, 117.

⁵⁵ Mearsheimer 2001, 270-271; Christensen and Snyder 1990, 141.

shared between politics and the natural sciences among other fields.⁵⁷ But as Anderson and Sheehan argue, the Scientific Revolution and Newton's discoveries in physics, particularly his description of the universe and laws of gravity, reinvigorated these comparisons and made them more explicit.⁵⁸ Anderson quotes a mid-18th century pamphleteer: "What gravity or attraction, we are told, is to the system of the universe, that the ballance (*sic*) of power is to Europe."⁵⁹ Thus, we can with certainty trace the development of the automatic conceptualization to this era. M. Wright confirms this,

[T]he pervasiveness of natural analogies was derived from a tradition of thought which assumed the universality of the Laws of Nature. Human affairs were part of nature and subject to its laws; to this extent the analogies were more apparent than real. This commingling of the natural and social realms pervades most Enlightenment writings on the balance of power from Fénelon onwards.⁶⁰

Fénelon indeed wrote one of the best-known justifications of the balance of power on natural law principles.⁶¹ Later scholars as well as politicians helped move the automatic conceptualization for war. The 18th century politician Edmund Burke brought the naturalistic notion to British government and Lord Palmerston did the same in the Victorian age.⁶² The German philosopher Johann Fichte, writing during the Napoleonic Wars, argued, "Nature strives after, and maintains, an equilibrium, through the very struggles of men for superiority;" thus the balance of power is a natural result of the competition for power between states.⁶³ The historians Arnold Toynbee and A.J.P.

⁵⁶ Claude 1962, 43-51.

⁵⁷ Sheehan 1996, 33-34; Little 2007a.

⁵⁸ Anderson 1993, 167-168; Sheehan 1996, 43, 46-47.

⁵⁹ Anderson 1993, 167.

⁶⁰ M. Wright 1975, xiv.

⁶¹ M. Wright 1975, 39; Fénelon 1975.

⁶² M. Wright 1975, xv; Anderson 1993, 197.

⁶³ Fichte 1975, 90.

Taylor popularized the concept in 20th century,⁶⁴ with Taylor believing it to be “self-operating and self-adjusting.”⁶⁵

Waltz did the same for political science when he based his neorealism in *Theory of International Politics* on the automatic form of balance of power theory. Colin Elman calls Waltz's theory “first and foremost an automatic balance of power theory.”⁶⁶ Waltz's neorealism is a structuralized form of classical realism in which the system level is his main focus. Accordingly, he ignores determinants of behavior at the unit level and posits that only the shape of the international system, the number of great powers and the distribution of their power, influences action. So he does not try to predict actions at the state level; he is primarily concerned about the system-level prediction that the system continues to be in balance.⁶⁷ Waltz starts with the assumption that the international system is anarchic and populated by states wishing to survive. The logic of anarchy means that states cannot be secure from other states and cannot trust other states to help them if they are targeted for aggression. Therefore, states will pursue balancing policies to ensure their survival that unintentionally reproduce the anarchy of the international system, resulting in the reproduction of the balance of power itself. If the balance is upset, it will automatically reformulate. This result, though

may not accord with the intentions of any of the units whose actions combine to produce that result. To contrive and maintain a balance may be the aim of one or more states, but then again it may not be. According to the theory, balances of power tend to form whether some or all states consciously aim to establish and maintain a balance, or whether some or all states aim for universal domination.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Claude 1962, 43-45

⁶⁵ Taylor 1962, 542

⁶⁶ Elman 2003, 13.

⁶⁷ Waltz 1979, 121-122.

⁶⁸ Waltz 1979, 119.

This is a textbook description of the automatic conceptualization of balance of power theory. Whether some or all states will balance is left ambiguous in Waltz's neorealism; he only claims that the system level outcome of balance will recur.

Before Waltz, and like many scholars and thinkers before him, Hans Morgenthau equated the balance of power with equilibria found in the natural sciences and economics.⁶⁹ Scholars have thus taken from certain portions of *Politics Among Nations* that Morgenthau favored the universal, automatic form of the balance of power.⁷⁰ However, as writers since Tucker have noted, *Politics Among Nations* is often ambiguous and inconsistent.⁷¹ While Morgenthau starts by describing the automatic form, he then critiques this (Chapter 14) and develops a more complicated picture of the balance of power by adding moral restraint, an aspect of the manual conceptualization.⁷² According to Little's interpretations, Morgenthau thought that European leaders came to realize that their efforts to maximize power were self-destructive so they turned to moral restraint to sustain the status quo.⁷³ Morgenthau presupposes that there is an interplay between these two forms of the balance of power, which Little describes as adversarial and associative forms of the balance of power, respectively.⁷⁴

As scholars such as Claude argue, if balances are to be sustained against the efforts of domination seekers, then balancing by states must occur at least some of the time. Claude states,

⁶⁹ Morgenthau [1948] 1973, 167-169.

⁷⁰ For instance, Haas 1953, 445; Waltz 1959, 198; Hoffmann 1960, 30-32; Gulick 1962, 35-37; Keohane 1986b, 13.

⁷¹ Tucker 1952; Claude 1962, 25-37; Little 2007a, 91, 94-96. For instance, Morgenthau states he uses four different meanings for the term "balance of power" and that he explains which usage he refers to each time, Morgenthau 1973, 167. Claude however shows that he fails to hold to this promise, Claude 1962, 25.

⁷² Morgenthau 1973, 213-221; Little 2007a, 96-100; Vasquez 1997, 903; Waltz 1997, 914.

⁷³ Little 2007a, 98.

⁷⁴ Little 2007a, 66-67.

Conceivably, equilibrium may emerge as the unwilling byproduct of competitive strivings for favorable disequilibrium, but most statesmen are quite sensibly inclined to regard it as their duty to take matters involving the security of their countries into their own hands rather than leave them to the inscrutably mechanistic workings of an invisible hand. Historians of philosophic bent may assure us of inexorable-equilibrium-in-the-long-run, but in the long run we are all dead, and the floor of history may well be strewn with the corpses of nations struck down in that crucial “meanwhile” interval between the immediate present and the indeterminate future.⁷⁵

Theorists of the manual form believe that it takes the deliberate cooperation of states, especially great powers, to create a balancing coalition, the most effective form of balancing. In manual versions of balance of power theory, Claude writes, reliance to keep the balance is placed not on “self-equilibrating tendencies within the system” but rather on the “necessity for skilled operations by the statesmen who manage the affairs of the units constituting the system.”⁷⁶

According to the manual conceptualization, if the balance of power relies on human agents, then it can fail to hold if human agents do not balance. The manual form relies on theorization at the unit-level, and allows for the possibility that there may not be a balance at all. This addresses two shortcomings in Waltz's theory that will be discussed below: He argues his theory is incapable of being adapted into a unit-level theory, something Elman debates, and there is no acceptance in his theory of the possibility that the balance may fail.⁷⁷

The manual conceptualization necessarily places a greater emphasis on historical empiricism and less on abstract theorizing. The reason for the creation of a balance can be hypothesized, a detail that Waltz cannot deal with since he begins with the assumption

⁷⁵ Claude 1962, 88-89.

⁷⁶ Claude 1962, 48-50.

⁷⁷ Elman 1996a.

of an anarchic balanced system.⁷⁸ One approach to the manual balance of power encapsulates well this greater respect for the details of diplomatic history: The English School of international relations. The English School presents what is probably the most comprehensive manual balance of power theorization in its “international society” argument.⁷⁹

At the same time that Waltz was developing the theoretical ideas that would form neorealism in the 1960s-70s, English School scholars were developing their own theory of international society which incorporates a manual conceptualization of the balance of power based on the context of the European case. English School scholars argue that the balance of power is a manual, intentional construct, a deliberate goal of pro-status quo European policymakers who took the idea of the balance of power from 15th-16th century Italian scholars to formulate, justify, or push for policies to counter the hegemonic inclinations of the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties in the 16th and 17th centuries. The idea of balancing hegemonic threats became so widely accepted as a guide to policymaking that, by the start of the 18th century, it was formalized by the great powers into the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and most treaties after.⁸⁰

An automatically-derived, fortuitous balance of power is possible according to English School theorists, but they believe that it will not persist. Instead, it will be either supplanted by a manually constructed balance as actors become accustomed to creating policies that lead to balances and reproduce anarchy, or the balance will fail and be supplanted by a hegemonic order. Like Wendt's constructivist argument, Little explains that the balance of power of English School theory is defined by an “intersubjective

⁷⁸ Ruggie 1986.

⁷⁹ Butterfield and Wight 1966; Bull [1977] 2002.

agreement established amongst the great power to sustain a system of independent states.”⁸¹ The balance of power is thus a manual, collective construct.

Hedley Bull explains that in order for the institutionalized balance of power to be sustained or preserved, states must enact several steps in their relations with each other. First, it is presupposed that actors see themselves and the other actors as comprising a system and that there is a continuous and universal system of diplomacy which provides actors intelligence about other actors and communication with them. If these conditions are satisfied, then Bull argues that the state system has risen to the level of an international society, a more peaceful, stable, and cooperative form of anarchy, and a balance of power may be preserved through the efforts of states.⁸² Herbert Butterfield concurs, “An international order is not a thing bestowed upon by nature, but is a matter of refined thought, careful contrivance and elaborate artifice.”⁸³ Thus, the English School's explanation of the balance of power is pessimistic that an automatic balance of power can be sustained without intentional action toward that goal.

Claude also discusses a third conceptualization, the semiautomatic form, in which a single “balancer” state performs the balancing operations needed to prevent hegemony.⁸⁴ The “balancer” role has played a key role in many scholars' balancing works. However, while the concept has seen theoretical development, the conceptualization and empirical discussions have typically revolved around the UK's role in keeping the balance in Europe. Other balancer states are rarely identified by proponents of this concept. Since the concept involves the effort of one state to balance, it

⁸⁰ Bull 2002, 31, 102; Butterfield 1966, 146; Sofka 2001, 150.

⁸¹ Little 2007b, 48. The English School has been called a forerunner of constructivism, Dunne 1995; Wendt 1993, 31.

⁸² Bull 2002, 101-102.

cannot be described as automatic. I believe that it can be wholly subsumed by the manual conceptualization for the sake of simplicity.

Critiques and Revisions of the Automatic Balance of Power

With the publication of Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* in 1979, the automatic balance of power largely became the standard form of balance of power theory in IR. However, Waltz's ambiguity about how actors react to rising powers led to several critiques. These largely came from two directions: One line of critique came from social constructivist and the English School scholars who sought to restore historicism, human agency, and the manual balance of power conceptualization.⁸⁵ Meanwhile the second line of critique meanwhile came from more traditionally positivist scholars, including realists. The realists argued that Waltz's automatic conceptualization by itself does not provide the ability for foreign policy prescription, which led some realists to seek to revise the theory by adding or changing key components that would allow unit-level theorization.⁸⁶ Stephen Walt's balance of threat theory is the most notable of these.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, an important critique by Randall Schweller suggested that realists roll back Waltz's structuralization and revert back to classical realism.⁸⁸

From the constructivist perspective, John Ruggie, originally publishing in 1983, started off by criticizing Waltz for not attempting to explain system change, specifically the change from the medieval system to the modern state system.⁸⁹ Waltz's neorealism

⁸³ Butterfield 1966, 147.

⁸⁴ Claude 1962, 43-51.

⁸⁵ Wendt 1992, Ruggie 1986, Cox 1986.

⁸⁶ Christensen and Snyder 1990, Elman 1996a.

⁸⁷ Walt 1987.

⁸⁸ Schweller 1994.

⁸⁹ Ruggie 1986, 141. This charge is repeated by Buzan, Jones, and Little 1993, 168.

starts with the modern state system (i.e., unitary states are the units of his system), and since the balance of power is constantly reified, the system never changes and logically should have always been in existence. Ruggie does not try to dispute Waltz's argument that this system could last into the future, but he argues that it does not show how a balance of power began in the first place.⁹⁰ The medieval system existed before the modern state system (and an ancient system before that). The medieval system consisted of intricate webs of nonexclusive authorities, jurisdictions, and territorial rights.⁹¹ Varying figures of authority such as church officials, lords, kings, emperors, and local town officials often held overlapping claims of jurisdiction.⁹² Thus, there were not unitary states in Europe's feudal system and this system was quite different from the modern state system that Waltz begins with. Waltz's theory does not have the ability to explain this transformation because it lacks the functional differentiation of states.⁹³ This failure to account for change and the medieval period is repeated by Cox.⁹⁴

Following these critiques was the important constructivist work of Alexander Wendt. Wendt adopts the realist assumption that anarchy exists, but he argues that this is a social construct, not a structure that will always exist in the same form. He states that the logic that anarchy necessarily leads directly to self-help is mistaken – the international structure itself is an “intersubjectively constituted structure of identities and interests in the system,” and this social structure shapes actors' behavior, identities, and interests.⁹⁵ Actors understand that they are in an anarchic, self-help system, and that other states are as well, and thus they act accordingly. But actors can change this system if they

⁹⁰ Ruggie 1986, 152.

⁹¹ Ruggie 1986, 142-143.

⁹² Spruyt 1994, 12.

⁹³ Ruggie 1986, 146.

choose to. As Wendt's popular titles states, "Anarchy is what states make of it." When the U.S. and the Soviet Union decided they were no longer enemies, the Cold War ended.⁹⁶ Wendt thus questions not only the modal behavior of the units, which he assumes Waltz argues is to balance (but which Waltz is actually vague about), but he also questions the reification of the anarchic, automatic balance of power. Material power matters as well, but it does so in the social context. As Wendt states, "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons, because the British are the friends of the United States and the North Koreans are not."⁹⁷ Though the UK's power is materially much greater than North Korea's, it is not a threat to the U.S. because the understood social structure between the U.S. and the UK is one of deep friendship and long-standing alliance. Over the long run, he argues, repeated peaceful interactions between states lead to mutual respect for sovereignty and eventually intersubjective utilities over simply egoist utilities.⁹⁸ Actors' behavior, identities, and interests in turn reconstitute and reshape the social structure, so that the international structure and actors' behavior, identities, and interests are mutually constitutive. Thus, over a long run of patternistic, nonconflictual interaction, actors could move toward collective security arrangements.

With the contribution of Stephen Walt and the end of the Cold War there began a series of positivist critiques of Waltz's automatic form of balance of power theory, some

⁹⁴ Cox 1986, 244-245.

⁹⁵ Wendt 1992, 401; 1995, 71-72.

⁹⁶ Wendt 1992, 397.

⁹⁷ Wendt 1995, 73.

⁹⁸ Wendt 1992, 395.

of which led to prominent revisions of neorealism.⁹⁹ These revisions have been made to add the ability to theorize unit level behavior to make neorealism more consequential or useful for making foreign policy prescription.¹⁰⁰

Walt started his work on balance of threat theory with an attempt to empirically test Waltz's neorealism using the Cold War alliances of the U.S. and the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹ Instead of finding two balanced sides however, he found that the U.S. was actually the more powerful of the two Cold War rivals and that more states bandwagoned with the U.S. than balanced. He went on to formulate the unit level argument that states choose their alignment by balancing threat instead of power. In Walt's argument, threat is determined by four variables: Power, proximity, offensive capability, and offensive intentions.¹⁰² At the system level, balance of threat theory can lead to unequal distributions of power – outcomes that differ from Waltz's balanced outcome – if the particular arrangement of threat variables is such that the greatest threat in the system is not the most powerful.¹⁰³

Tom Christensen and Jack Snyder also are concerned with finding a way to inject unit level foreign policy explanation into neorealism.¹⁰⁴ According to Christensen and Snyder, multiple paths of state behavior, even those that oppose each other, could be predicted when trying to apply neorealism at the unit level. States could be predicted to commit “chain ganging” or buckpassing.¹⁰⁵ To address this problem, they “merge” the neorealism of Waltz with offense-defense balance theory and security dilemma theory to

⁹⁹ Walt 1985; 1987; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Kaufman 1992; Schweller 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2006; Elman 1996a; Vasquez 1997; Powell 1999.

¹⁰⁰ Christensen and Snyder 1990, 137-138; Elman 1996a, 9.

¹⁰¹ Walt 1985.

¹⁰² Walt 1985, 8-9; 1987, 21-28.

¹⁰³ Elman 2003, 15-16.

¹⁰⁴ Christensen and Snyder 1990, 137-138.

allow more consistent predictions under certain conditions at the unit level. They argue that under the condition of multipolarity, states may buckpass rather than balance if they believe that the defense holds the advantage in the offense-defense balance and there are other great powers more proximate to the hegemonic threat. When the offense holds the advantage under multipolarity, they predict that chain-ganging, the dragging of one's allies into conflict, will occur.¹⁰⁶ Christensen followed this argument by adding a balance of power perception variable – the perception of the relative strength of frontline and second-line states against potential foes.¹⁰⁷ If the frontline state is perceived to be relatively stronger than the foe, then second-line will feel that alliances are less necessary. If however the frontline state is perceived as relatively weaker or equal to the foe, then the perception of the offense/defense balance variable becomes relevant. These arguments are compelling with regard to balance of power theory for discussing unit level alternatives to balancing that should hypothetically run counter to the reformulation of balance.

The work of Randall Schweller has been important in critiquing the automatic balance of power position of Waltz. Schweller's research program has focused on rolling back the structuralization of realism;¹⁰⁸ hence, he typifies his work as “neoclassical” realism.¹⁰⁹ Schweller argues that not all states balance.¹¹⁰ Some states bandwagon “for profit” – usually territorial gains – because they are revisionist states, a concept from

¹⁰⁵ Christensen and Snyder 1990, 143.

¹⁰⁶ Christensen and Snyder 1990, 143.

¹⁰⁷ Christensen 1997, 68-69.

¹⁰⁸ Morgenthau 1973, 54-64.

¹⁰⁹ Schweller also uses the term “balance of interests” to describe his theory – status quo states have an interest in preserving the status quo while revisionist states have an interest in overthrowing it (1994, 99). This study will refrain from using this term however due to the confusion and over-usage of the balance metaphor.

¹¹⁰ Schweller 1994, 1996.

classical realism that Waltz does not discuss because he assumes all states are functionally undifferentiated. Schweller defines status quo powers as “those great powers that won the last major-power war and created a new world order in accordance with their interests by redistributing territory and prestige” while revisionist states are those that increased their power after distribution of territory after the last major-power war and consequently do not have a distribution of territory (or other benefits) that matches their newfound power.¹¹¹ Revisionist states will seek to change the status quo, and other revisionist gains seekers will bandwagon with them. This description of status quo and revisionist states is very similar to that of satisfied and dissatisfied states in power transition theory.¹¹² Schweller also sought to provide a system level explanation. Through a simple weighing of the capabilities of the two sides, “the stability of the system depends on the balance of conservative [status quo] and revisionist forces...When a revisionist state or coalition is stronger than the defenders of the status quo, the system will eventually undergo change.”¹¹³

John Vasquez used these critiques and revisions of Waltz's neorealism when he made his charge based on Lakatos's criteria that neorealism was a degenerative research project.¹¹⁴ Vasquez charges that these works represent inconsistencies in neorealism, and

¹¹¹ Schweller 1993, 76.

¹¹² Organski 1968; Organski and Kugler 1980; Tammen et al. 2006. Power transition theory is a realist theory that is not based on the balance of power. Like Gilpin's (1981) realist hegemonic stability theory, power transition theory theoretically describes a hierarchic order where peace between the system's great powers is associated with a preponderance of power, not a balance of power, held by a dominant power and his status quo-satisfied allies. The name power transition refers to the argument that general wars occur at the point of equality between the dominant power and a revisionist rising challenger. Therefore, power transition theory associates great power war with equal distributions of power. This has led some scholars to contrast balance of power and preponderance of power at the dyadic level with regard to a correlation with peace. An example of this is Powell (1999). It should be recalled though that the most common statement of balance of power *theory* as used here does not make a claim that peace is correlated with a balance of power.

¹¹³ Schweller 1994, 104.

¹¹⁴ Vasquez 1997; Lakatos 1970.

that the revisions by Walt, Christensen and Snyder, and Schweller represent degenerating problemshifts – emendations to neorealism to save it from damning evidence – that in turn mark the whole of neorealism as degenerating rather than progressive.¹¹⁵ This article provoked responses from Waltz, Walt, Schweller, Christensen and Snyder, and Elman and Elman and resulted in Vasquez and Elman's 2003 edited volume *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*.¹¹⁶

Though he agrees that debate over neorealism using Lakatos's criteria was beneficial, Colin Elman in the end judges that Vasquez was not successful.¹¹⁷ The failure of Vasquez's critique results from his linkage of distinct unit level neorealist theories to Waltz's system level theory.¹¹⁸ After Christensen and Snyder's article, Elman argued that neorealism could be used to form unit level theories, but Waltz countered that his theory only predicts systemic outcomes, not the actions of the units of the system. He repeated this in his reply to Vasquez.¹¹⁹ If we look at the system level in Europe in this manner, we can see that no one state has been able to dominate the other great powers of the system and create a hegemonic regime over others. This is problematic though if we look at the actual cases of domination seeking. Charles V, Philip II, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Wilhelm II, Hitler, and the Soviets all failed ultimately in their attempts to establish hegemony over Europe. In the cases of Napoleon and Hitler, we see that their hegemonic threats failed when they overexpanded and provoked a hiding great power to defend itself (Russia for Napoleon, the U.S. for Japan). This is technically not balancing because these

¹¹⁵ Walt 1987; Christensen and Snyder 1990; Schweller 1994; Vasquez 1997, 907.

¹¹⁶ Waltz 1997; Walt 1997; Schweller 1997; Christensen and Snyder 1997; Elman and Elman 1997; Vasquez and Elman 2003.

¹¹⁷ Elman and Vasquez 2003, 300.

¹¹⁸ Waltz 1997, 915; Elman and Elman 2002, 248.

¹¹⁹ Elman 1996a; Waltz 1996, 1997.

states were invaded and defended themselves.¹²⁰ But this is not a problem for Waltz, since he is not explaining *how* balances are restored, just that they are restored.¹²¹ As Levy suggests, in Lakatosian terms, the best way to deal with the issue of critiquing the automatic balance of power is to advance past it with theories that predict system level and unit level outcomes.¹²²

The Empirical Side – The Universal Claim Debate

From the empirical side, scholars influenced by the natural law arguments of the previous centuries made the claim that balance of power theory was universal. Georg Schwarzenberger stated that the balance of power “is of universal application wherever a number of sovereign and armed States co-exist.”¹²³ Hans Morgenthau stated in *Politics Among Nations* that the “balance of power is a universal social phenomenon” and that different balance of power systems existed in Asia, Africa, and America independent of the European system.¹²⁴ Since *Politics Among Nations* has long been held up as a classic tome of IR scholarship, this view undoubtedly influenced many IR scholars training in the second half of the century. One of the most widely cited books in IR scholarship, Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* also enshrined among many the notion of balance of power theory as a universal law despite a well known paucity of empirics. Waltz states that “balance-of-power politics prevail wherever two, and only two,

¹²⁰ Levy 2003, 135; Schweller 1994, 83.

¹²¹ Elman 2003, 13; Levy 2003, 132-133.

¹²² Levy 2003, 133.

¹²³ Schwarzenberger 1951, 181.

¹²⁴ Morgenthau 1973, 169, 199.

requirements are met: that the order be anarchic and that it be populated by units wishing to survive.”¹²⁵

Many scholars have claimed that balance of power systems operate as far back and in places as disparate as the ancient eras of China, and India, and Greece (though these are spatially disparate, one must note that they are not disparate temporally). A balance of power has been argued to exist among the Chinese city-states in the Spring and Autumn (771-481 BCE) and Warring State Period (481-221 BCE) until the state of Qin subjugated the other states and created the short-lived Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE).¹²⁶ And the system was not simply balanced for lack of domination seeking efforts. According to Hui, there were domination seeking attempts that were successfully balanced.¹²⁷

In Ancient India, Seabury argues that Kautilya understood and taught the balance of power concept, and that a balance existed there between 600 BCE and the start of the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE.¹²⁸ Kautilya's argument regarding the “circles of hostility and friendship” is essentially a geographic model of alliances.¹²⁹ Wight however critiques the suggestion that Kautilya's writings are proof of knowledge of balance of power theory in Ancient India. He argues that this falls short of an explication of balance of power theory, in which the prevention of systemic hegemony, not the balancing of proximate rivals, is the goal. He claims instead that Kautilya's circles argument is exemplar of a simpler, less abstract argument which he calls the “pattern of power” and is

¹²⁵ Waltz 1979, 121.

¹²⁶ Hsu 1999, 562; Lewis 1999, 632; Hui 2005. The historian Hsu (1999) lists the period's duration this way, while Hui lists the periods as: Spring and Autumn Period (770-453 BCE) and Warring States Period (453-221 BCE), Hui 2007, 123.

¹²⁷ Hui 2007, 124-125.

¹²⁸ Seabury 1965, 6-7.

¹²⁹ Kautilya 1951, 289-29; Doyle 1997, 163-164.

similar to the creation of a checkerboard pattern of alliances.¹³⁰ More recently, Brenner discusses the balance of power in Kautilya's India, 600-232 BCE.¹³¹ He finds that while balancing behavior existed at the unit level and a rough though slowly eroding equilibrium in the distribution of power existed at the system level, the collective action dilemma and the existence of dual hegemony seekers eventually led to ineffective balancing and the establishment of the Mauryan Empire.¹³²

Ancient Greece has by far the most numerous references in the balance of power literature, though this could be more a result of its affinity to Western scholars and the abundance of resource material in Western languages than for any qualitative reason. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Hume was the first to connect the balance of power to the Ancient Greeks. In his work "Of the Balance of Power," Hume considered the balance of power to be "founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning" that he thinks it impossible that the Greeks would not have known its logic.¹³³ He argued that the Ancient Greeks balanced not only in the alliance that formed against Athens in the Peloponnesian War, but also in Athens's support of Thebes against Sparta after the Peloponnesian Wars. Additionally, balancing occurred in the Hellenistic Period between the satrap empires of Alexander's successors.¹³⁴ The works of historians Seager, Eckstein, and Shipley support balancing arguments in this period.¹³⁵ Hume also mentions the Athens and Thebes's attempt to balance Philip of Macedonia at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE and the brief attempt of Hiero, the 3rd century Greek leader of Syracuse, to balance the expanding power of Rome by allying with Carthage in the first

¹³⁰ Wight 1966, 149.

¹³¹ Brenner 2007.

¹³² Wohlforth et al. 2007, 167-168.

¹³³ Hume 1975, 62-63.

Punic War, though these last two cases obviously did not result in balances (a telling slip for a scholar who believed in the automatic balance).¹³⁶ In the 20th century, Waltz and others approvingly endorsed Hume's examples;¹³⁷ many other IR scholars and historians have pointed to the balancing of Sparta and her allies against the rising power Athens and its Delian League, relying on Thucydides's account of the Peloponnesian War.¹³⁸

The long balance in Greece represents a difficult case for manual balance of power theorists, such as the English School scholars, who argue that actors must be knowledgeable of the balance of power concept in order to strive to maintain a balance of power.¹³⁹ The English School argues that states at the international society level are able to create a sustainable balance, but whether the Ancient Greeks maintained a form of permanent diplomacy, as Bull argues is necessary, is doubtful.¹⁴⁰ This goes against Watson's claim that it is justifiable to speak of the Ancient Greek system in terms of an international society.¹⁴¹ Watson also claims that the Greeks were more normatively anti-hegemonic than other Ancient communities, but this claim is undercut by the acceptance of the majority of city-states of Persian hegemony when Xerxes sent emissaries throughout Greece before his invasion.¹⁴² The reason for the sustained balance is inconclusive and requires further research.

In Europe, aside from the Hiero reference, neither the unipolar period of the Roman Empire nor the medieval period are addressed by balance of power proponents,

¹³⁴ Hume 1975, 59-62.

¹³⁵ Seager 1994a, 1994b; Eckstein 2006, 104; Shipley 2006, 43-45.

¹³⁶ Hume 1975, 60, 62; Hume was not the first to reference the Hiero and Carthage example. Gentili and Botero, both writing in the 16th century, mentioned this example, Gentili 1975, 14; Botero 1975, 22.

¹³⁷ Palmer and Perkins 1953, 315; Waltz 1959, 199.

¹³⁸ Waltz 1979, 127; Strauss 1991, 198; Luginbill 1999, 36-48.

¹³⁹ Little 2007b, 48, 65-66.

¹⁴⁰ Bull 2002, 101; Eckstein 2006, 58.

¹⁴¹ Watson 2009, 50.

though Fischer attempts a look at medieval Europe through a neorealist perspective.¹⁴³

The medieval period's analogy to the modern international state system is shaky however due to the overlapping webs of sovereignty.¹⁴⁴ This is problematic for using balancing theory since balance of power theory assumes a system of independent units with no overarching authority. Most balance of power proponents agree that not until mid-15th century Italy does a balance reappear in Europe.

In the 15th century, many scholars argue that the Italian peninsula constituted a small-scale, closed international system.¹⁴⁵ The states in this localized system interacted with each other mostly without interference or influence from the wider European system, whose states were busy balancing neighboring rivals.¹⁴⁶ The peninsula consisted of at least twelve major independent city-states, most of them containing not just their main city but also the surrounding countryside and smaller neighboring towns.¹⁴⁷ The great powers among these are considered to be Florence, Venice, Milan, Naples, and the Papal States, of which Venice is said to have been the most powerful and aggressive.¹⁴⁸

Scholars typically describe a balance of power existing between these great powers from the Peace of Lodi in 1454 until the French invasion in 1494.¹⁴⁹ At Lodi, Milan and Venice signed an agreement ending the state of war between them; this resulted in a rough equilibrium. Later that year, they were joined by Florence in signing a non-aggression pact which established a balance of power between the three northern

¹⁴² Watson 2009, 51, 57.

¹⁴³ Fischer 1992.

¹⁴⁴ Spruyt 1994.

¹⁴⁵ Among others, Holsti 1972, 54; Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, 30.

¹⁴⁶ Butterfield 1966, 137-138; Sheehan 1996, 29. It should be cautioned that Venice's rivalry with the Ottoman Empire may have influenced actions with the other Italian city-states, weakening the analogy to the international system.

¹⁴⁷ Mallett 1998, 548.

¹⁴⁸ Sheehan 1996, 30.

Italian city states, and by January 1455, all three were joined by the Papal States and Naples in creating the Italian League, which formally recognized the territorial status quo and set obligations for the signers.¹⁵⁰ Though this seems like a cooperative security pact, inside the League, the powers changed sides as necessary to keep the balance. There were typically two alliances at any one time; the traditional line-ups of these were Naples-Milan-Florence on one side and Venice and the Papal States on the other. But these alliances were not consistently held; adding more power to the argument that this was a balance of power system, Milan and Florence joined together with Venice for a five year period in the 1470s against a Naples-Papal States alliance, before moving back again into alliance with Naples.¹⁵¹ Balancing behavior encompassed military action, such as intervention against the invasion of weak third party states.

The invasion of Italy by France in 1494 put an end to the balance in Italy and the closed international system analogy in Italy, but the Italian Wars of the first half of the 16th century introduced post-feudal state competition to the European system, and thus some scholars such as Morgenthau argue that a European-wide balanced system reappeared at this point out of the complex web of feudal relations.¹⁵² Morgenthau dates the alliances of Francis I of France, Henry VIII of England and the Turks against Charles V, the Habsburg leader of Austria and Spain, as “the first modern example on a grand scale of the balance of power operating between an alliance and one nation intent upon establishing universal monarchy.”¹⁵³ From this point on, balancing continued against Charles V and over the centuries against the successive hegemonic threats of Philip II of

¹⁴⁹ Mallett 1998, 564.

¹⁵⁰ Mallett 1998, 558-559.

¹⁵¹ Mallett 1998, 564-567.

¹⁵² Morgenthau 1973, 188; Levy 1983.

Spain, Louis XIV and Napoleon of France, Wilhelm II and Hitler of Germany, and then against the Soviets after World War II in the wider international system. Even if it is acknowledged that a balance of power did not operate throughout the entire world history, the universalist position is that a systemic balance of power has been law-like in the European state system, where the state system developed, and in the wider international system after the spread of the European system.¹⁵⁴

The automatic conceptualization of balancing is commonly conflated with the universalist position. This is understandable – an idea that one believes to operate automatically may naturally be thought of as holding everywhere. They are separate issues though; universality is an empirical issue while the automatic/manual dichotomy is theoretical. The association between the automatic conceptualization of balance of power theory and the claim that balanced systems are a universal law can be clearly seen in Waltz's theory: Balanced systems occur automatically in any anarchic system, without the efforts of the units of the system. But even before Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, scholars conflated the automatic conceptualization with the claim of universality. In presenting his description of the automatic conceptualization, Claude cites Rousseau and Hume as “automatic” theorists.¹⁵⁵ Both are typically cited by others as proponents of the balance of power as a “universal” law. Rousseau and Hume among others were part of the Enlightenment era scholarship that associated the balance of power with natural laws of the physical sciences. This provided the basis for both the universalist and automatic claims.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Morgenthau 1973, 188.

¹⁵⁴ Waltz 1993, 77.

¹⁵⁵ Claude 1962, 43-46.

¹⁵⁶ M. Wright 1975, xiii-xv.

Empirical Critiques of Balance of Power Theory

The existence of these balances of power though should not give one the sense that balanced power has been the modal systemic outcome in all regions and subsystems throughout history. On the contrary, these might be the *only* examples of balanced systems in world history. Moreover, the ancient systems all eventually came to an end; thus the universalist claim is eventually debunked in each of those cases. At the unit level, balancing existed in ancient times but it could not be described as universal. Counter-hegemonic coalitions were often ineffective and many states bandwagoned instead. Still, the existence of balanced systems over long periods is significant, and further research should be performed on these cases

Quantitative testing on balance of power theory sprang up in the late 1960s and early '70s out of the Correlates of War (COW) project, but these tests of the proposition regarding the likelihood of war under parity vs. preponderance of power debate, not actually a test of balance of power theory as it is most commonly conceptualized.¹⁵⁷ Another series of articles came out of Richard Rosecrance's Situational Analysis Project, which coded data solely for diplomatic events in Europe from 1870-1890.¹⁵⁸ These works were uniform in finding no tendency toward a structural balance in 1870s-80s Bismarckian Europe.¹⁵⁹ These works also mark the initial foray into IR scholarship of the diplomatic historian Paul Schroeder, who would later play a role in the 1990s critiques of

¹⁵⁷ Singer 1968; Singer and Small 1972; Russett 1972. Quantitative works on balancing by William Moul also comparatively test balanced power and power preponderance against the outbreak of war, which is not the same as balance of power theory's prediction of the prevention of hegemony, Moul 1985, 1988. However, an 1989 piece by Moul contains an interesting comment on the difficulty of empirically testing power in balancing theory: "Weighting each component [of national power] equally is a studied confession of ignorance of the proper mixtures for each great power over a long period of time," Moul 1989, 113.

¹⁵⁸ Healy and Stein 1973; Rosecrance et al. 1975; McDonald and Rosecrance 1985.

Waltz's neorealism. Schroeder critiqued the quantitative research of the Situational Analysis Project for the Bismarckian Period, though he did not condemn their approach altogether – rather he lauded the efforts to subject balance of power to testing.¹⁶⁰

Following the end of the Cold War, neorealism came under fierce criticism for failing to predict the collapse of the Soviet Union. Much of this criticism was based on Waltz's argument that bipolarity was more stable than multipolarity.¹⁶¹ However, neorealists who closely adhered to Waltz briefly struck back at such criticism and argued that new great powers would arise to challenge the U.S. and that conflict in Europe would once again rear its ugly head.¹⁶²

Robert Kaufman was the first of a series of mainstream positivist IR scholars to forcefully critique neorealism and balance of power theory in the 1990s.¹⁶³ Kaufman uses the 1930s threat of Hitler to support his contention that bandwagoning occurs often, and that the lack of attention to unit level behavior in balance of power theory is problematic. He contributed a critique of Walt's balance of threat theory in particular by arguing that bandwagoning as well as late and ineffective balancing occur much more often than is acknowledged by Walt.¹⁶⁴

In the mid-1990s, Schroeder (1994a) reentered into debate with IR scholars over the balance of power with a widely cited article criticizing the paucity of empirics in

¹⁵⁹ Healy and Stein 1973, 40-42; McDonald and Rosecrance 1985, 57-60.

¹⁶⁰ Schroeder 1977, 18.

¹⁶¹ Waltz 1979, 172.

¹⁶² Mearsheimer 1990; Layne 1993; Waltz 1993.

¹⁶³ Kaufman 1992.

¹⁶⁴ Kaufman 1992, 420. Eric Labs also contributed a critique in the same issue of *Security Studies* as Kaufman, but his article focused specifically on the bandwagoning of small states. Though it was not Labs's intention to critique balance of power theory, it is important to reiterate that balance of power theory is a great power theory, and so criticisms of the theory that use evidence of small states bandwagoning against the theory are not truly critiquing the theory, Labs 1992; Kaufman 1992.

Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.¹⁶⁵ He charges that Waltz relies too much on generalization, analogies, and undocumented references, or often nothing as the empirical support for neorealism.¹⁶⁶ He then argues in this article, along with a book from the same year,¹⁶⁷ and a subsequent chapter in the Vasquez and Elman volume,¹⁶⁸ that states both large and small (thereby capturing the important distinction between great powers and weaker states) often do not try to balance preponderant power or hegemonic threats, but rather hide and bandwagon.¹⁶⁹

Rosecrance and Lo followed the work of Schroeder on the Napoleonic Wars by arguing that the great powers did not balance Napoleon when they should have according to balance of power theory. They claim that doubt should therefore be cast on the theory. They then compare the Napoleonic Period to the period immediately following WW II, 1945-49, to draw some general hypotheses about power, side payments, and the initial placement of potential balancing military forces.¹⁷⁰

The most recent empirical critiques of balance of power theory have moved the debate back toward empirical verification of balance of power theory and falsification of the universal law claim.¹⁷¹ In a review of the hypotheses, scopes, and conditions of balance of power theory, Levy casts doubt on Waltz's conceptualization of balance of power theory as a universal law.¹⁷² Levy and Thompson find support meanwhile for unit-

¹⁶⁵ Schroeder 1994a.

¹⁶⁶ Schroeder 1994a, 114-115.

¹⁶⁷ Schroeder 1994b.

¹⁶⁸ Schroeder 2003.

¹⁶⁹ Schroeder 1994a, 117, 120-121.

¹⁷⁰ Rosecrance and Lo 1996, 487.

¹⁷¹ On empirical verification of balance of power theory, see Levy and Thompson 2005, 2004. On the falsification of the universal law claim, see Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a.

¹⁷² Levy 2003, 146.

level balancing in the European context.¹⁷³ They also find support for the contention that states are more likely to balance if their rivals are the domination seekers.

In the case of the Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth project, several scholars have contributed chapters that look at specific periods in world history in which a balance of power failed to sustain in an international anarchic order.¹⁷⁴ Kaufman and Wohlforth cover the rise and fall of the Assyrian Empire over a period lasting 271 years (883-612 BCE).¹⁷⁵ They find that although the balancing mechanism existed – several balancing coalitions attempted to stop Assyrian domination – in each case they were ineffective. The collective action problem was evident in the failure of the balancing attempts.¹⁷⁶ After a period of 100 years of unipolarity and 50 years of those 100 years as a true hegemon, balancing only began to reappear as the empire weakened due to imperial overstretch; Kaufman and Wohlforth thus conclude that while the behavioral, unit-level balancing hypothesis finds support, the systemic level outcome of a balanced system is disconfirmed.¹⁷⁷

Eckstein and Deudney cover the rise of the Roman Empire, which has typically been ignored by 20th century IR theorists and realists in particular.¹⁷⁸ Deudney says simply that outside of Carthage the Romans faced no general counterbalancing alliance during their rise.¹⁷⁹ Both Eckstein and Deudney argue that Rome's ability to absorb conquered peoples into the Empire with rights and a degree of autonomy yet with the

¹⁷³ Levy and Thompson 2004, 2005.

¹⁷⁴ Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a.

¹⁷⁵ Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007, 41.

¹⁷⁶ Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007, 43.

¹⁷⁷ Kaufman and Wohlforth 2007, 40, 44.

¹⁷⁸ Eckstein 2006; Deudney 2007, 149.

¹⁷⁹ Deudney 2007, 152, 157.

ability to extract military manpower is a large reason for their success *vis-à-vis* other prospective empires in the region, such as Carthage.¹⁸⁰

In other chapters, Jones points to the successive rise and fall of tribute-empires in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, a description that also points toward support of Gilpin's hegemonic stability theory.¹⁸¹ Hui (2005) writes that the balance of power that existed from 656 to 284 BCE in Ancient China came to end when the great power Qin was able to effectively use both state-strengthening reforms and divide and conquer techniques to overcome its foes, whose balancing efforts were racked by buckpassing and balancing of the wrong targets.¹⁸² Likewise, so went the Ancient Indian system as ineffective balancing and buckpassing allowed the establishment of the Mauryan Empire. Kang contrasts the war-ravaged European system to the relatively peaceful interstate relations under an implicit Chinese hegemony in the East Asian system.¹⁸³

Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth finish the edited volume with the conclusion that neither balanced nor unbalanced distributions have dominated in systems in world history. They find on the contrary that both balanced multipolar and bipolar systems are almost exactly as common as are unbalanced unipolar and hegemonic systems.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, they feel that the evidence is "sufficient to reject [Waltz's] hypothesis as a serious assertion about international relations."¹⁸⁵

Wohlforth's work has continued in this vein. His latest book with Stephen Brooks, *World Out of Balance*, argues that balance of power theory was made for multipolar and bipolar systems and predicted that hegemonic threats would always be balanced and thus

¹⁸⁰ Eckstein 2006, 34; Deudney 2007, 152-153. This argument was made earlier by Syme 1939.

¹⁸¹ Jones 2007, 198; Gilpin 1981.

¹⁸² Hui 2005.

¹⁸³ Kang 2007, 214-223.

that the international system would continue to be either multi- or bipolar.¹⁸⁶ But something unpredicted happened when the Soviet Union simply folded and dropped out of the Cold War. Balance of power theory then cannot be applied to the current unipolar condition of the international system.¹⁸⁷ They summarize their argument simply, “Counterbalancing is and will long remain prohibitively costly for the other major powers. Because no country comes close to matching the comprehensive nature of U.S. power, an attempt to counterbalance would be far more expensive than a similar effort in any previous international system.”¹⁸⁸ When hegemony is established, “the obstacles to balancing are magnified.”¹⁸⁹ Brooks and Wohlforth do not try to make a prediction of how long the U.S. unipolarity will last, leaving this for future research and theoretical development, but they do make a general call for IR scholars to “readjust” their research agendas and theoretical traditions in order to better understand unipolarity.¹⁹⁰

The work on international systems in world history by the English School scholars Barry Buzan and Richard Little, in their major work *International Systems in World History*, with Charles Jones in *The Logic of Anarchy*, and Adam Watson in *The Evolution of International Society* have also contributed strong critiques of neorealism based on their wide reviews of world history.¹⁹¹ As Buzan and Little argue, “IR theory cannot develop properly unless it is rooted in a full-scale history of the world, and not just the European/world history of the last 500 or even the last 1,000 years.”¹⁹² They state

¹⁸⁴ Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007b, 228, 231.

¹⁸⁵ Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007b, 229.

¹⁸⁶ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 35.

¹⁸⁸ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 23.

¹⁸⁹ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 35.

¹⁹⁰ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 213.

¹⁹¹ Buzan and Little 2000; Buzan, Little, and Jones 1993; Watson 2009.

¹⁹² Buzan and Little 2000, 385.

that their review of history shows that many of Waltz's assumptions are unfounded. For example, units can be seen throughout history to exhibit structural and functional differentiation.¹⁹³ Moreover, changes in the nature of the dominant units in an international system have lead systems to transform from anarchic to hierarchic systems. This in turn challenges Waltz's assumption that only anarchic systems are international systems.¹⁹⁴ Watson argues, and Buzan and Little repeat the charge, that many international systems throughout history have displayed a tendency toward hegemony.¹⁹⁵ This argument will be covered more in the next chapter.

These most recent critiques and reviews represent a clarion call to add temporal or spatial restrictions to balance of power theory or drop it in favor of a theory with greater explanatory power.¹⁹⁶

A Closer Consideration of the Manual Conceptualization of the Balance of Power

This review of the theoretical and empirical debates surrounding balance of power theory sheds light on the inherent weaknesses of the automatic conceptualization and the universalist position of balance of power theory. The automatic form has been criticized for its insufficient theorization, particularly its inability to predict unit-level behavior. The universalist position has possibly persisted despite its spotty empirical record outside of Europe due to the Eurocentric bias of the IR field. A balance has persisted in Europe over the centuries, even during the problematic periods of Napoleon and Hitler when it seemed as if most states did not or could not balance. Even though it could not explain

¹⁹³ This echoes the criticism of Ruggie 1986.

¹⁹⁴ Buzan and Little 2000, 372-375.

¹⁹⁵ Watson 2009, 131; Buzan and Little 2000, 373.

outcomes outside of Europe, it could have been thought sufficient because it could explain international politics within states in the European-style state system, both in Europe and in the modern international system after WWII after this state system was fully spread around the world.

The criticism of the automatic conceptualization after the Cold War and a growing interest in non-European international systems however has led to a greater look at the manual conceptualization of balance of power theory. The English School provides a manual balance explanation for the operation of the sustained balance specifically in Europe.¹⁹⁷ It offers a favorable alternative to the simplistic automatic version because of two reasons: First, as a manual form of balance of power theory, it theorizes unit-level behavior; and second, it makes the simple acknowledgment that the long European balance was not universal but the result of the wide spread of the idea of a balance of power from Italy to Europe's policymakers and thinkers. As Claude argues, a sustained balance of power requires the deliberate efforts of policymakers and diplomats, who in turn need a common reference point with which to set their mutual goals at international conferences. This common reference point was the balance of power concept. In this section, we will look in greater detail at the explanation for the rise of the manual balance of power in Europe as shown by the spread of balance of power ideology from 15th century Italy to the rest of the European continent until it became firmly implanted as an institution in European diplomatic relations.

¹⁹⁶ Levy is in favor of adding temporal or spatial restrictions, Levy 2003, 146. Seemingly in favor of dropping it are Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a; Brooks and Wohlforth 2008

The Origins of the Balance in the 15th Century Italian City-State System

It is the general consensus of scholars who have studied the historical origins of balance of power theory that the origins of both the European balance of power system and balance of power theory begin in the 15th century in the Italian peninsula.¹⁹⁸ It is from the *History of Italy*, written by the 16th century Florentine scholar and political advisor, Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), that we gain the greatest picture of the balance of power in 15th century Italy.¹⁹⁹ Guicciardini attributes the maintenance of the balance mainly to the actions of the Florentine ruler of this period, Lorenzo de Medici (1449-1492).²⁰⁰ De Medici was in power in Florence during the most intense period of alliance realignment after 1470 and, according to Guicciardini, he “carefully saw to it that the Italian situation should be maintained in a state of balance, not leaning more toward one side than the other.”²⁰¹ De Medici is thus widely regarded as the “norm entrepreneur” behind the balance of power. The medieval historian Mallett adds that because Florence was comparatively weak compared to the other great powers, it was dependent for its security on alliances, especially with Milan.²⁰² This naturally must have led to de Medici's formulation of a policy of alliances to balance Venice externally rather than to rely on internal balancing.

While de Medici's letters show a great concern for the relative power of each of the great city states, they reveal no explicit understanding of the balance of power.²⁰³ It is from Guicciardini's description of de Medici's policies rather that we gain the “first vivid

¹⁹⁷ Little 2007b, 48.

¹⁹⁸ Nelson 1943; Gulick 1955, 13; Zeller 1961, 198; M. Wright 1975, ix; Anderson 1993, 151; Sheehan 1996, 30.

¹⁹⁹ Guicciardini 1975; Sheehan 1996, 31.

²⁰⁰ Guicciardini 1975, 9; Little 2007, 76-77.

²⁰¹ Guicciardini 1975, 9.

²⁰² Mallett 1998, 566.

picture” of the theory, though the earliest known reference to a balance of power in Italy was made by the Venetian Francesco Barbero in 1439.²⁰⁴ Guicciardini writes that the Naples-Milan-Florence alliance did not “unite the allies in sincere and faithful friendship.” Instead, they jealously and “assiduously observe[d] what the others were doing, each of them reciprocally aborting all the plans whereby any of the others might become more powerful or renowned.”²⁰⁵ This statement shows that Guicciardini understood that an accumulation of power was a concern of all leaders, not just de Medici.

This monitoring was facilitated by the simultaneous development of permanent diplomatic exchange taking place in Italy.²⁰⁶ This development was the result of the declining influence of the Church and a sign of the growth of sovereignty. It was also helped by the relatively small size of the Italian system, the common language, and the efficient government systems of the city states.²⁰⁷ Resident diplomats became the primary method in passing communications between allies and gathering information on other states, especially information regarding military capabilities and aggressive schemes, necessary functions for maintaining a balance of power.²⁰⁸

The Spread of the Balance of Power Outside of Italy

Other Italian scholars writing in the late 16th century such as Rucellai, Gentili, Paruta, and Botero further developed Guicciardini's descriptions of the balance of power in Italy as well as prescriptions for the ways in which their current Italian leaders should

²⁰³ M. Wright 1975, 1; Sheehan 1996, 32.

²⁰⁴ Butterfield 1966, 136; Anderson 1993, 151.

²⁰⁵ Guicciardini 1975, 11.

²⁰⁶ Anderson 1993, 3-6; Bull 2002, 101.

act keep the balance.²⁰⁹ Botero and Paruta both described as balancing the interactions in the Italian Wars of the Habsburg Charles V of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, Francis I of France, and Henry VIII of England.²¹⁰ The Italian Wars were marked by the rivalry between Charles V and Francis I. France was considered, by the Popes at least, to be the primary threat, though the power of Charles V reached a zenith that was greater than France when he was declared Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. And Henry VIII continued the English rivalry with France by allying with Spain and invading northern France on several occasions. There are reasons for these actions not to be considered attempts uphold the systemic balance of power – the balancing of France instead of the more powerful Habsburg empire and the gains seeking opportunism of Henry VIII being chief among them – but the depiction of these rulers' policies as balancing by the Italian scholars shows continuation of the balance of power concept and application outside of Italy. One of the first non-Italian references came in 1535 when Charles V's sister, Mary of Hungary, described the distribution of power between Charles V and Francis I and the Italian city states as a balance.²¹¹ Bacon later repeated the assertion in 1612 that the three kings held the balance of power between them, and Morgenthau also described them as the first modern example of the balance of power.²¹²

As Sheehan argues, the recently perfected printing process spread the works of the Italian scholars around Europe to the thinkers, policymakers, and even monarchs of the day, just as other subjects spread out of Renaissance Italy to Europe.²¹³ So political

²⁰⁷ Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, 30-31.

²⁰⁸ Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, 32-33.

²⁰⁹ Sheehan 1996, 31-32; Gentili 1975; Paruta 1975; Botero 1975.

²¹⁰ Botero 1975, 21; Paruta 1975, 18.

²¹¹ Anderson 1993, 151-152.

²¹² Butterfield 1966, 138-139; Morgenthau 1973, 187-188.

²¹³ Sheehan 1996, 33.

observers and later generations came to see the behavior of their rulers described in balancing terminology by the Italians and soon others. Anti-Spanish balancing policies were being championed by French writers; the France-Spain rivalry of the 16th-17th centuries in general helped push the development of the theory.²¹⁴ A political pamphlet in 1584 explicitly proposed an anti-Spanish balancing alliance comprised of France, the Turks, England, and the other states of Europe; this anti-Spanish campaign based on balance of power arguments continued into the 1600s. This type of French balance of power propaganda spread to the German states as well.²¹⁵ Gentili in Italy also warned about the Spanish drive for domination, using the “wise” policies of de Medici to argue for balancing against Spain and the Turks.²¹⁶ In 1579, Queen Elizabeth received a translated copy of Guicciardini's *History of Italy*, and five years later, her chief advisor Walsingham proposed aiding the Dutch in their revolt against the Spanish and asking the French to concur in the action. This is significant given the long-standing animosity between France and England. After another five years, and one year after the defeat of the Armada, the English declared that they would ally with anyone against Spain.²¹⁷ Would the English have tried such a policy without knowledge of the balancing concept?

Balance of power policies were not yet guiding policymaking in the way that constructivist and English School scholars argue would later occur though. Permanent diplomatic exchanges had spread depending on the state in the first few decades of the 16th century – France went from having one ambassador abroad in 1515 to ten in 1547 – but this pace was broken up by the antagonism of the Counter Reformation and did not

²¹⁴ M. Wright 1975, xiii.

²¹⁵ Anderson 1993, 154-155.

²¹⁶ Gentili 1975, 12-13.

²¹⁷ Sheehan 1996, 35-36.

pick up again until the beginning of the 17th century.²¹⁸ Regarding the spread of the balancing idea, Anderson argues that “the balance of power was now becoming established in practice, at least in a crude way, as a major guideline of international relations,” though it is possible that “any relatively close grouping rise spontaneously to policies of this kind.”²¹⁹ In other words, it is possible that the 16th century balance of power between France, Spain, and England was fortuitous. Support for the manual balancing argument comes later when the balance of power begins to be formalized in treaties.²²⁰ But because a balance did hold, this period would lay a foundation upon which later writers would base and justify balancing policies.

The 17th Century – Spain and France

The greatest step in the development of the theory as well as in its use by policymakers would occur with the transition of hegemonic threat from Spain to France in the 1600s.²²¹ The religious wars largely ended with the Treaty of Westphalia, which formalized the modern sovereign state system and ended the dominance of the Church. The formal recognition of sovereignty created by Westphalia further facilitated the development of diplomacy, which had been spreading out from its Italian origins since the late 1400s.²²² References to the balance of power become more numerous and less

²¹⁸ Anderson 1993, 9-11.

²¹⁹ Anderson 1993, 152.

²²⁰ One noteworthy treaty from this period though is the 1518 Treaty of London, a nonaggression pact that was signed by all of the major European states, including Spain, France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire. The treaty is considered an attempt by the Church to reestablish a Christian unitary identity among the Europeans, a medieval idea that was in decline by this time. The treaty bound leaders from attacking each other and promised mutual aid to any state that was attacked, essentially recognizing and attempting to set in place the status quo (Anderson 1993, 211). Though the treaty was not held to for long – the great powers were back at war in Italy in 1521 – the treaty seems to be a precursor of the Peace of Utrecht (1713), which formally institutionalized the balance of power.

²²¹ Wight 1973, 97.

²²² Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, 36.

ambiguous after 1600.²²³ In 1612, the Italian Boccacini wrote that maintaining a balance of power to prevent hegemony was by this time a “generally received opinion” and Wight argues that “by this point the idea of the balance of power had quite clearly entered into the mainstream of European thinking about international relations.”²²⁴

This discourse picked up as writers started to realize that Spanish power was in decline and French power was increasing. Anderson writes that until about 1640, there was “unanimous agreement that it was Spanish power which threatened to overturn whatever precarious equilibrium might exist in Europe.”²²⁵ However, by the time of the Peace of Westphalia and the end of the Eighty Years' War, it became clear that Spanish power was in decline relative to France.²²⁶ The balance of power became the doctrine which some used to guide the transition of their policies from balancing Spain to France. As Butterfield states, “Now that France had replaced Spain as the menace to Europe, it came to be seen that it had not been the peculiar wickedness of the Spaniards that had previously threatened the world – it was the disposition of forces that made the Spaniards the aggressors in one age and then the French in another age.”²²⁷ This general feeling only increased with the increasing aggressiveness of Louis XIV.²²⁸

England however, in the midst of its revolution, did not immediately shift its balancing from Spain to France. When Oliver Cromwell gained control over government, he entered England into an alliance with France and war with Spain in 1657; the pro-French Charles II continued this alliance upon restoration of the crown in 1660. These actions drew the rebuke of English observers, including the politician Slingsby Bethel,

²²³ Anderson 1993, 153; Butterfield 1966, 139.

²²⁴ Anderson 1993, 153; Wight 1973, 97.

²²⁵ Anderson 1993, 155.

²²⁶ Regla 1961, 369.

who wrote a famous pamphlet in 1668 that criticized Cromwell's foreign policies, and thus those of Charles II as well. Bethel wrote that Cromwell has continued England's foreign policy of the past while failing to understand that the circumstances had changed at mid-century; Cromwell had allied England with the strongest power in Europe to beat a weakening rival, thereby ultimately endangering England. Old rivalries and friendships, Bethel reasoned, must be reconsidered according to the present circumstances, a clear statement of balance of power reasoning.²²⁹

Balance of power arguments were thus by this period taking on the form that is familiar to the modern conceptualization of the theory. Moreover, it was becoming ingrained into the policies of the European governments. Government advisors and ministers such as George Savile (the Marquess of Halifax) made arguments steeped in balance of power thought.²³⁰ The biggest steps in the institutionalization of the balance of power into policymaking meanwhile came in the next few decades, with the establishment of the Triple Alliance in 1668, the moment when the English momentarily switched to an anti-French alignment; the Grand Alliance in 1689 created by William III to balance Louis XIV; and finally, the Peace of Utrecht in the early 18th century, which formalized the balance of power and started the so-called “Golden Age of Balancing” in the 18th century.

England's switch from balancing Spain to France and the creation of the Triple Alliance took place in the late 1660s against the setting of the 2nd Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67) and Louis XIV's War of Devolution (1667-68) against the Spanish

²²⁷ Butterfield 1966, 139.

²²⁸ Anderson 1993, 155.

²²⁹ Sheehan 1996, 39-40.

²³⁰ Sheehan 1996, 43.

Netherlands. In the last year of the Anglo-Dutch War, a cash-strapped Charles II formed a secret treaty with Louis XIV to support his attempt to conquer the Habsburg portion of the Netherlands in return for financial support and pressure on the Dutch. Louis XIV launched the War of Devolution the next month. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Dutch War entered its final stage in early summer when the Dutch launched the daring strike against the laid up English fleet at the mouth of the Medway River. This loss for the English, together with the recent Great Plague of 1665-66, the Great Fire of London of 1666, and debt of the government, combined to put Charles II in weak position politically. The fighting formally came to an end with the Treaty of Breda. The Dutch however needed Charles to be further pushed in order to stop the French offensive against the Spanish Netherlands. The Dutch and the English diplomat William Temple succeeded in pushing Charles II into signing the 1668 Triple Alliance between the Dutch, England, and Sweden. This alliance forced Louis XIV to stop the War of Devolution in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668.²³¹ The Triple Alliance did not last long. Charles II reverted to a pro-French stance and joined Louis XIV's Franco-Dutch War (1672-78) for its first two years (the 3rd Anglo-Dutch War of 1672-74). But in his attempt to steer his own government into a balancing position against the French and settle with the Dutch, Temple's writings became heralded for their concerns with the balance of power and its workings in the European system. Sheehan writes, "Unlike earlier writers on the subject, Temple clearly saw national balance of power policies as operating within a wider European state system. He was perceptive enough to see that other states might legitimately use balance of power thinking to constrain England when necessary,"

²³¹ Zeller 1961, 213.

including the interests of France and the Dutch vis-à-vis England.²³² That Temple was Charles II's diplomat serves to show the influence of diplomats of this age; many diplomats were also close advisors to their rulers.

The European system indeed became more integrated when the Austrian side of the Habsburg empire, which had been formally divided from the Spanish side after the abdication of Charles V in 1556, took over from their weakening Spanish cousins as the foil to the French, particularly after their decisive victory over the Turks in the Battle of Vienna in 1683 freed resources.²³³ This was an important development in the manual balancing argument because hitherto, Europe had been described by writers such as Commynes, Overbury, and Rohan as being comprised of regional sub-balances between neighbors and proximate rivals; in other words, Europe did not seem to exist as a whole system. In 1609, Thomas Overbury described the situation as a double balance, with a Western European balance between France, Spain, and England and an eastern balance between Russia, Poland, Sweden, and Denmark, with the German states in the middle.²³⁴ The diplomat Philippe de Commynes, writing in the late 15th century, had described Europe as being composed of pairs of rivals: France-England, Spain-Portugal, Bavaria-Austria.²³⁵ Henri de Rohan, writing in 1638, likewise argued that “it be a maxim common to all Princes to hinder the growth of their Neighbors.”²³⁶ Yet he also lifted this discussion solely from the level of rivals to the system level of balance of power theory by describing the tendency of others to ally themselves with one of the bipolar powers, Spain and France: Between these two poles, the “other Princes join the one or the other,

²³² Sheehan 1996, 41-42.

²³³ Anderson 1993, 156.

²³⁴ Sheehan 1996, 36.

²³⁵ Commynes 1969, 354.

according to their interest,” as interest which Rohan claims “always aims at the augmentation, or at least the conservation of a State.”²³⁷ The closer interaction of Austria therefore is important for lifting the balance of power out of a relationship between rivals and into the systemic level. For the first time since the Italian Wars, and importantly, without the haranguing of the Pope, the great powers of Europe were balancing each other outside of their respective regions.

The Franco-Dutch War (1672-78) saw the accession of William III of Orange to the position of *stadtholder* of the Dutch Republic and the beginning of his rivalry with Louis XIV. When William III ascended to the throne of England with his wife Mary in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, he brought a greater sensibility for Continental politics to England and focused English foreign policy firmly on balancing against France and on preserving the continental status quo.²³⁸ William III did not use balancing terminology exactly; he referred instead to the “interest of Europe” and the “public good.”²³⁹ But as Sheehan argues, his words carried the meaning of the idea: “William III asserted that his opposition to France was inevitable only because France was the preponderant power. Had a similar threat been posed to Europe by Austria...he would have opposed the Habsburgs equally energetically.”²⁴⁰

William III's first great diplomatic coup was the Grand Alliance of 1689, an alliance of eight states, including Austria, Spain, the Dutch Republic, and several German states, to oppose Louis XIV's eastward offensive into the German states. This action was a part of the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-97), also known as the War of the League

²³⁶ Rohan 1975, 37.

²³⁷ Rohan 1975, 35-36.

²³⁸ Bromley 1970, 17-18; Lossky 1970, 156-157, 191-192.

²³⁹ Lossky 1970, 156-157, 192.

of Augsburg. It was during the War of the Grand Alliance that an anonymous pamphlet, thought to be written by Daniel Defoe, developed the idea of England's role in European politics as being that of “the balancer”: Because England was too weak in land forces to single-handedly balance foes, and because the security of England depended on the continent being kept free from universal monarchy, the writer argued that England should ensure that the treaty ending the war should result in an Austro-Franco equilibrium, so that England could play the role of the balancer in the future to deliberately restore a balance of power if one of the two sides grew greater than the other.²⁴¹ This is clear advocacy of England taking on a policy that would maintain the status quo and the permanently oppose hegemony.

Both sides in the War of the Grand Alliance exhausted themselves by 1697 and peace was concluded, but the Spanish Succession Crisis necessitated gathering the Alliance into action once more within three years. This crisis was the result of the childless Spanish King Charles II becoming terminally ill in the late 1690s. Louis XIV schemed to have Spain partitioned between him and others; William III participated in the negotiations to try to preserve a balance. But when Charles II died in 1700, he left Spain and her territories in his will to Louis XIV's grandson. As this would have resulted in a unified French-Spanish empire, William III and the other states in Europe opposed this succession plan. The succession of the grandson as Philip V of Spain was ultimately accepted before war began on the condition that he renounce his right to the French throne, which he did, but this did not stop fighting from breaking out as Austria moved on formerly Habsburg Spanish territories in Italy. This elicited a French response on

²⁴⁰ Sheehan 1996, 50.

²⁴¹ Sheehan 1996, 50-51.

Spain's behalf, an action which stoked fears that the two states would act in unison. The members of the Grand Alliance, keen on preserving the balance of power by keeping France and Spain from uniting, again declared war on France, leading to the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14).

William III's successor Queen Anne brought England into the war in 1702, formalizing the balance of power into English (British after 1707) policy in the process.²⁴² She explained that “William had concluded the Grand Alliance ‘in order to preserve the liberty and the balance of Europe and to curtail the exorbitant power of France.’”²⁴³ The historian Lossky further states that by 1713, “Anne's government claimed for itself a constant adherence to ‘the same principle...[which is] to preserve the equilibrium in Europe.’ On the Continent, nearly all the early official references to the ‘balance of Europe’ gave credit to Anne as its sponsor.”²⁴⁴ In the approaching landmark Peace of Utrecht and Quadruple Alliance therefore, Great Britain negotiated from a steadfast balance of power perspective.

The Peace of Utrecht (1713) brought the long War of Spanish Succession to an end and marked the first time in which balance of power terminology was included in a system-wide treaty. The settlement reached at Utrecht consisted of a series of bilateral agreements between the major participants and the balance of power is referenced in the Anglo-Spanish Treaty.²⁴⁵ But if the war was begun for balance of power reasons, the peace was not unambiguously won on such terms. Schroeder downplays the influence of the balance of power in the negotiations; he argues that each power pursued its own

²⁴² Lossky 1970, 157.

²⁴³ Lossky 1970, 157.

²⁴⁴ Lossky 1970, 157.

²⁴⁵ Anderson 1993, 164.

separate goals in the pursuit of a settlement, a charge that is especially descriptive of Great Britain's abandonment of its allies to forge peace with France, which she then pushed on her helpless allies.²⁴⁶ Moreover, it would be desirable for the manual balancing argument to see the balance of power referenced outside of the British treaties. Still, the British secured their aim of restoration of the balance of power through Philip V's renewed statement to stay on the throne in Spain and renounce his claims to the French throne.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, the balance was apparent in the timing of the peace settlement for not only the British, but the Dutch as well in issue of the alternative Austrian succession to the Spanish throne that they had been hypothetically championing: Two Habsburg Emperors had died during the war, leading Charles III, the Habsburg claimant to the Spanish throne, to instead become Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor in 1711. The British and the Dutch had no interest in stopping French domination of Spain only to see a revival of Charles V's Habsburg Empire.²⁴⁸ Even if, as Schroeder skeptically argues, the powers pursued egoistic goals, the prevention of hegemony was still the reason for and the outcome of the war.

The 18th Century – The “Golden Age of Balancing”

The Peace of Utrecht ushered in a period of balancing lasting until the French Revolution that many scholars refer to as the “Golden Age of Balancing.”²⁴⁹ By the early 18th century, the modern form of diplomacy was in place, aiding the maintenance of the

²⁴⁶ Schroeder 2004, 251. See also Pitt 1970, 470-471.

²⁴⁷ Pitt 1970, 463.

²⁴⁸ Pitt 1970, 441.

²⁴⁹ Hassall 1914; Gulick 1955; Dehio 1962; Claude 1962; Anderson 1993, 163; Sheehan 1996, 97; Doyle 1997, 175-193.

balance through consistent diplomatic exchange.²⁵⁰ The process by which the European states operated and thought of themselves as a strategically interdependent whole which had begun in the 1680s became fully developed after Utrecht and was extended east after Prussia and Russia became great powers during the century. Alliances were fluid and dynamic, as displayed by the Quadruple Alliance in 1718, in which Great Britain and France joined together with Austria and the Dutch to stop Philip V of Spain, and by the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, in which Austria and France again became allies while Britain joined with Prussia to balance France again. The numerous changes in alliance partners, according to Sheehan, “encouraged a sense of belonging to a European international state system...and a recognition of the importance of the other states who made up the system.” Overall, the 17th century was marked by low levels of nationalist and ideological conflict.²⁵¹

The cosmopolitan make-up and the Enlightenment-influenced intellectual leanings of many sovereigns only accentuated this.²⁵² Several monarchs and top military men hailed from foreign lands: King George I of Britain, Philip V of Spain, and Prince Eugene of Savoy, the leader of the Habsburg military. The Enlightenment, with its emphasis on rationality, had an overwhelming influence on scholars and in turn on leaders. The balance of power appealed to and permeated the thinking of learned statesmen such as Frederick the Great.²⁵³ Meanwhile, the decline of dynastic competition between rulers after the Spanish Succession crisis had a positive effect on the persistence of balancing policies. Anderson states that the 18th century was “the most productive

²⁵⁰ Anderson 1993, 41; Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, 5.

²⁵¹ Rosecrance 1963; Sheehan 1996, 101.

²⁵² Rosecrance 1963; Sheehan 1996, 98; Doyle 1997, 175.

²⁵³ Anderson 1993, 163; Reeve 1975, 120; Morgenthau 1973, 205.

period of balance of power theorising...never before or since has a single idea been so clearly the organising principle in terms of which international relations in general were seen.”²⁵⁴ The number of, frequency of, and number of participants in international peace conferences grew over this time; most of the major peace conferences after Utrecht referenced the balance of power as a natural or desired status.²⁵⁵

The 19th Century & Concert of Europe

This proclivity toward balance suffered greatly though in the tumult of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, but balance returned strongly with the advent of the Concert of Europe system in the first half of the 19th century. After Napoleon's cataclysmic defeat in Russia, the 1813 Treaty of Reichenbach between Russia, Austria, and Prussia set the goal of re-establishing the “state of equilibrium and lasting peace in Europe” through a permanent peacetime alliance.²⁵⁶ As Gulick notes, such an idea had a long history among balance of power thinkers.²⁵⁷ The 1814 Treaty of Chaumont resulted in the Concert of Europe, which came to be used to denote the coordination between the great powers to keep the balance of power after 1815.²⁵⁸ Sheehan calls Revolutionary and Napoleonic Period the “agent of change from one system to the other,” a transition between the 18th century way in which the balance of power was institutionalized and the Concert of Europe which enshrined it in the 19th century.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ Anderson 1993, 163.

²⁵⁵ Sofka 2001, 150; Little 2007a, 67.

²⁵⁶ Sheehan 1996, 117-118.

²⁵⁷ Gulick 1955, 155.

²⁵⁸ Gulick 1955, 156.

²⁵⁹ Sheehan 1996, 116.

Some scholars however have tried to distinguish the Concert from earlier balancing frameworks.²⁶⁰ Schroeder writes that the common view that this period represents “a classic case of balancing” does not stand examination, since some of the powers hid or bandwagoned with Napoleon.²⁶¹ Schroeder then makes the argument that the Vienna Settlement did not rest on a balance of power.²⁶² First, he states that there was not an equal five-way distribution of power. Of the three weaker central powers, France was only barely a great power, and a newly defeated one at that in 1815, and Prussia and Austria did not qualify as great powers. The relatively more secure flanking powers, Britain and Russia, on the other hand cumulatively held over half of the system's power. Schroeder argues that instead of resting on a cooperative balance of power, the Vienna Settlement instead rested on the dual hegemonic pursuit of Britain and Russia. Britain rather antagonistically sought to contain Russian expansion while also seeking to expand its control of the seas and overseas colonies.²⁶³ Watson agrees in part, calling the Concert system a “diffused hegemony,” though he includes all five great powers in this.²⁶⁴

Gulick and others argue though that the goals of the Concert were the same as with previous treaties – a “Europe in balance.”²⁶⁵ Sheehan also states that the Concert was similar to Utrecht; it only differed in that it had more lasting success.²⁶⁶ In his chapter 9, Gulick summarizes the biggest among the vast territorial exchanges that took place at the Congress of Vienna's behest in 1815 in order to ensure a balance of power, and especially to strengthen France's neighbors to block any possible quick resurgence in

²⁶⁰ Fay 1930; Schroeder 1992, 1994b; Watson 2009, 240.

²⁶¹ Schroeder 1994a, 120.

²⁶² Schroeder 1992, 1994b.

²⁶³ Schroeder 1992, 686-690.

²⁶⁴ Watson 2009, 240.

²⁶⁵ Gulick 1955, 157, 302; Scott 1994; Sked 1999.

²⁶⁶ Sheehan 1996, 123.

French power.²⁶⁷ This necessitated a certain level of cooperation among the great powers, though this came at the expense of the minor states, whose rights were limited and territorial boundaries redrawn or even erased summarily by the great powers. Such events were also present in before 1792 however, as is demonstrated by the partition of Poland.²⁶⁸ Hence, the charge of a diffused hegemony of the five great powers (or three if we accept Schroeder's argument on who were great powers) has merit, though this was not much different than before.

Yearly congresses between the great powers followed the 1815 Congress of Vienna. Morgenthau goes so far as to depict these congresses as an early form of international government.²⁶⁹ A Quadruple Alliance between Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria was signed in November 1815, and France was admitted to this group in 1818. Though the five great powers soon split into two sides between the liberal leaning Britain and France and the conservative Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia, and Austria and the congresses stopped soon after that, the balance of power that was reestablished after Napoleon however resulted in coordination between the great powers for roughly forty years, until the Crimean War.

The rest of this period until World War I saw a less stable balance marked by alliances, changes in territory, and arms races. The Crimean War (1854-56) and the series of wars and territorial exchanges among the great powers that followed broke down the Concert system and marked conflict between the great powers for the first time since 1815. The Crimean War was a balancing action on the part of the British and French to counter the expansion of Russia into the Ottoman Empire. Not knowing which side to

²⁶⁷ Gulick 1955, 244-261.

²⁶⁸ Sheehan 1996, 124-125.

join, or perhaps out of interest in keeping the balance, Austria and Prussia did not get involved. Britain and Austria continued to play manual balancing roles afterward,²⁷⁰ yet their efforts were strained by the aggressive actions of leaders Napoleon III in France, Bismarck of Prussia, and Nicholas I in Russia. The greatest changes in the status quo were obtained in the Prussian victories over Austria in 1866 and France in 1870, which heralded the rise of Prussia as the preeminent continental military power and led to the unification of Germany and decline of Austria. France subsequently switched to a foreign policy focused on balancing Germany, and the French-German rivalry eventually led to the two opposing alliances that fought WWI. Britain maintained the balance by allying with France and Russia in the Triple Entente.

Though the balance was less stable and not particularly cooperative in the second half of the 19th century, the powers were still focused on balancing each other. Up until WWI, diplomatic language and peace conferences still centered on the balance. It “remained the basic assumption of many commentators on European politics and the most important guideline of foreign offices.”²⁷¹ Anderson claims that with its usage over time, the balance of power gained a

quasi-legal status: it [became] a kind of constitutional principle governing Europe's political life. A British international lawyer claimed in 1854 that it had been more than once 'most formally and distinctly recognised as an essential part of the system of International Law'; and a French writer a few years later described it as 'the federative charter of European society.'²⁷²

This description, and this section's explanation of how European policymakers arrived at this state of affairs with regard to the balance of power, provides ample evidence that the

²⁶⁹ Morgenthau 1973, 48.

²⁷⁰ Sheehan 1996, 132.

²⁷¹ Anderson 1993, 196.

balance of power was an institutionalized norm in European politics that influenced foreign policy behavior in ways that did not exist outside of Europe. The many peace conferences and the agreements on the balance at peace conferences support this contention.

Conclusion

It is clear that further theorizing is needed for balance of power theory, particularly at the unit level. There has been little in the way of research on the determinants of balancing and nonbalancing behavior. Since we know that bandwagoning and buckpassing behavior exist, we should investigate determinants for both. Moreover, at the system level, we should try to better understand what happens to a balance when the balance of power norm is not institutionalized or is totally unknown. Do actors still try to balance? Can they work together in external balancing coalitions? That is, is the balance of power norm, developed in Europe, necessary for a sustainable balance of power? We know that balances lasted for sustained periods in the ancient cases, but we do not know why. How sustainable is a fortuitous balance when the balance of power norm does not exist?

²⁷² Anderson 1993, 197.

The English School's international society argument provides an explanation for the manual European balance of power but it does not provide an explanation for what occurs in systems where the concept of the balance of power has not developed. A theory of how states balance, bandwagon, or buckpass in reaction to domination seeking is needed. At the same time, we need a theory that hypothesizes that shape of the international system when hegemonic threats arise. In the next chapter, we will look to the work of the English School scholars Watson and Buzan and Little to theorize characteristics of systems in which the balance of power concept is not institutionalized.²⁷³ These scholars argue that systems often display a propensity toward hegemonic order. The cause of this propensity will be spelled out and hypothesized. At the unit level, we will also look at two determinants for balancing and nonbalancing behavior for actors in anarchic systems to understand more why hegemonies rise despite the balancing mechanism. Then in the empirical chapters, we shall look at behavior in an anarchic system with a fortuitous, fragile balance of power, the case of “Warring States” Japan, 1467-1590, to test these arguments.

²⁷³ Watson 2009; Buzan and Little 2000.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Argument of Balancing, Nonbalancing, & the Balance of Power

Contrary to the predictions of balance of power theory that the balancing mechanism prevents the emergence of hegemonies in anarchic systems, and contrary to the absence of hegemony in the European system for the last five centuries, hegemonies have occasionally been established at different points in history.²⁷⁴ Why are domination seekers sometimes able to succeed in establishing hegemonic orders in local, regional, or global anarchic systems?

As we saw in the last chapter, the English School of IR provides a manual balance of power explanation for the sustained European balance.²⁷⁵ According to their school of thought, statesmen and diplomats, who learned of the balance of power concept from Renaissance Italian scholars, strove to maintain a balance of power among the European great powers in order to prevent the hegemony of any one great power. But this explanation cannot be easily applied to non-European and systems.²⁷⁶

What does the English School say about the balance of power in non-European cases? Scholars such as Adam Watson, Barry Buzan, and Richard Little believe that “fortuitous balances” may exist, but that they will be fragile and unsustainable..²⁷⁷ A fortuitous balance will tend toward either hierarchy or toward a manually constructed balance of power, one in which a norm exists among the great powers to preserve the status quo of an anarchic state system. Little explains that the balance of power of

²⁷⁴ Waltz provides the most-cited claim that the balance of power prevents the emergence of hegemony, Waltz 1979. Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth provides examples to the contrary, Kaufman, Little, and Wohlforth 2007a

²⁷⁵ Bull 2002.

²⁷⁶ Little 2007b, 48.

²⁷⁷ Watson 2009; Buzan and Little 2000. A fortuitous balance in this case is synonymous with an anarchic order, that is, an order that is not hierarchic, Little 2007b, 47-48.

English School theory is defined by this “intersubjective agreement established amongst the great power to sustain a system of independent states.”²⁷⁸ The balance of power is thus a manual, collective construct. Without an intersubjective agreement to maintain the balance with most of the great powers’ consent, a fortuitous balance will fail and be replaced by a hegemonic order.

But why do units fail to sustain a fortuitous balance of power, which after all does seem like common sense, as Hume described it? Why do the other great powers not balance the aspiring hegemon? It is evident that states often do try to balance – the unit level prediction – they just do not always do so efficiently, which can lead to the failure of the system level prediction of balance. Collective action difficulties are seen as the main culprit behind this, but all states have the incentive to free ride, therefore such arguments do not explain the variance in actions, that is, they explain why some states free ride without explaining why others actually balance.²⁷⁹ Moreover, we know that states also bandwagon, but only a few scholarly works have explored structural-level explanations.²⁸⁰ This project argues that two structural variables are particularly salient in inhibiting balancing behavior: Rivalry and distance from the domination seeking threat. Though Bremer and Mearsheimer included distance in their arguments on the causes of war, it has not been well integrated into the balancing literature.²⁸¹ Rivalry has received little notice in the balancing literature as well.²⁸² If a state has a rival, it may think the rival is more dangerous than the hegemonic threat and may consequently focus its security efforts on him. If the rival is also the domination seeker, then balancing is

²⁷⁸ Little 2007b, 48. The English School has been called a forerunner of constructivism, Dunne 1995; Wendt 1993, 31.

²⁷⁹ Rosecrance and Lo 1996.

²⁸⁰ Barnett and Levy 1991; Schweller 2006.

predicted. But if a state is engaged in a rivalry with a third party, then the state may free ride or even bandwagon with the domination seeker to concentrate on defeating its rival, which it may perceive to be the stronger threat. States that are distant from the domination seeker see him as less threatening, since there may be other balancers who are more proximate and it is costly for the domination seeker to send his forces over long distances. This works two ways – sending troops over long distances increases the cost of balancing as well. So distance increases the free riding incentive.

Before developing further these arguments, we first need to return to balance of power theory to state its hypotheses. Then we will look into this project's argument. The second section develops the system level hypotheses. The third and final section looks at unit level behavior and presents two factors that have an effect on balancing and nonbalancing behavior.

The Balance of Power Argument and Hypotheses

According to the discussion of the definition of the balance of power last chapter, the definitive statement of *balance of power theory* is that hegemonies do not occur in multistate, anarchic systems, because states, particularly great powers, will balance to prevent any single state from achieving hegemony over the system,²⁸³ and the most common definition of the term *balance of power* is the “particular distribution of power among the states of that system such that no single state and no existing alliance has an 'overwhelming' or 'preponderant' amount of power”.²⁸⁴ On top of stating these

²⁸¹ Bremer 1992; Mearsheimer 2001.

²⁸² An exception is Levy and Thompson 2004.

²⁸³ Gulick 1955, 30-34; Levy 2003, 131-133; Brooks and Wohlforth 2008, 22.

²⁸⁴ Zinnes 1967, 272; Sheehan 1996, 4.

definitions explicitly, we stated in the last chapter that most balance of power theories are great power theories. That is, they are concerned with the actions of the great powers, the “movers and shakers” of the international system.

Finally, before stating the balance of power hypotheses, we must further discuss three important distinctions regarding the type of hegemony that is balanced against.

Scholars should be careful to delineate which side of each distinction they fall on. The first distinction concerns balancing against land-based military power in a continental context (e.g., Ancient Rome, Napoleon, Hitler) versus balancing against all hegemonic powers, including maritime powers (e.g., 19th century Great Britain).²⁸⁵ Most balance of power theories have implicitly conceived of balancing against hegemonic domination seeking in terms of balancing against land-based military power in continental Europe.²⁸⁶ Military hegemonic domination involves occupation or the threat of occupation with a temporary or permanent loss of independence. This threat to independence does not arise in balancing against strictly maritime hegemonic powers that do not have the land-based military capability to occupy another great power.²⁸⁷

A similar distinction involves balancing against military versus economic hegemony. As Levy states, economic hegemony is more associated with hegemonic stability theory, power transition theory, and long cycle theory and economic factors are not the primary concern of most balance of power theories.²⁸⁸ Economic factors typically are only important in most balance of power theories in that economic factors can be used to increase military power. Depending on how power is defined and measured, economic

²⁸⁵ Levy and Thompson 2003, 1; Levy 2003, 142-143.

²⁸⁶ Levy 2003, 142, Schweller 2006, 9, 11.

²⁸⁷ Yet balancing against maritime powers has occurred before. In the 1770's, French leadership stated that they joined the U.S. to balance Britain (Savelle 1939, 162-164; Stourzh 1969, 113, 284).

factors may push one system leader ahead of another in terms of power, but it is clear that military power and security issues are at the forefront of most of the balance of power literature.²⁸⁹

The issue of the apparent lack of balancing against the United States in the post-Cold War era involves the two distinctions above. The U.S. is both the international system's top maritime power and its top economic power, thus the international system's great powers have failed to maintain the balance of power if hegemony is conceived in these terms. But if hegemony is conceived in the more traditional, land-based, military power sense then the question depends on the scholar's application of the definition to the U.S. If scholars portray the U.S. as a land-based military hegemon which can threaten domination on other land masses outside of North America, which is possible to argue given the U.S.'s significantly overwhelming military advantage that comes from its large, well-equipped, well-trained army and dominant air support, as well as its latent power derived from its superior economy, resources, and industrial base, then it is indisputable that balancing has failed.²⁹⁰ If, however, one argues that land-based military hegemony requires having an army that can attack and enter into the other great powers' territory, then one might argue that there is no reason to balance against the U.S. unless it was to amass forces sufficient for invasion and occupation on the European or Asian continents.

Because the land-based, military hegemonic threat form is the most common and traditional form of balance of power theory, the argument presented here will limit itself to the consideration of balancing against land-based, military hegemonic threats.

²⁸⁸ Levy 2003, 142-143. For hegemonic stability theory, power transition theory, and long cycle theory, see Gilpin 1981; Keohane 1984; Organski 1968; Thompson 1988.

²⁸⁹ Mearsheimer 2001, 56.

²⁹⁰ Brooks and Wohlforth 2008.

The third distinction concerns balancing against powers that have hegemonic capabilities versus balancing against those that have capabilities and a clear intent to dominate. Do great powers just assume that all rising great powers will seek hegemony? Will great powers accept the possibility of the existence of a “gentle giant” – a preponderant great power that has the capabilities to dominate but chooses not to? This distinction is probably the most debated among balance of power theorists and will be hypothesized so as to be included in the empirical test.

Discerning a state’s true intent is naturally a difficult task for foreign policy decision makers. There is a strong association between capabilities *and* intent to dominate; as capabilities increase, great powers know they can more easily realize their goals through domination over others.²⁹¹ Thus states should naturally be wary of a preponderance of power in one state or alliance. Mearsheimer argues that intentions are “ultimately unknowable,” so states must simply balance against capabilities, regardless of intent.²⁹²

On the other hand, Walt, in his break away from conventional balance of power theory, argues that power alone does not always signify threat sufficient to trigger balancing. He argues that states balance against the most threatening state, and that this is composed of aggregate power, offensive intent, offensive capability, and proximity.²⁹³ Power, offensive capability, and proximity are (possibly) measurable factors, but how do actors distinguish intent? This is the question the British and French faced over Germany’s rise in the 1930s; they wanted to be sure of Hitler’s intentions before committing to halting him. Balancing can be costly, especially if it results in war, so

²⁹¹ Levy and Thompson 2004, 3.

²⁹² Mearsheimer 2001, 45.

states will typically try to withhold the effort for those whom they are relatively certain have the intent to dominate. Schweller falls on the capabilities plus intentions side of this distinction and argues that the intention to dominate is recognized by others when the rising power violates accepted norms of conduct, or “rules of the game.” He states that the balancing mechanism is triggered, when an actor deliberately “commits an act that flagrantly violates accepted rules and, in doing so, signals its intentions to do harm”.²⁹⁴ Walt's and Schweller's arguments thus oppose Mearsheimer and Waltz on this distinction: Both capabilities and intent to dominate are necessary to induce balancing by others.

However, in making his argument, Schweller cites from Morrow: “Bluffing and misrepresentation are the stuff of international politics.” This facet of strategic bargaining “further compounds the difficulty of making realistic appraisals of threat, for actors can gain more favorable bargaining outcomes by taking actions that misrepresent their preferences and willingness to take risks”.²⁹⁵ Mearsheimer would respond that it is due to this difficulty that all rising great powers are assumed to be threatening and will be balanced against. This is an empirical matter – we should investigate whether actors balance against simple capabilities or capabilities and intent. Since decision makers spend considerable amounts of time and resources trying to discern intent, it behooves us to include such a test. Thus, the balancing hypothesis will be split into two hypotheses, one for balancing against capabilities and one for capabilities plus intent.

For the capabilities hypothesis, a level of power which can be said to trigger balancing must be explicitly stated. It could be argued that great powers simply balance the leading state, but the uncertainty of knowledge of power levels and the possibility of

²⁹³ Walt 1985, 9-12.

²⁹⁴ Schweller 2006, 41.

several leading powers with approximately equal levels of power would then predict that the great powers would shift alliances much more frequently than they actually do in the real world to synchronize balancing actions with every minor adjustment in the distribution of power. Rather, it is more likely that a leading power would need to make a large gap in the distribution of power between it and the other great powers in order to trigger balancing. For this purpose, Levy and Thompson's statistical study of balancing in Europe between 1495 and 1999 will be used to gain an explicit "trigger point" to test balancing in the capabilities hypothesis; in this study, Levy and Thompson concluded that great powers are significantly likely to form a balancing coalition against the leading power when it holds a high disproportion (operationalized as 33%) of the system's military capability.²⁹⁶ Thus, the capabilities hypothesis appears as:

Hypothesis 1: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability.*

The capabilities plus intent hypothesis will add the requirement of intent to dominate to trigger the balancing mechanism.

Hypothesis 2: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability and the great power or alliance displays a clear intent to dominate.*

²⁹⁵ Schweller 2006, 43; Morrow 1988, 85.

²⁹⁶ Levy and Thompson 2005, 30.

Finally, there is the system-level balance of power hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

Failure of the Balance of Power – The System Level Outcome

Against the standard balance of power system level outcome of perpetual balance, typically based on a narrow Eurocentric perspective, we look to the English School work of Watson and Buzan and Little.²⁹⁷ These scholars argue that to make truly universal IR theory, we must look at international systems throughout history.²⁹⁸ Watson's book, *The Evolution of International Society*, represents a great contribution to the comparative study of international systems. This was a work long in gestation for the English School; its origins date to the mid-1960s and the founding members of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics, from which the English School itself originates.²⁹⁹ Comprised of a study of 12 international systems ranging from the ancient to the modern period, Watson draws together an analytical picture that encompasses systems whose orders ranged from anarchic to hegemonic to imperial, ultimately tying the analysis to the English School's international society argument.³⁰⁰ Watson argues that there is an

inevitable tension between the desire for order and the desire for independence. Order promotes peace and prosperity...[but it] constrains the freedom of action of communities...The desire for autonomy, and then for independence, is the desire of states to loosen the constraints and commitments imposed upon them. But independence also has its price, in economic and military insecurity.³⁰¹

²⁹⁷ Watson 2009; Buzan and Little 2000.

²⁹⁸ Buzan and Little 2000, 385.

²⁹⁹ Buzan and Little 2009, ix. Buzan and Little include a brief history of the Committee and Watson's contribution in their foreword to the 2009 edition of *The Evolution of International Society*, Watson 2009.

³⁰⁰ Buzan and Little 2009, xxix.

³⁰¹ Watson 2009, 14.

In anarchic systems experiencing truly Hobbesian conditions of extreme, constant violence, units might see benefits to giving up some independence in order to gain security and stability under a hegemonic order.

Contrary then to the neorealist assumption that a system's order must be anarchic to be considered an international system, English School scholars consider order in international systems throughout history to have swung between anarchy and hierarchy.³⁰² As described by Watson, the spectrum of international order runs from anarchy at one end to hegemony, suzerainty, dominion, and finally to empire at the other extreme.³⁰³ These degrees are not discrete, but rather ideal type categories. Watson does not assume that systems move abruptly between them; the spectrum is a continuum with degrees between these categories.³⁰⁴ Watson defines hegemony as a dominant power in the system with the ability to lay down the law about the operation of the system and the external relations between units. This meets roughly the criteria also set by Gilpin in his economic-based hegemonic theory.³⁰⁵ Suzerainty entails greater control than hegemony. Watson describes it as the exercise of political control of one state over another, or an “overlordship;” the submissive state formally accepts the legitimacy of the hegemony of the dominant state.³⁰⁶ Dominion is defined as a situation in which an imperial authority to some extent determines the internal government of other units, but they are able to retain their identity as separate states with some degree of autonomy. Finally, empire is direct

³⁰² Buzan and Little 2000, 373.

³⁰³ Watson 2009, 14-15.

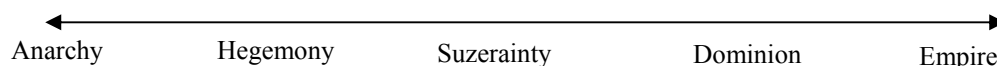
³⁰⁴ Watson 2009, 16.

³⁰⁵ Gilpin 1981.

³⁰⁶ It is possible that Watson considered suzerainty to be historically bounded and not totally necessary as he drops it out of the description of the degrees of hierarchy on certain pages without explanation, Watson 2009, 14, 17, 125.

central administration of units.³⁰⁷ Watson's depiction of the degrees of hierarchy is shown below in Figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1 – Adam Watson's Degrees of Hierarchy



As described in the previous section, most balance of power theories are concerned with hegemonic threats represented by rising land-based military power. A qualifier for comparing Watson's theory to balance of power theory then is that the hegemon (or suzerain or greater) also represents a land-based military threat sufficient to attack the other units. In other words, the hegemon cannot simply be an economic or a maritime hegemon.

According to Watson, international systems over time swing like a pendulum across the categories of the order spectrum, moving toward one end before turning back in the other direction due to pressures that tend to move it away from the extremes.³⁰⁸ The pendulum swings toward hierarchy away from anarchy when inequalities in material inequalities arise among the units, leading to an increasingly widening gap such that the leading unit is able to conquer its leading rivals and establish a hierarchic order. As summarized by Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little, the underlying logic for this argument is material capabilities: "The larger the underlying [material] inequalities among the great

³⁰⁷ Watson 2009, 15-16.

³⁰⁸ Watson 2009, 17, 123-125, 254.

powers...and the more these inequalities lead to clear distinction among ranks, the more likely the hierarchical patterns are to emerge and remain stable”.³⁰⁹

Order swings away from the empire end due to problems such as overexpansion and pressure for autonomy by units, especially those that are more distant. Stuart Kaufman, also writing on the fragmentation and consolidation of international systems, echoes this argument on the pressure for autonomy when he states that a force pushing for the fragmentation of empires is “unit identity”.³¹⁰ Because the units under the control of an empire in many cases do not cease to exist under imperial control, when the empire becomes fragmented, these units become independent again. Thus, the term international system can still be applied to empires.³¹¹

These pressures tend to keep the system away from the unstable extremes of empire and anarchy and resting near a degree of hegemony with local autonomy for units. So on average, international systems, particularly those “with a large number of substantially independent units” have a propensity toward hegemony.

We will consider the system level hypothesis that anarchic international systems tend to move toward hegemony. This is due to the natural tendency for one rising power to accumulate more material resources than others and consequentially gain more power and a greater advantage through conquest of others. Implicit in this is a hypothesis

³⁰⁹ Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007, 13.

³¹⁰ S. Kaufman 1997, 174. In S. Kaufman's work, the spectrum of international systems is ordered according to polarity. Thus, in contrast to Watson's spectrum of order, his spectrum ranges from total fragmentation (anarchy) to multipolarity to bipolarity to single hegemony and finally to empire. A synthesis of this version with Watson's would be helpful, as Watson misses the difference between multiple, dual, and unipolarities while Kaufman does not have the degrees of control between hegemony and empire, Kaufman 1997, 176. It should be noted however that when S. Kaufman joined the Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little project, together they adapted Watson's order continuum, Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007, 6.

³¹¹ Buzan and Little 2000, 373. The alternative is that the empire remains and eventually becomes known as a single state, as with the Chinese empire. This is an example of what Ikenberry calls a constitutional order, Ikenberry 2000, 29.

regarding the creation of great powers. Over time, powerful states grow into great powers by conquering their weaker neighbors and consolidating territory under their control and growing economically and in resources. This conforms with S. Kaufman's hypothesis that self-help actually leads to consolidation of the system under a smaller number of units.³¹² This will be hypothesized as well.

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

Two Structural Determinants of Balancing and Nonbalancing Behavior

We cannot explain the whole story without the unit level though. How do the inequalities between great powers that enable the creation of a hegemonic order grow in the first place? Why do the other great powers not balance the aspiring hegemon or keep up with its growth in power? Is it simply because the other great powers are unaware of the balance of power concept? Coordinated balancing and creating balancing alliances can be difficult without the wide knowledge of the balance of power concept to “cue” the need for everyone to balance. Without this, it can be difficult to overcome the free rider problem of collective action. But this ignores the fact that historical systems such as Ancient Greece predating the 15th century Italian creation of the balance of power concept have experienced sustained balances of power that were not simply fortuitous. There is much evidence that states in history have tried to perform balancing without

³¹² S. Kaufman 1997, 174.

knowledge of the balance of power concept, so that individual balancing would seem a natural behavior, even if cooperative balancing is not.

Some individual states may balance without an efficient balancing coalition coming into existence because of the Hobbesian qualities of anarchic systems which make collective action difficult. As Alexander Wendt argues, in Hobbesian stage of anarchy, in which the norm of mutual recognition of sovereignty does not exist, the possibility of war is constantly high.³¹³ Because of this, “cooperation...is extremely difficult in this context, since trust is lacking, time horizons are short, and relative power concerns are high”.³¹⁴ The order is truly a self-help system; actors know that they cannot rely on others, not even for balancing.³¹⁵

We must add to this the regional hegemonic incentives of great powers. Mimicking behavior posited about great powers at the system level, great powers strive to be regional hegemonic powers. In fact, it can be argued that this concern takes precedence over the establishment of systemic hegemony, since regional hegemony must precede systemic hegemony. Moreover, proximate powers, especially neighboring states, are the greatest threats to security. Land-based military invasion is most likely to originate from adjacent territory. The most important proximate security concerns are rivals, since rivals are those actors with whom a state has had repeated conflict. In comparison, states are least concerned with distant powers, since the difficulty of invasion from afar decreases the possibility of it occurring. States in the Hobbesian stage of anarchy, where the possibility of war is high and consistent, are regionally minded actors. This is similar to Mearsheimer's argument in *The Tragedy of Great Power*

³¹³ Wendt 1999, 265.

³¹⁴ Wendt 1992, 415.

Politics, where he argues that great powers try to establish regional hegemony, while also trying to block the establishment of regional hegemony of others.³¹⁶ In conclusion, it is argued that great powers place the highest priority on being secure in their region. This means that in terms of security, they are most concerned with their proximate rivals, and they are least concerned with distant domination seekers. Thus rivalry and distance are determinants of balancing and nonbalancing behavior.

Against the standard balance of power unit-level prediction that states will only balance hegemonic threats, we consider here two structural determinants of balancing and nonbalancing behavior: Distance and rivalry. It is not claimed that these two factors are the only determinants of balancing and nonbalancing; these two are chosen rather because they are seen as important determinants of alliance participation in other literatures but are largely overlooked in the balance of power literature. Since the most standard balance of power literature does not address the causes of nonbalancing behaviors such as buckpassing and bandwagoning either (outside of critiques), it is logical to think that this oversight is due to the exclusion of these two determinants.

A coalition of great powers externally balancing together is the most effective way to maintain the balance, but the collective goods problem inherent in balancing together hinders the creation and maintenance of such balancing coalitions. Stopping a hegemonic threat to preserve a balance of power provides security to all of the system's units, thus the preservation of the balance is a public, nonexcludable, collective good. However, because this good can be enjoyed by all and because balancing is costly, states

³¹⁵ Wendt 1999, 265.

³¹⁶ Mearsheimer 2001, 141.

have an incentive to free ride or buckpass the balancing task to others.³¹⁷ So to maintain a balance of power via the most efficient means, a cost-sharing balancing coalition, the collective goods problem must be overcome.

Overcoming the incentive to pass the buck is not easy though. Rosecrance and Lo and Mearsheimer believe buckpassing to be a common choice for states reacting to hegemonic threats.³¹⁸ The decision to balance can be viewed through a cost-benefit analysis. The benefit is the preservation of balance and independence, the public good that all will enjoy if the balancing successful; this is generally fixed, though it may increase for those who expect more concrete gains from defeating the hegemonic threat. The cost of fighting provides much of the determination of which actors will balance and which will buckpass. A small state, for instance, faces a greater cost for balancing due to the disparity of its military capability compared to the domination seeker greatly. This greatly increases the incentive to buckpass. However, this study focuses on great power actors who are assumed to be roughly equal in military size, so relative military capability will not be used here. Instead, this study will focus on the effects of distance and interstate rivalry on the decision to balance.

Distance and rivalry have not played large roles in the balance of power literature. Both have been used as factors in the study of determinants of conflict outside of the balancing literature. Levy and Thompson, a recent statistical study of balancing behavior in Europe over the past 500 years, changes this however by including distance and rivalry among their variables and finding both to have an influence on the decision to balance.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Olson 1965; G. Snyder 1997, 50-51.

³¹⁸ Rosecrance and Lo 1996, 481; Mearsheimer 2001, 139.

³¹⁹ Levy and Thompson 2004.

Their inclusion in the present qualitative study allows us to look more closely at the causal process behind these relationships.

The Effect of Distance on Balancing

The more distant an actor is from the hegemonic threat, the greater cost of projecting power. The declining effectiveness of power over distance is a simple rule of international relations scholarship that was popularized by Boulding as the so-called power gradient.³²⁰ Conversely, the empirical literature on proximity and conflict on the other hand shows that war is more likely to occur between states that are proximate, and especially between those that are contiguous. This literature shows robust results that generally favor proximity as a better predictor of conflict over any other variable.³²¹ The usage of proximity as a determinant of conflict may seem trivial to some, but one should consider proximity and particularly contiguity as a substitute for opportunity for conflict. That is, neighbors have more opportunity for conflict over territory than distant dyads. They may not agree on borders, or they may covet the same border-region resources. Additionally, anti-government forces may cross into the neighbor's territory, provoking conflict between the two. Proximate states can share some of these problems if they both are contiguous to the same body of water, or if they have competing interests in a weak, common neighboring state.

So distance may reduce the likelihood of conflict between any dyad, but does it specifically cause a great power to be less likely to balance? The reason for the correlation between outbreak of war and proximity – the increase in opportunity for

³²⁰ Boulding 1962.

conflicting interests – is a separate matter from preserving one’s independence and that of the system from a system-wide hegemonic threat. Wherever the threat is in the system, near or distant, great powers should be vigilant about keeping the balance, according to the logic of balance of power theory. But the question of distance has rarely been brought up in the balancing literature.

According to the cost-benefit analysis of deciding to balance, the more distant an actor is from the hegemonic threat, the more costly it is to balance since it is costlier to project troops over a longer distance and their absence decreases security from local threats. Beyond this simple decision rule, distance can also influence an actor to be less concerned with the hegemonic threat as the actor knows it will be difficult for the hegemonic threat to project his power over a long distance as well, and if there are closer great powers, then they will probably balance first.

Though the consideration of distance in balancing has been sparse, several authors have brought it into their arguments. Straightforwardly, Walt argues that proximity is a factor in the consideration of threat in his balance of threat theory.³²² It is natural for rising expanding powers to consider conquering their neighbors first, since they are closer, the costs of war are reduced, and the probability of victory is greater. Neighboring states know this and so they are more fearful of proximate than distant states.

Adding buckpassing as an alternative to balancing, Christensen and Snyder argue that less vulnerable, more distant states have an incentive to buckpass and let the states that are more proximate to the hegemonic threat, the “frontline” states, perform balancing behavior, particularly when actors view the offense/defense balance as favoring the

³²¹ Gleditsch and Singer 1975; Garnham 1976; Diehl 1991; Bremer 1992; Vasquez 1993, 1995; Hensel 2000; Bennett and Stam 2004, 115; Starr 2005.

defense or when they perceive the frontline state to be more powerful than the hegemonic threat.³²³

Mearsheimer's *Tragedy of Great Power Politics* is notable for the key role that geography plays within his realist theoretical framework. In addition to distance, Mearsheimer considers geographic barriers such as the "stopping power of water" as factors that decrease the effectiveness of the balancing mechanism. He states, "Common borders promote balancing; barriers encourage buck-passing".³²⁴ Great powers that are farther away from the hegemonic threat or separated geographically by a large body of water feel less threatened by the hegemonic threat because of the power gradient. If there are other states that can balance the threat and absorb its attacks, especially other great powers, then they have another reason to feel less of a threat. Equally so, because the power gradient works both ways, distant great powers know that their balancing efforts will be less likely to stop the hegemonic threat and more costly and less effective if military action called for. Distant great powers are thus more likely to buckpass on the balancing efforts of others.³²⁵ States that share borders with the hegemonic threat cannot buckpass and will balance instead. As a result of this argument, Mearsheimer elevates buckpassing as one of the two "principal strategies that great powers use" in reaction to a hegemonic threat, on a par with balancing.³²⁶

³²² Walt 1987, 23-24.

³²³ Christensen and Snyder 1990, 144-145; Christensen 1997, 66.

³²⁴ Mearsheimer 2001, 271.

³²⁵ Mearsheimer 2001, 270-271.

³²⁶ Mearsheimer 2001, 139. Mearsheimer thus agrees with Schweller that buckpassing is the more fitting opposite of balancing, rather than bandwagoning, as argued by Waltz and Walt, Mearsheimer 2001, 267; Schweller 1994, 74; Waltz 1979, 126; Walt 1985, 4.

Finally, Levy and Thompson find that a state's proximity to a hegemonic threat is positively related to balancing.³²⁷ This provides more than sufficient evidence to warrant a qualitative investigation of the link between distance and balancing. This project will look at this link within the same units across time, giving us a greater understanding of how the approaching forces of a hegemonic threat affect the timing of the decision of great powers to balance.

Hypothesis 6: *The more proximate a great power is to the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will balance. The more distant a great power is, and the more great powers there are between it and the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will buckpass.*

Hypothesis 7: *A distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in its direction.*

The Effect of Rivalry on Balancing

Rivalry is closely related to the relationship between proximity and war. The literature on international rivalries has found that most rivals are proximate or neighboring states, and that most rivalries are marked by disputes over territory.³²⁸ Rivalries are responsible for a great disproportion of war that occurs in the modern international system. Goertz and Diehl, for instance, find that 12% of the system's dyads account for 60% of the total militarized disputes.³²⁹

On top of the links between rivalry and territory, the rivalry literature has in the last decade and a half confronted issues of the definition and operationalization of

³²⁷ Levy and Thompson 2004.

³²⁸ Vasquez 1995, 1996; Rasler and Thompson 2000, 2006.

rivalries, the paths to war between rivals, and rivalry development and termination.³³⁰ For the most part, the study of rivalries has been contained within the dyadic level of analysis however. Studies by Goertz and Diehl, Bennett, and Colaresi have utilized systemic factors, but only for the effect they have as exogenous shocks on rivalry termination.³³¹

Likewise, rivalries have not played a large role in the balance of power literature. The reason for this is that great powers are supposed to be flexible in the alliance partners when balancing hegemonic threats, whether these partners are rivals or not. On the necessity of flexible alliances, Waltz writes, “To preserve the system, at least one powerful state must overcome the pressure of ideological preference, the pull of previous ties, and the conflict of present interests” in order to balance.³³² Later, he states, “If pressures are strong enough, a state will deal with almost anyone...states will ally with the devil to avoid the hell of military defeat”.³³³ States must be able to look past their conflict of interests with their rivalries to the longer term picture of preventing a domination seeker from establishing hegemony over the system.

Yet, timing is an important issue in this matter. The earlier balancing takes place, the more likely it is to be effective. But rivalries involve extreme psychological hostility between the two states that can cloud rational, long term decision making calculations.

Vasquez defines a rivalry as,

a relationship characterized by extreme competition, and usually psychological hostility, in which issue positions of contenders are governed primarily by their attitude toward each other rather than by the stakes at hand...Normal conflict is guided ultimately by a selfish concern, whereas rivalry, because of the persistence of hostility, can get out of hand and make for disagreement and negative acts that from

³²⁹ Goertz and Diehl 1993.

³³⁰ Goertz and Diehl 1995; Bennett 1998; Hensel 1999; Thompson 2001; Stinnet and Diehl 2001; Colaresi 2001; Rasler and Thompson 2006; DiCicco 2006.

³³¹ Goertz and Diehl 1995, Bennett 1998, and Colaresi 2001, 571.

³³² Waltz 1979, 164.

³³³ Waltz 1979, 166.

a strict cost-benefit analysis are not necessary ...[there is a] tendency for all issues (and the specific stakes that compose them) to become linked in to one grand issue – us versus them.³³⁴

This is because rivals frame issues in terms of an actor dimension – what they mean for the other actor – as opposed to a stake dimension, which is driven by an egoist cost-benefit analysis of the stake under contention. Under the actor dimension, the “cost-benefit analysis of normal politics gives way to the feeling that what is of primary importance is not one’s own value satisfaction, but hurting the other side”.³³⁵ So rivals may have such an intense degree of hostility for each other that they become more likely to focus only on ways in which they can hurt their rival, and they will be less likely to join their rival in balancing a hegemonic threat.

Granted, as stated above, this work on rivalry was performed at the dyadic level, not at the systemic level. Thus, most of the “issues” referred to in Vasquez’s statements above are dyadic issues just between the two rivals. The question then becomes whether rivalries inhibit rational decision making concerned with systemic hegemonic threats. Are rivals so hostile toward each other that they will not form a balancing coalition with each other to balance a hegemonic threat? Would one of them even be as myopic as to bandwagon with bandwagon with the hegemonic threat to see the rival defeated? Or, as Waltz argues, do all states “ally with the devil” to head off the threat of hegemony from another state? The issue of timeliness is also important. Even if rivals eventually join together in a balancing coalition, as Waltz argues, does the presence rivalry inhibit the start of balancing long enough as to prevent timely balancing?

³³⁴ Vasquez 1996, 532.

³³⁵ Vasquez 1993, 82.

Several hypotheses will be considered. First, Levy and Thompson found statistical support for the argument states are more likely to balance if their rival is threatening systemic domination.³³⁶ This seems to be common sense. If rivals are so ready to find ways to hurt each other, then the presence of rivalry will actually increase the magnitude and speed of the balancing mechanism. Thus, a state with a rival is very likely to balance when the hegemonic threat is that state's rival.

Hypothesis 8: *If a great power's rival is threatening hegemony, then that great power is more likely to balance.*

We will consider next if rivalry inhibits balancing against a third party state that is threatening hegemony, that is, a state outside of the rivalry dyad. Imagine there are two great power rivals, States A and B, and a third party hegemonic threat, State C. If State A chooses to balance C, then B may choose to buckpass the threat in order to see A carry the cost of balancing. This is equal to Mearsheimer's description of *bloodletting*, the act of letting a balancer and the hegemonic threat waste their military resources on each other to gain relative superiority over both.³³⁷ State B, the buckpasser, is more likely to be the more distant of the two rivals to the hegemonic threat.

A rival may also choose to bandwagon with the hegemonic threat in order to take an active role in defeating his rival and gain more materially from his loss. The bandwagoner is also more likely to be the more distant of the two rivals from the hegemonic threat. The bandwagoning state may perform this action if he does not

³³⁶ Levy and Thompson 2004.

³³⁷ Mearsheimer 2001, 154-155; Snyder 1997, 51.

recognize the overall threat to the system and his own future security displayed by the hegemonic threat. The perception of whether a state is a hegemonic threat can be a difficult one to make. Even Waltz stated, “It is still more important to remember that the question of who will ally with which devil may be the decisive one.”³³⁸ Thus, a great power may bandwagon with the hegemonic threat to defeat his rival before realizing that the hegemonic threat was more dangerous than his rival. As is stated in hypothesis 5 above, when a great power has buckpassed or bandwagoned, it will turn to balancing late if the strategy backfires and the hegemonic threat grows more powerful, even joining his rival if the latter is still balancing.

Hypothesis 9: *If a great power’s rival balances against a hegemonic threat, then the great power is likely to buckpass or bandwagon with the hegemonic threat. The balancer is more likely to be the more proximate of the two to the hegemonic threat.*

Hypothesis 10: *If a great power engaged in a rivalry buckpasses or bandwagons a hegemonic threat and the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction, it will turn to balancing late and ally with its rival.*

³³⁸ Waltz 1979, 166.

Conclusion

In the last chapter, it was argued that the automatic version of balance of power theory was inadequately conceived and that richer, more empirically accurate theoretical arguments at both the unit and system level were needed. In this chapter, we have formulated an alternative to the automatic form of balance of power theory that encompasses balancing behavior and its two main alternatives, bandwagoning and buckpassing. Additionally, we looked at a unit level theory from the English School regarding the propensity of anarchic systems for hegemony.

Chapter 4 – Explanation of the Empirical Case & Variable Operationalization

The Case

The project will test balance of power theory with a case external to the modern European and the post-WWII global context. This project proposes to test these hypotheses with a case new to the study of international relations – the case of the medieval Warring States or Sengoku Period of Japan. As will be explained in detail in the next chapter, the structural condition of anarchy existed in Warring States Japan, and the archipelago was split into many independent domains, ruled over by feudal warlords with large armies. These warlords engaged in near-constant warfare with each other over territory. The result is that Warring States Japan between 1467 and 1590 was a multistate system – a miniature version of the global international system.³³⁹ This multistate system came to an end in 1590 when the system was unified by two warlords, Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), in a domination seeking process that occurred between 1568 and 1590.

The argument and hypotheses of the preceding chapter will be empirically tested against this case in the following three chapters. The next chapter will first justify the usage of this case for a work in international relations by describing in detail the structural condition of anarchy (lack of central rule) that existed in Warring States Japan between 1467 and the start of the (ultimately) successful unification process in 1568. The nature of the balance of power and the existence of possible domination seekers in this period will be explored. This chapter will close with smaller explorations of the balance

³³⁹ Kurosawa 2004.

of power in two sub-regional systems, the eastern Kantō region surrounding modern-day Tokyo and the western Honshu region.

Though it is argued that Warring States Japan was a multistate system, some scholars may still dispute its usefulness as a test for IR theory because it is in essence a regional case, a small subset of the international system. This argument however overlooks the contributions to IR scholarship of past explorations of regional cases, not to mention the general lack of contestation of the validity of these comparisons and empirical tests. Two of the greatest and most accepted realist scholars, Kenneth Waltz and Robert Gilpin, have compared the Ancient Greek system of Athens and Sparta to the modern international system.³⁴⁰ K.J. Holsti wrote about the multistate systems that existed in Ancient China and Renaissance Italy.³⁴¹ Stephen Walt uses the Middle East as the empirical case for his book *The Origins of Alliances*, even though two large global actors, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, often interfered in the region, harming the ability to use the regional case as a stand-in for the international system.³⁴² More recently, Douglas Lemke has extended power transition theory to cases of regional hierarchies.³⁴³ We can learn much from the careful application of IR theory to regional cases, especially since the empirical range of cases to test systemic theories is very limited.

The second empirical chapter will cover the domination seeking of Oda Nobunaga between 1568 and his death in 1582 and the reaction of the most powerful warlords to his efforts to unify the system. The third empirical chapter will do the same for the domination seeking of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the reactions of the great power

³⁴⁰ Waltz 1979, 127; Gilpin 1981, 1988.

³⁴¹ Holsti 1972.

³⁴² Walt 1987.

³⁴³ Lemke 2002.

warlords between 1582 and 1590. In both of these long campaigns, there were a significant number of warlords both in opposition and in support of the domination seekers, as well as many others who performed free riding. The actions of the great powers among these warlords will serve as the units of analysis to test the unit-level hypotheses.

The Operationalization of Variables

The variables that need to be operationalized are:

1. Balancing
2. Bandwagoning
3. Free riding
4. Power
5. Distance
6. Rivalry
7. High Distribution of Power
8. Intent to Dominate
9. Hegemonic Order
10. Balance of Power

In addition, we will also need to explicitly state:

11. Which actors qualify as great power warlords, the units of the analysis, and the great power rivalries.

Operationalization Tasks 1, 2, & 3: The Values of the Unit-level Dependent Variable

Balancing: The most referenced form of balancing in the IR literature is external balancing, the formation of an alliance in opposition to the domination seeker. The most unambiguous form of balancing is attacking the domination seeker when one is not under attack or the immediate threat of attack. Internal balancing, openly amassing arms to warn a domination seeker against further expansion, will not be used here, due to the ambiguous nature of amassing of arms without a corresponding balancing attack or alliance (especially during the Warring States Period when every warlord maintained large armies) and also due to the poor and exaggerated nature of records on the number of men under arms in this period, which the historian Sansom discusses, among others.³⁴⁴

Defending against direct attack or repelling an invasion is not considered balancing but self-defense. However, if one successfully repels an invasion from the domination seeker, and then continues to attack him without continuing to be under the threat of attack, then this will be considered balancing.

Preventive war, if it is seen to occur, will be investigated carefully, since it can indicate balancing of a foe that has the intent to dominate but does not yet have a level of power greater than the attacker. It could be that the attacker is the domination seeker. The issue of multiple domination seekers in general will have to be treated carefully.

Bandwagoning: Defined as militarily aiding the hegemonic threat with the full weight of one's armed forces.

Free riding (also called referred to as hiding and buckpassing): Defined as doing nothing when a domination seeker is threatening to establish a hegemonic order. This could also be referred to as hiding. Buckpassing specifically refers to doing nothing when others are balancing.

Tasks 4, 5, & 6: Unit-level Independent Variables

Power: The conceptualization of power in political science has long been a focus of debate.³⁴⁵ There are generally two approaches. First is the national power approach, in which power is a unit-level attribute measured by military capability and the aggregation of several latent variables such as the size of the economy, population, and natural resources. The second is the relational approach, which treats power as a relational concept between units; power in this case is the ability to make others do what they do not want to do. The former is the older approach, and the one that has played a central role in work on balance of power theory, including in Waltz's neorealism, while the latter became developed over the second half of the 20th century.³⁴⁶ While the relational approach is the more sophisticated of the two, the national elements approach persisted in security studies probably for empirical measurement purposes – it is simpler to operationalize. The Correlates of War Project has been very useful for its measurements of national power based on the national elements approach.³⁴⁷ It could be argued that international relations scholars implicitly accept the relational approach, but continue to rely on the national elements approach for empirical work as a proxy variable. In any

³⁴⁴ Sansom 1961, 120, 325, n. 11.

³⁴⁵ Spykman 1942; Dahl 1957; Baldwin 2002.

³⁴⁶ Baldwin 2002, 177-178.

³⁴⁷ Small and Singer 1982.

case, balance of power theories rely on the national elements approach,³⁴⁸ with its emphasis on military power, therefore the national elements approach will be used here.

Unfortunately, it well known among historians that records in medieval Japan on the number of men under arms are exaggerated.³⁴⁹ Therefore we shall use the total territory under a warlord's control as a measure for power. In feudal systems, land was the most important commodity; it was both the goal of feudal lords and the measure of their power. The struggles between Sengoku warlords were most typically over territory. Sansom suggests that controlling territory was the true manifestation of power,³⁵⁰ and the warlords cited by historians as the most powerful are invariable those with the greatest amount of land.³⁵¹ If gaining territory was the goal of the warlords, then the most powerful warlords are easily identified as the ones with the most territory. This fits with the particular conceptualization of balance of power theory used here: Actors balance land-based military power targeting the control or occupation of others' territories. What better way is there for actors to determine each other's power than by seeing the amount of territory they have conquered? This operationalization has great merit in medieval Japan: The link between land and power naturally has its foundation in the agricultural value of land and the importance of controlling agricultural production. This was established early on in Japan, similarly to feudal and pre-feudal conditions in Europe.

Land is also a useful measure of power because the more territory a warlord controlled, the more men he would have at his disposal for the military. The powerful thus gained an ever greater edge by conquering territory as they gained more warriors and

³⁴⁸ Baldwin 2000, 182.

³⁴⁹ Sansom 1961, 120, 325, n. 11.

³⁵⁰ Sansom 1958, 110.

³⁵¹ Sansom 1961, 248; Hall, Nagahara, and Yamamura, 1981, 9-10.

land-based resources, the components of national power. In the Japanese feudal system, warlords conquering a new territory usually took charge of the conquered territory's warriors, the vassals of the previous warlord. Sometimes, the conquered warlord (if he kept his head) and his clan became vassals themselves of the conquering warlord. Major warlord houses used the *kandaka* system to levy military service of the vassals living in their territories. This system converted the all land into a *kandaka* figure, the cash equivalent due to a vassal from the yield in goods and services in his own holdings. This *kandaka* figure thus detailed how much a vassal was worth in terms of his land. After obtaining this figure, the overlord then levied military service from the vassal proportionate to his *kandaka* value.³⁵²

Population in Japan in this period was primarily rural, though there were some population centers in the Kansai region (Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara), in port towns along the coasts, and in provincial capitals. Controlling these population centers, and especially the rich trading ports such as Nagasaki, naturally gave an advantage to the warlord whose territories these fell in, however these advantages are moderated by the independence of these cities. The lands of those considered the most powerful warlords, Takeda Shingen, Uesugi Kenshin, Hōjō Ujiyasu, did not hold Japan's biggest cities or ports, but rather vast tracts of land. The north on Honshu was more sparsely populated, so this argument is less valid for the northern warlords, who were less able to control the farmers in their territories and are generally considered to be militarily weaker than their counterparts to the south.

³⁵² Nagahara and Yamamura 1981, 27.

There is one problem with using land as a measure: Mountainous territory is less productive for rice and would generate a lesser agricultural yield and hold lesser people, and would be more difficult to pass through (though this last factor means it would be more valuable as a defensive barrier). Primarily mountainous territory should therefore be considered less valuable. However, the problem of mountainous terrain does not entirely discriminate between warlords: about 75% of Japan is mountainous, thus spreading the burden of holding mountainous land to nearly all warlords. Holding the few great alluvial plains did not instantly make one the most powerful warlord either: The Hōjō clan held much of the Kantō plains region, the greatest alluvial plain in Japan, but no historian would consider them to have been more powerful than the Takeda clan, whose provinces of Kai and Shinano were very mountainous by comparison.

It may be the case of conflating cause and effect to use territory as a proxy for power – the powerful gained territory because they had power first – but it is no mistake to state that the powerful gained more power when they conquered neighboring territories, and that they thusly widened the gap between the great powers and the rest and enabled themselves to take more territory by adding conquered vassals to their military structure.

The amount of total territory under a great power warlord's control is measured by the total area (kilometers squared) of all of the provinces and partial provinces under the warlord's control. To find what territories were under which warlord's control, I used a variety of map sources found in libraries and bookstores to construct a chronological series of maps of warlord territories. Today's modern prefectures are based on the old provinces of the medieval era, so there are many cases in a whole province became one

prefecture. In many other cases, two or more provinces combined to make one provinces, so many of the borders are the same as today's prefectures. In cases where a whole province became one prefecture, I found the prefecture's total area in squared kilometers, data which is widely available in library reference books, and simply assigned it to the older province. In cases where one prefecture was made from multiple provinces, I found the total areas for prefectures districts, which is also widely available, and added these totals into each corresponding province, using maps for reference. I did the same for cases in which provinces were broken up to make prefectures. This data is available in the appendix to this chapter.

I took the total areas for each province, and then began to total the total areas controlled by the great power warlords using the chronological series of maps I constructed. These borders of the areas of warlord control are estimates in the historical sources as the frontiers between warlords territories and the extent of conquests were often not known in exact detail (the sources often conflict with each other in the exact details – the line of a border, for instance – in which case I chose the more conservative estimate of the extent of a warlord's control). Since these were just estimates, when a warlord's territory included a partial province, I estimated the proportion of the province under his control instead of performing an investigation. This data is provided in the appendices to the respective empirical chapters.

Distance: Distance will be measured by the shortest distance between the edge of the domination seeker's territory to the each great power warlord's provinces capital, to tell us how fearful the warlord's should have been of the conquest of their capital. I use

Google Maps and the maps that I constructed to calculate the distances. I will note if necessary the instances where a body of water separates the dyads, which occurs in three dyads in the two domination seeking periods (Oda and Ōtomo, Hideyoshi and Chōsogabe, Hideyoshi and Shimazu)

Rivalry: Scholarship on the subject of international rivalries still debates the sources of rivalry, but contiguity is widely argued to be one of the main causes. A link between rivalries and contiguous states is supported by work in the rivalry pieces by scholars such as John Vasquez and Karen Rasler and William Thompson.³⁵³ Vasquez details how territorial disputes are a significant determinant of conflict, particularly between contiguous states. Vasquez states that most rivalries are between neighbors and appear related to territorial disputes.³⁵⁴ This project shares this belief

One of the primary concerns in the literature on rivalries has been to identify rivalries in order to know the domain of cases that should be studied.³⁵⁵ There are two general approaches to this. One is the dispute-density approach, which identifies rivalries *ex post facto* by counting the number of disputes within a certain, arbitrary time frame, for instance two wars in two decades.³⁵⁶ The second approach has been the interpretive approach, which looks to see who states leaders regard as rivals.³⁵⁷ Due to the paucity of sources from Warring States Japan that may aid in using the interpretive approach, this project will use the dispute-density approach. The conflict-time period threshold used to establish that a rivalry exists between great powers will be two wars in ten years.

³⁵³ Vasquez 1995, 1996; Rasler and Thompson 2000, 2006.

³⁵⁴ Vasquez 1996, 535.

³⁵⁵ Thompson 2001, 558.

³⁵⁶ Bennett 1996, 1998; Diehl and Goertz 2000; Wayman 2000; Maoz and Mor 2002.

Additionally, great powers co-habiting the same region will be categorized as rivals, since their proximity and interest in expansion should make them natural competitors for land.

Tasks 7 & 8: Balance of Power Theory Independent Variables

High Distribution of Power: For measuring capabilities, a level of power which can be said to trigger balancing should be explicitly stated. It could be argued that great powers simply balance the leading state, but the uncertainty of knowledge of power levels and the possibility of several leading powers with approximately equal levels of power would then predict that the great powers would shift alliances much more frequently than they actually do in the real world to synchronize balancing actions with every minor adjustment in the distribution of power. Rather, it is more likely that a leading power would need to make a large gap in the distribution of power between it and the other great powers in order to trigger balancing. For this purpose, the analysis of Levy and Thompson, will be used to gain an explicit “trigger point” to test balancing in the capabilities hypothesis. In their wide-ranging statistical study of balancing in Europe between 1495 and 1999, they concluded that great powers are significantly likely to form a balancing coalition against the leading power when it holds a high disproportion (operationalized as 33%) of the system's military capability.³⁵⁸ Therefore, the balancing or alternative forms of behavior should be triggered when the domination seeker achieves 33% of the system's military power.

³⁵⁷ Thompson 2001; Vasquez 1993; Huth et al. 1992; Levy 1999.

³⁵⁸ Levy and Thompson 2005, 30.

Intent to Dominate the System: Since power is operationalized as the amount of territory under one warlord's control, we must be careful not to conflate the measure of power with the intent to dominate by stating that the intent to dominate the system can be recognized by conquering territory. Conquering territory can be a manifestation of intending to dominate the system, but it could also be the result of a goal that is smaller in scope. An actor can conquer territory and then stop short of trying to dominate the whole system because he has become satisfied with the amount under his control, he has conquered a specific strategic piece of land or a resource, or he has trouble consolidating power and has become worried about overextension.

The intent to dominate should be operationalized by taking advantage of the qualitative method of this project. Intent will be seen to exist if an actor takes a preliminary step that is widely seen as being necessary to dominate or explicitly states that he seeks to dominate the system. In the case of Warring States Japan, the warlords saw occupying the capital of Kyoto as necessary to establish a hegemonic order, because if one controlled Kyoto, then one controlled the Emperor, who was the only legitimating device in the system, although the Emperor's word was respected very little and military power was of a much greater necessity. Statements exposing intent to dominate will also be discussed where pertinent.

This task is more complicated in the case of regional balancing, as will be covered in the next chapter. There are no obvious places to occupy like Kyoto at the regional level so we will need to rely on any statements that show intent to dominate.

Tasks 9 & 10: The Values of the System-level Dependent Variables

Hegemonic Order: Adam Watson defines a hegemon as a “power or authority in a system [who] is able to ‘lay down the law’ about the operation of the system, that is to determine to some extent the external relations between member states, while leaving them domestically independent.”³⁵⁹ Due to the feudal nature of the empirical case, a hegemonic relationship will be said to exist when a warlord formally submits to a more powerful lord and performs tasks on his behalf – it is paramount to overlordship. A hegemonic order is thus a system in which a hegemon exists and is able to establish overlord relations and spread his authority across the system, or to at least across a very high proportion of the system.

Balance of Power: Defined in Chapter 3 as the “particular distribution of power among the states of that system such that no single state and no existing alliance has an ‘overwhelming’ or ‘preponderant’ amount of power,”³⁶⁰ a balance of power will be operationalized as an absence of a hegemonic order.

Task 11: The Great Power Warlords (the units of the analysis)

Great Power: A great power was defined earlier as a unit in an international system with a relatively high level of military capabilities, self-sufficiency in security, and the ability to project military power beyond their borders. Additionally, the interests and objectives of great powers are system-wide, and they defend these interests more aggressively than lesser powers; they are involved in a disproportionate number of alliances and wars as

³⁵⁹ Watson 2009, 15.

³⁶⁰ Zinnes 1967, 272; Sheehan 1996, 4.

well as in international negotiations and organizations. Furthermore, great powers are perceived as such by other great powers and lesser units. Finally, great powers are further identified as such by formal criteria, such as through recognition in international organizations, institutions, and treaties.³⁶¹

In addition to having a measure of power, we must also identify the great powers during the period, 1467-1590. Sansom identifies 23 powerful warlords at the mid 16th century; the list is comprised of the Yūki, Nanbu, Date, Ashina, Hōjō, Satomi, Imagawa, Uesugi, Takeda, Asakura, Saitō, Hosokawa, Chōsogabe, Ōuchi, Mōri, Amako, Yamana, Ukita, Ryūzōji, Arima, Ōmura, Ōtomo, and Shimazu clans.³⁶² More warlords join the list of the powerful later. From these possible candidates, we will choose those who fit the profile of great powers, using the criteria from Levy's (1983) definition.

Levy implies that some of these criteria are more important than others, and that military capability and projection, and system-wide interests and objectives are the most important (1983, 18).

Using this definition, great power status will be operationalized in the following manner: First, a warlord must have a certain level of military power. Since military power is operationalized here as the area of territory under control, a warlord must control at least 8,000 km² of territory to qualify as a great power. This floor is based on Nobunaga having approximately 8,500 km² of territory under his control in 1568 when he decided he was sufficiently prepared to march over the lesser clans that blocked his path to Kyoto. He held only two provinces and a small part of a third at the time. Imagawa Yoshimoto, the first warlords from outside of Central Japan to attempt to march onto Kyoto, held

³⁶¹ Levy 1983, 16-18.

³⁶² Sansom 1961, 248.

9500 km² of territory when he made his attempt in 1560. Nobunaga fit the other requirements of the definition above – he had systemic interests, he was involved in a disproportionate number of wars, and he was involved in alliance negotiations with two obvious candidates for great powers, Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin. Since he fits several requirements, and he held territory that was still less than the other great warlords, it seems reasonable to mark his territorial area at the time, which was less than the other obvious candidates in 1568, as the territorial lower limit for great power status.

This eliminates Sansom's list the smaller northern warlords, the Yūki, Date, Ashina, Satomi clans, as well as the western Ukita, Arima, Ōmura clans, all of which held relatively small holdings compared to their greater neighbors. The Saitō of Mino Province controlled less than what Nobunaga did when moved onto Kyoto. Even though they are the warlord clan in Central Japan who first balanced Nobunaga, the Asakura will also be excluded for controlling only one province, not enough for the cut-off. The Yamana clan of the area east of Kyoto was one of the two most powerful clans in the shogunate before 1467, but they declined quickly after the Ōnin War, particularly in later years at the hands of the Amako clan. The Ryūzōji on Kyushu come close to being included as great powers; they became powerful beginning in the 1570s, but their leader Ryūzōji Takanobu was killed in battle with a Shimazu army in 1584 and the clan never recovered. The Shimazu soon defeated the Ōtomo clan and took over as the local dominant power on Kyushu.³⁶³

Second, great powers must be involved in a disproportionate number of wars, must be self-sufficient in fighting, and must projected military power outside its borders. Most of the warlords in the Sengoku Period were almost constantly involved in wars and

were relatively self-sufficient. Probably all warlords could send troops outside of their borders, but how far depends on their neighbors. Weak warlords could not send troops far, but even some candidates for great power status would not send their troops far because their rivals would invade their home province. These criteria do not narrow down the list.

Third, a warlord should have systemic interests, form alliances with other powerful actors, and receive recognition as a great power. While this is difficult to show in this case, any opportunity to show an interest in systemic affairs that is turned down in favor of isolationism is a sign that a warlord does not have systemic interests.

Additionally, a great power will have created an alliance with another powerful warlord (though not necessarily another great power) within the past ten years. Moreover, it will be taken into account if a warlord is shown recognition as an equal by a great power.

Here, I will make an additional cut. The Nanbu of the northernmost part of the main island of Honshu controlled a vast amount of territory, but the northern lands, especially where the Nanbu were located, were sparsely populated and contained less resources so that the amount of territory they held was not the same as that of others to the south.³⁶⁴

Perhaps more importantly, the Nanbu do not appear much in the historical accounts of this period and apparently showed little interest in systemic events, being sufficiently satisfied with their territories in the far north which few others showed any interest in. For these reasons, and since there would be little or nothing gained from investigating them, I will exclude them from the group of great power warlords. The powerful warlords of Kyushu present a similar problem – they had little interest in systemic events in

³⁶³ Elisonas 1991b, 344-345.

³⁶⁴ Sansom 1961, 283.

Central Japan – but I include the Ōtomo and Shimazu clans because Kyushu was a more important and richer frontier than northern Honshu as the door to foreign trade and contact with foreigners.

The unifiers themselves naturally qualify as great powers during their respective case studies. Nobunaga is considered a great power from 1567 until his death. In 1567, he captured large Mino Province to his north, communicated with Ashikaga Yoshiaki regarding a march to Kyoto, and received congratulations on his Mino conquest as well as, one could argue, respect as an equal from Uesugi Kenshin.³⁶⁵ These events show military capability and projection, system-wide interests, and recognition from others as a great power. Upon Nobunaga's death in 1582, Hideyoshi is considered a great power as the head of a large army and as one of the top two Oda generals.

The remaining great power warlord clans, the Hōjō, Imagawa, Uesugi, Takeda, Hosokawa, Chōsogabe, Ōuchi, Mōri, Amako, Ōtomo, and Shimazu clans, qualify as great powers during some portions of the period 1467-1590 because they pass the criteria. Additionally, I will include as great powers the Miyoshi clan, who are not on Sansom's mid-16th century list. After 1551, the Miyoshi supplanted their overlords the Hosokawa as the most powerful clan in Kyoto until Nobunaga arrived in 1568.

³⁶⁵ Darling 2000, 112.

The list of great power warlords for the three time periods covered in the next three chapters then is as follows:

Table 4.1 – List of Warring States-era Great Powers

<u>1467-1568:</u>	<u>1568-1582:</u>	<u>1582-1590:</u>
Hosokawa 1467-1493	Nobunaga	Hideyoshi
1542-1551	Takeda	Mōri
Miyoshi 1551-1568	Uesugi	Shibata
Uesugi 1467-1520	Hōjō	Ieyasu
1551-1568	Mōri	Chōsogabe
Ōuchi 1467-1551	Ōtomo	Shimazu
Amako 1540-1561		Hōjō
Takeda 1550-1568		
Imagawa 1550-1560		
Mōri 1555-1568		
Hōjō 1555-1568		
Ōtomo 1555-1582		

Great Power Rivalries

Now that we have identified the great powers, we can also identify the great power rivals, those warlords with repeated conflicts. These warlord rivalry pairings all surpassed the threshold of two conflicts over a decade, as they consistently fought with each other every few years. Citations are also provided below where historians identify the pairs as rivals or “traditional enemies.”

In the pre-1568 empirical chapter, I will investigate the balance of power in two regions, the eastern Kanto and the Western Honshu/northern Kyushu regions.

The great power rivalries for pre-1568 case (1467-1568) are: the three-way Hōjō-Takeda- Uesugi rivalry in the Kanto region;³⁶⁶ and the Ōuchi-Ōtomo, Ōuchi-Amako,

³⁶⁶ Sansom 1961, 275.

Mōri-Ōtomo, and Mōri-Amako rivalry dyads in the west (the Mōri took over the Ōuchi territories in 1554 and subsequently took their place in their rivalries).³⁶⁷

The great power rivalries for the Nobunaga case (1568-1582) are: the three-way Hōjō-Takeda- Uesugi rivalry in the Kanto region, and the Mōri-Ōtomo dyad in the west (the Amako ceased to be great powers.

There are no great power rivalries for the Hideyoshi case (1582-1590).

³⁶⁷ Sansom 1961, 283; Toyama 1975, 45-50, 308; Elisonas 1991b, 315. 327.

Chapter 5 – Warring States Japan Before 1568

In this chapter I will lay down justification for the international system analogy for Warring States Japan by describing the system as an anarchic system of independent rulers and then I will describe the nature of the anarchic system that existed for 100 years before Nobunaga's entry into Kyoto in 1568. For regional cases such as this to fit as a test for balance of power theory, three conditions must be met. First, there must be a lack of central rule over the system. Second, the system should consist of armed, autonomous units. Third, the regional system must either be isolated from the outside world to the degree that powerful actors outside of the system cannot affect the decisions of the actors inside of the region, or the regional system should contain the international system's most powerful actors. We will check to see if these conditions are met in order to test IR theories with this case.

Then it must be established whether a balance of power existed among the warlords prior to the beginning of Nobunaga. Was there a balance? Was it fortuitous? Did it require the deliberate efforts of warlords? Were there regional balances? Moreover, a background history of the Warring States period will be provided in order for the reader to be familiarized with this period of Japanese history. Therefore, this chapter shall serve both as a historical background description and an exploration of the balance of power prior to 1568 in addition to a justification for choosing the case to look into balance of power theory.

The plan of this chapter is as follows. First, we will briefly describe the historical origin of the Warring States period. Then we will explore the two halves of the first hundred years of the Warring States period. This will serve as the description of the

period and as the support for the contention that this was an anarchic system of independent units. Then we will analyze the systemic balance of power in two regional balances of power in the east and west to support for the argument that the warlords had balancing experience. This section will contain test of the balance of power hypotheses. Finally, we will offer a conclusion.

Preliminary Historical and Theoretical Discussion

The shoguns of Japan were the overlords of the warrior (*bushi*) class, the dominant class in Japanese society after the 12th century. The shogunal seat was hereditary; there were three separate shogun dynasties in Japanese history: the Minamoto (1192-1333), the Ashikaga (1338-1573), and the Tokugawa (1603-1868). The post of shogun was essentially a military dictatorship, representing the dominance of the warrior class over the emperor and the other classes. Interestingly, the shoguns did not abolish or supplant the emperors, as often occurred in other countries. Thus the emperors' line has thus been preserved since ancient times. The emperors however had no authority and no military capability to enforce decrees, though warriors sometimes sought rulings from the emperor that could add an Imperial stamp to their powerful military reputations. In the Warring States period discussed here, the emperors were often reduced to begging provincial warlords to send money for the upkeep of the Imperial palace and for accession and abdication ceremonies. The respect for the emperor ebbed and flowed. It was at its lowest perhaps in the Warring States period.

The origin of the Ashikaga shogunate dates back to 1333, when the Kamakura-area warlord Ashikaga Takauji helped Emperor Go-Daigo defeat the forces of the

Minamoto shogunate. The conflicting interests of these two leaders were soon apparent though; the emperor planned on restoring power to the Imperial throne while Takauji wanted to supplant the Minamoto shogunate with his own. After three tense years of mutual tolerance, Go-Daigo and Takauji and their supporters began fighting over control of Japan, a long war known as the War Between the Northern and Southern Courts (1336-1392) that drew in their successors as well. This war effectively split the warrior clans of Japan into two sides since several clans in western Japan joined the emperor's cause. Meanwhile, Takauji gained control of Kyoto and was crowned shogun by a puppet emperor of the northern court in 1338. The Ashikaga shogunal government spent its first 60 years amidst warfare and a divided nation. Its control of the provinces and governing institutions were incomplete and weak as a result. The Ashikaga had to rely on powerful provincial governors (*shugo*) to maintain authority.³⁶⁸ Control over the governors was incomplete however; during the civil war, some governors switched to the southern side. Even after the war, governors rebelled against the shogun and had to be put down. Ashikaga authority was most effective only in Central Japan.³⁶⁹ The origins of the Ashikaga shogunate in such a weak position vis-à-vis its provincial governors is important, since it laid the seeds for the split of Japan into the independent domains of the Warring States period.

Ashikaga power peaked at the turn of the 15th century during the reign of the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358-1408).³⁷⁰ During this time, the civil war ended and shogunal coffers subsequently increased. Yoshimitsu established trade with China which

³⁶⁸ Governors are also referred to as constables in the English literature.

³⁶⁹ Hall 1990, 206.

³⁷⁰ Varley 1967, 61.

brought riches and Chinese coins which became the official currency in Japan.³⁷¹ Japan experienced enough prosperity that some historians have termed this period the Muromachi Renaissance.³⁷²

After the death of Yoshimitsu the Ashikaga shogunate declined. Shogunal power came to be wielded more strongly by the office of deputy shogun (*kanrei*), a position similar to regent that also served as the head of a council of senior governors. The deputy shogun position was cycled between the three greatest governor houses, the Hosokawa, Hatakeyama, and Shiba clans (Hall 1990, 208). After Yoshimitsu's death, the next two shoguns were weak willed and the deputy shogun and the council of governors took on greater control. The sixth shogun, Yoshinori, planned on changing this however upon taking power. In an attempt to hold more personal control, he tried to transfer governors and influence succession in governor clans.³⁷³ His brash, dictatorial style clashed with the most powerful governors however, leading the head of one clan, Akamatsu Mitsusuke, to assassinate Yoshinori over dinner. From there, the authority of the shoguns over their administration quickly fell apart, restoring power to the deputy shogun and his rivals in the governor's council.³⁷⁴ As they began clashing over their own personal interests, the more distant provincial governors took less heed from Kyoto and began acting even more independently.

Warring States Japan was a period in which the Ashikaga shogunate's declining power finally hit rock bottom and ruling authority completely diffused into the provinces.

³⁷¹ Tanaka and Sakai 1977; Shoji 1990, 432-440. The China trade dwindled however in the 1450s as later shoguns lost interest. A few warlords continued their own trade thereafter, but these efforts largely ended by 1523, when a clash between the sailors of rival Japanese warlords in the Chinese port that accepted Japanese ships infuriated Chinese authorities, Elisonas 1991a, 238-239.

³⁷² Grossberg 1981.

³⁷³ Grossberg 1981, 45-46.

³⁷⁴ Varley 1967, 65-71, Arnesen 1979, 187.

The provincial governors and their deputies had always had a great degree of local autonomy, but this could be guided in principle from the shogunate in Kyoto.³⁷⁵

Moreover, the shogunate had been mostly successful in keeping the warlord houses from fighting each other. This was no longer possible after the Ōnin War. A scholar of Japanese history, Mary Elizabeth Berry, cites one contemporary source who wrote in 1477 that the shogunate was dead. Quoting from Berry, this diarist writes:

There is no obedience to shogunal commands in any of the nearby provinces – not in Ōmi, Mino, Owari, Tōtōmi, Mikawa, Hide, Noto, Kaga, Echizen, Yamato, or Kawachi....The provinces that receive the shogun's commands are only Harima, Bizen, Mimasaka, Bitchū, Bingo, Ise, Iga, Awaji, and the provinces of Shikoku. But even these are not obedient. Ordered to comply with shogunal commands in accord with the law and in keeping with their official appointments, the military governors there pay respect to the shogun. However, their deputies and other men of the land entirely withhold obedience. Thus, in effect, all of Japan is beyond the reach of the shogun's commands.³⁷⁶

The governors retreated from the fighting that devastated Kyoto to their provinces only for many to find their authority usurped by their deputy governors (*shugo-dai*), retainers, or independent samurai (*jizamurai*).³⁷⁷ Once they had consolidated power locally, these new leaders, beholden to no overlord or norms of propriety, began targeting their neighbors' territories for conquest. Thus began the Warring States period. The age of the Ashikaga shogun and his *shugo* passed, and that of the Sengoku daimyo was on the rise.

Warring States Japan in the Century Before Nobunaga

The story of the first century of the Warring States period describes the rise of a new group of provincial rulers known as Sengoku daimyo. The Sengoku daimyo took

³⁷⁵ Arnesen 1979, 185.

³⁷⁶ Berry 1994, 34-35.

³⁷⁷ Hall 1990, 226.

advantage of the decline in shogunal authority, which created a vacuum of power in the provinces. They were independent rulers, and they were new in the sense that their authority derived neither from Imperial authority nor from the shogunate, but from their own personal military power and the ruling structures that they themselves created. The last two decades before Nobunaga are additionally marked by the rise of a group of great powers, those who were able to substantially expand their territories. Rivalries existed in two regions, one in the east and the other in the west, between these great power warlord clans, and it is in this context which Nobunaga entered Kyoto in 1568 and began his attempt to unify the land. Aside from identifying that Japan was an anarchic, multistate system, the second task in this chapter is to identify the nature of the balance of power. Was it balanced, at the system level and in the two regions or rivalries identified in this chapter? If so, was the balance fortuitous, or did the great powers try to balance domination seeking? Was there any domination seeking?

Struggles for Power in Kyoto

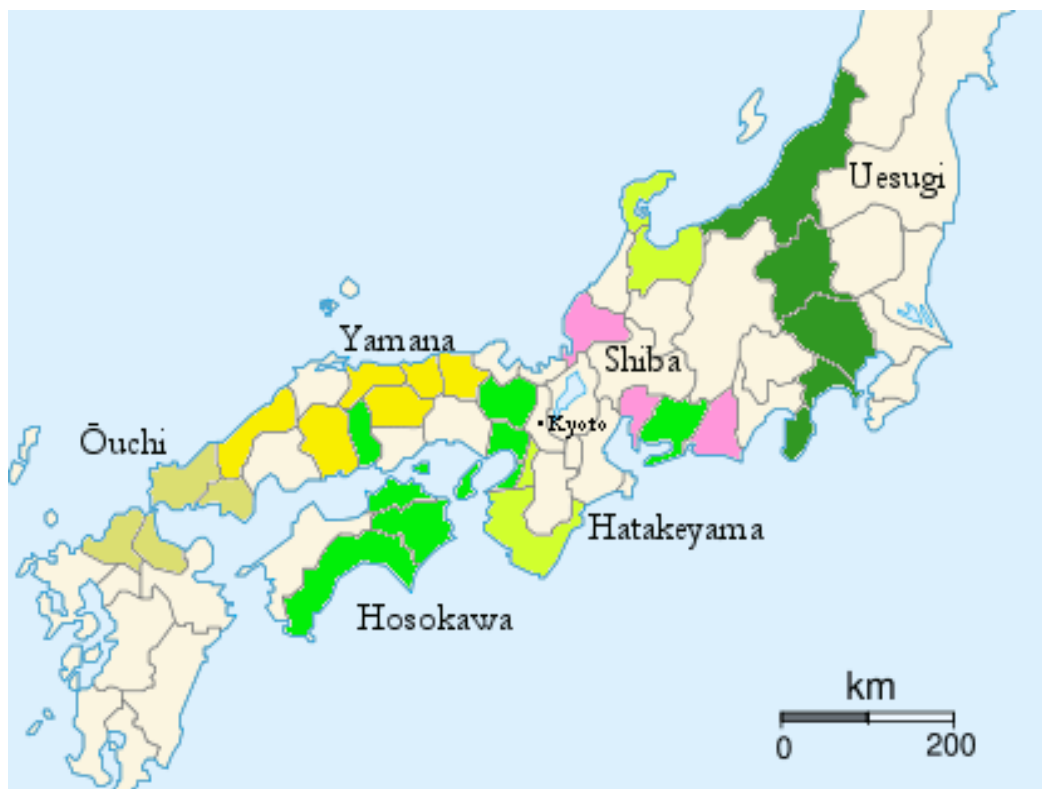
The first struggle for power in Kyoto was the Ōnin War (1467-1477), which set off the Warring States period. This war was the culmination of succession quarrels within three important houses, that of the Hatakeyama clan, the Shiba clan, and the shogunal dynasty itself, the Ashikaga.³⁷⁸ The Hatakeyama and Shiba clans each served as governors under the Ashikaga shogunate; the Hatakeyama governed four provinces at the time while the Shiba governed three provinces.³⁷⁹ The war started with the rift in the Hatakeyama clan between supporters of two rivals for succession of that clan, yet the

³⁷⁸ Varley 1967, 76.

³⁷⁹ Kodama 2008, 71.

conflict largely became a showdown between the heads of the two most powerful clans in Japan – the Hosokawa and Yamana clans, governors of nine and six provinces respectively.³⁸⁰ Figure 5.1 displays the widespread territories of the major warlord houses at the start of the Ōnin War. The unfilled spaces denote areas controlled by minor warlords. It should be noted that the far north was never brought under the Ashikaga's *shugo* governor system.³⁸¹

Figure 5.1 Japan at the Start of the Ōnin War, 1467



³⁸⁰ Kodama 2008, 71.

³⁸¹ Hall 1990, 204.

Prior to the Ōnin War, clan heads Hosokawa Katsumoto and Yamana Sōzen tried to reconcile differences stemming from their rivalry within the shogunal government. Katsumoto married Sōzen's daughter and adopted Sōzen's son as his heir. But this effort failed when Katsumoto supported the restoration of the Akamatsu clan, whose leader had assassinated Shogun Yoshinori in 1441. Yamana Sōzen had defeated the Akamatsu and had taken three of his six provinces from them. Needless to say, he did not want to give them back. But the Hosokawa felt threatened by the Yamana gains, which placed them on the western edge of Hosokawa territory.³⁸² Katsumoto then worsened matters by bearing a son and replacing his adopted son as heir with his own child.³⁸³ Katsumoto then tried to stall the continuing rise of the Yamana clan, and Sōzen responded by countering Hosokawa actions. Whereas during their brief attempt at alliance, when Sōzen and Katsumoto had taken the same opinion on the burgeoning Hatakeyama succession dispute, Sōzen now began to take the opposite side of Katsumoto on the Hatakeyama succession issue to prevent him from growing stronger in influence. Katsumoto and Sōzen then took opposite sides on the Shiba succession as well.

The crisis within the Ashikaga house was caused by the eighth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimasa, who wished to resign from the position of shogun. In 1464 his brother Yoshimi was brought in by Hosokawa Katsumoto to assist in his administrative affairs. Yoshimi was thus in a position to succeed his brother. However, a year later, Yoshimasa gave birth to a son, Yoshihisa. Yamana Sōzen threw his support behind Yoshihisa in order to oppose Hosokawa. This raised the level of the conflict between all, for the succession that mattered most was control over the seat of shogun itself. Meanwhile, the

³⁸² Varley 1967, 72-74.

³⁸³ Berry 1994, 18-19.

two sides in both the Hatakeyama and Shiba succession crises were already skirmishing in the early 1460s. Yoshimasa alternated between supporting each side based on the advice of competing advisors, Sōzen and Katsumoto.³⁸⁴ Sōzen and Katsumoto then started recommending to the shogun that the other be formally censured by the shogun. The Ōnin War finally started when the intraclan fighting of the Hatakeyama house spread to the capital. Yoshimasa ordered the Hosokawa and Yamana clans to stay out of the fighting, but in the truest sign of the shogun's ineffectiveness at this time, the order was ignored. Hosokawa and Yamana and the other two clans' sides formed into two great sides, and small skirmishes gave way to ever greater fighting involving tens of thousands of troops in the first half of 1467.

Though the Ōnin War lacked large scale movements of troops that were characteristic of battles later in the Warring States period, the large number of troops situated in the crowded capital nonetheless resulted in the destruction of the city. Troops resorted to burning buildings as a favorite tactic and looting was commonplace to supply troops. Battles between allies of the two sides broke out in the provinces, spreading the fighting throughout western and central Honshu.³⁸⁵ The fighting raged on for over ten years and destroyed two-thirds of Kyoto. The original provocateurs, Hosokawa Katsumoto and Yamana Sōzen, both died in 1473 but still war raged on for four more inconclusive years. It only ended when the armies of both sides burned their strongholds and withdrew to their home provinces in 1477; the Hatakeyama fighting continued on in their provinces.³⁸⁶ After the Ōnin War, the Hatakeyama and Shiba clans were weak

³⁸⁴ Berry 1994, 20-25.

³⁸⁵ Berry 1994, 26-30.

³⁸⁶ Berry 1994, 33-34.

enough from their succession disputes that the deputy shogun post became essentially a Hosokawa position.³⁸⁷

The next conflict in Kyoto followed directly upon another disputed succession in the Ashikaga shogunate. The main character in this action was the new deputy shogun, Hosokawa Masamoto, son of Katsumoto. The shogun at this time was the tenth Ashikaga shogun, Yoshitane, nephew of the Ōnin War-era shogun Yoshimasa. Masamoto had favored another Ashikaga for succession to the shogunal seat; his original opposition however led Shogun Yoshitane to alternate the deputy shogun position between Masamoto and one of the Hatakeyama scions who had provoked the Ōnin War. Needless to say, Masamoto tired of his repeated removals from office and, fearing another removal in 1493, decided to overthrow the shogun and install his old favorite, Ashikaga Yoshizumi. This happened directly upon the quelling of a peasant uprising in Kyoto's province, Yamashiro; Masamoto squashed the uprising and then immediately sent his troops into Kawachi Province, where both Shogun Yoshitane and Hatakeyama were campaigning (in a continuation of the succession battles from 30 years before nonetheless). Hosokawa forced the suicide of Hatakeyama and captured the shogun, who was brought back to Kyoto a prisoner, imprisoned for a time, and then forced into exile. Meanwhile, Masamoto's favorite, Yoshizumi, became shogun at age 14.³⁸⁸ This would set a new low for lawlessness with attacks upon the shogun himself becoming a norm in future coups.³⁸⁹

Within a decade and a half, Masamoto himself was the object of overthrow attempts from within the Hosokawa clan and its vassals in the Hosokawa succession

³⁸⁷ Arnesen 1979, 200.

³⁸⁸ Berry 1994, 48-50.

battles of 1507-1508. Having made the error of adopting two sons from different families as heirs, Masamoto became embroiled in attempts by the rival supporters of these sons to replace him as deputy shogun. In 1507, the oldest adopted son and his supporters succeeded when they then attacked and assassinated Masamoto at his home. This son only held Kyoto for a month however as the other adopted son soon overcame and dispatched him. This son was only to last nine months however, before he was forced out of Kyoto in 1508 by Ōuchi Yoshioki, the most powerful warlord in western Japan, and the governor of Izumi Province, Hosokawa Takakuni. Shogun Yoshizumi was also forced out and the former shogun Yoshitane, who had originally requested help from Ōuchi, returned to the shogunate as Ōuchi and Takakuni's puppet.³⁹⁰ Takakuni was made deputy shogun (neither of the two adopted Hosokawa sons had lived long enough to have been declared deputy shogun) and Ōuchi was given the governorship of Yamashiro.³⁹¹

In Kyoto in 1521, troubles brewed once again between the shogun and his deputy. The deputy shogun, Hosokawa Takakuni, kicked Shogun Yoshitane out of Kyoto and installed a new puppet shogun, Yoshiharu. Yoshitane died two years later, seemingly leaving Takakuni in a secure position. But succession battles in the powerful Hosokawa house restarted after two decades in 1527. Takakuni came under attack from yet another disaffected Hosokawa clan member, Hosokawa Harumoto, and Ashikaga Yoshitsuna, the adopted son of the former shogun Yoshitane. Takakuni fled Kyoto with Yoshiharu but the two did not give up the shogunate. Meanwhile, Yoshitsuna assumed the role of the shogun, though he retreated with Harumoto and other supporters to the market town of Sakai near Osaka. Thus there was a period of dual (and dueling) shogunates from 1527

³⁸⁹ Berry 1994, 77.

³⁹⁰ Arnesen 1979, 216.

until 1532, with neither shogun reigning in Kyoto or having any effective power. In 1532, both Hosokawa Harumoto and Yoshiharu ditched their respective partners to join forces. The Kyoto citizenry, fed up at this point, took control of the city along with militant Buddhists and ran the capital from 1532 until 1536, when the deputy shogun, now Harumoto, and Shogun Yoshiharu restored shogunal authority over the city.³⁹²

Harumoto faced frequent rebellions from various challengers however. He even split with Shogun Yoshiharu, who left Kyoto again and took up with warlords rebelling against what was nominally his own administration. In the midst of this split, Yoshiharu resigned from the shogunate in 1546 in favor of his ten year old son, Yoshiteru. One of Harumoto's vassals, a warlord named Miyoshi Nagayoshi (also known as Chōkei), in the end betrayed the Hosokawa clan and successfully drove all parties out of the capital in 1549.³⁹³ The retired shogun Yoshiharu died a year later and Harumoto and the young Shogun Yoshiteru continued fighting Nagayoshi. The two sides fought a see-saw battle over control of Kyoto until 1553, when Nagayoshi forced Harumoto to suicide and exiled Yoshiteru from Kyoto for five years. He did not appoint his own shogun, but instead appointed a Hosokawa clan member as a puppet deputy shogun. The citizens of Kyoto again suffered greatly through the fighting of this period.³⁹⁴

The last power grab before Oda Nobunaga entered the capital in 1568 was the assassination of the shogun by Matsunaga Hisahide and the so-called Miyoshi Triumvirs in 1565. When Shogun Yoshiteru was allowed to return to Kyoto in 1558 he attempted to restore a certain degree of power to the shogunate, though he did this with trepidation

³⁹¹ Berry 1994, 50-51.

³⁹² Berry 1994, 145-167.

³⁹³ Imatani 2007, 151-164.

³⁹⁴ Berry 1994, 221-224.

under Miyoshi Nagayoshi. He did this by confirming Sengoku daimyo, those warlords who had conquered their way to warlord status, as governors of the provinces they had conquered. One example is the confirmation of the Mōri clan as governor of five provinces in western Honshu in the early 1560s.³⁹⁵ He received visitors from warlords such as Uesugi Kenshin, who promised to champion the shogun's cause and help restore order and shogunal authority. He even received a visit from Nobunaga in 1559, after he had finished consolidating power over his clan.³⁹⁶

When Nagayoshi died in 1564, his adopted son Miyoshi Yoshitsugu succeeded him with the help of his guardians, known as the Miyoshi Triumvirs. It was Nagayoshi's vassal however, a warlord named Matsunaga Hisahide, who exercised the most power. When Yoshiteru began making trying to take more power after Nagayoshi's death, Matsunaga and the Miyoshi Triumvirs decided to replace him with a distant cousin. They gathered an army and attacked the shogun's residence in Kyoto. The shogun, with his marginal bodyguard, could only offer a token defense before committing suicide. His brother and closest relative, Ashikaga Yoshiaki, fled the city and began a crusade around the provinces to find a champion to lead him back to Kyoto; he would eventually find one in Nobunaga. The new strongmen of Kyoto, Matsunaga, Miyoshi Yoshitsugu, and the Triumvirs, soon fell out with each other and started fighting. Adding to the confusion and lack of authority, the Ashikaga puppet with whom they intended to replace Yoshiteru never reached Kyoto until 1568; he was shogun only half a year before dying of disease as Nobunaga's army entered Kyoto. Matsunaga and the Miyoshi clan were not able to settle their differences and Nobunaga entered the capital relatively easily.

³⁹⁵ Ike 2009, 154.

³⁹⁶ Lamers 2000, 41-43.

Transformation in the Provinces

With the situation in the capital appearing to be nothing more than an endless stream of succession disputes and powerless shoguns, the most important transformation in Japan was occurring in the provinces. The first part of the Warring States period saw the emergence of the Sengoku daimyo, the new provincial warlords who ruled independently of the shogunate. The Sengoku daimyo were both the overlords of their own feudal organization and also the rulers over their territorial domain and its inhabitants. As a result of the breakdown of shogunal authority, most of the governors who held positions in the shogunate abandoned Kyoto and returned to their provinces to guard their own positions.³⁹⁷ The provincial governors, their deputies (*shugo-dai*), the militant Buddhists, and the independent samurai (*jizamurai*) saw that military prowess was the effective law of the land. Governors turned back to their provinces and some of those who had spent much of their time in Kyoto returned to find that their deputies or the *jizamurai* had upended their rule. These new leaders as well as the governors who succeeded in retaining power in their provinces became known as Sengoku daimyo.³⁹⁸ Once they had established and consolidated their power locally, the new Sengoku daimyo began attacking neighboring warlords and temples to add to their territory. In some provinces, the attacks and lack of authority often led to massive peasant uprisings (*ikki*).³⁹⁹ In some instances, these *ikki*, often in concert with Buddhist militants or *jizamurai*, were able to accomplish self-rule in their areas. The most impressive example of this occurred in Kaga Province, in which an *ikki* mixed with members of the True Pure

³⁹⁷ Arnesen 1979, 189-190; Hall 1990, 229.

³⁹⁸ Kawai and Grossberg 1977, 80-83.

³⁹⁹ *Ikki* though were not restricted to this time period. They had occurred in the 15th century as well as during the later *Edo* period, Sansom 1961, 207; Tsang 2007, 3.

Land Buddhist sect (together known as *Ikkō ikki*) were able to cast off warlord rule. The *Ikkō ikki* ruled the province with the head of the sect acting as the effective daimyo of the province.⁴⁰⁰ These were all examples of the general decline in feudal values that has been termed *gekokuujō*, meaning the lesser overtaking the greater or the “low oppressing the high.”⁴⁰¹

The first century of the Warring States period can thus be seen as a process of diffusion of power, with a breakdown of most of the large and often non-adjacent governor-held territories into smaller territories. As power spread out from Kyoto to the provinces, the number of daimyo increased to well over 200. Meanwhile, the number of governors was probably no more than 25 clans in 1467.⁴⁰² The most powerful clan in the Ashikaga shogunate, the Hosokawa, was mostly able to hold on to their lands in the central region and provide a little stability to the capital region.⁴⁰³ Since their territories were closer to Kyoto, they had been more able to perform their services in Kyoto while maintaining control over their lands. This is something that a clan with more distant and spread-out holdings like the Shiba clan could not do. The situation was different for clans like this with more distant provinces as well as those for whom the provinces they were (nominally) in charge of were unfamiliar.⁴⁰⁴ The maps in Figures 5.2 to 5.4 display the trend of this period. They feature the more powerful warlord houses of the period which are referenced in this chapter. We can see most of the major powers from the Ōnin War era becoming weaker and losing their territories, with new powers rising to replace them.

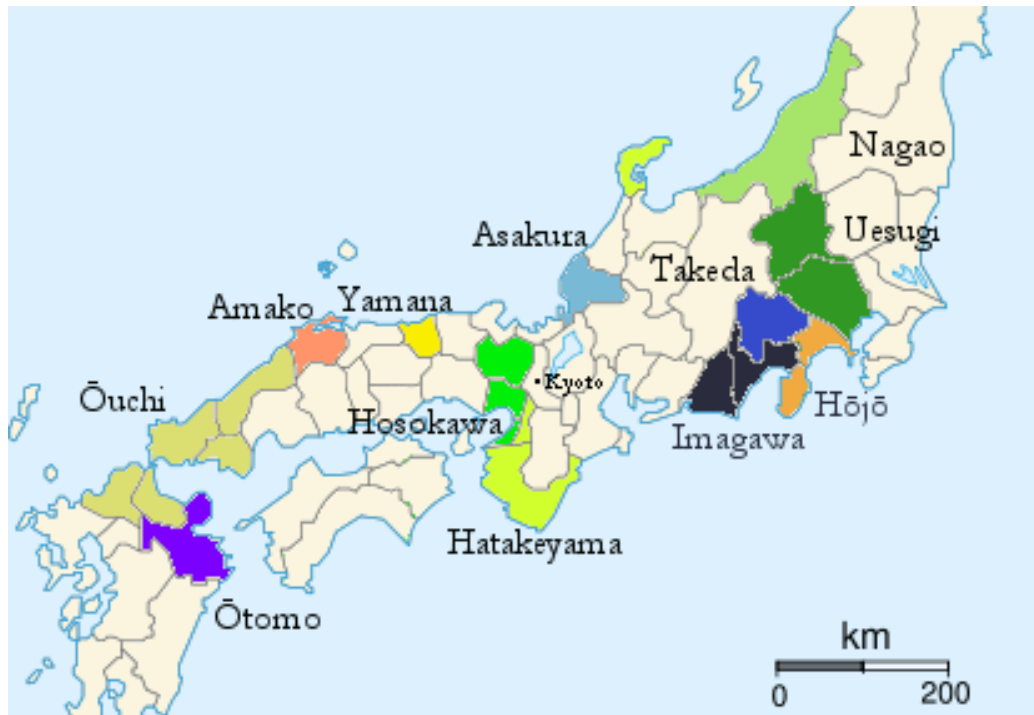
⁴⁰⁰ Berry 1994, 38-41; Tsang 2007, 2-3, 197-199.

⁴⁰¹ Sansom 1961, 235.

⁴⁰² Sansom 1961, 248; Kōta 2008, 25.

⁴⁰³ Hall 1990, 229.

Figure 5.2 – Japan, 1520



⁴⁰⁴ Hall 1990, 125.

Figure 5.3 – Japan, 1550

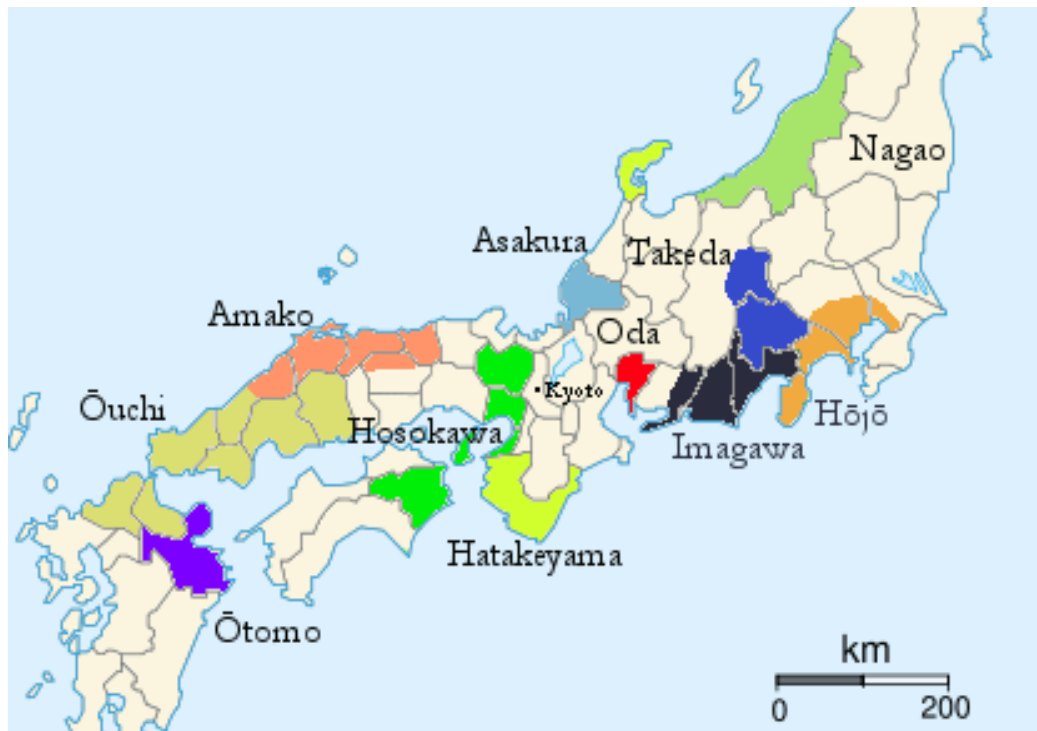
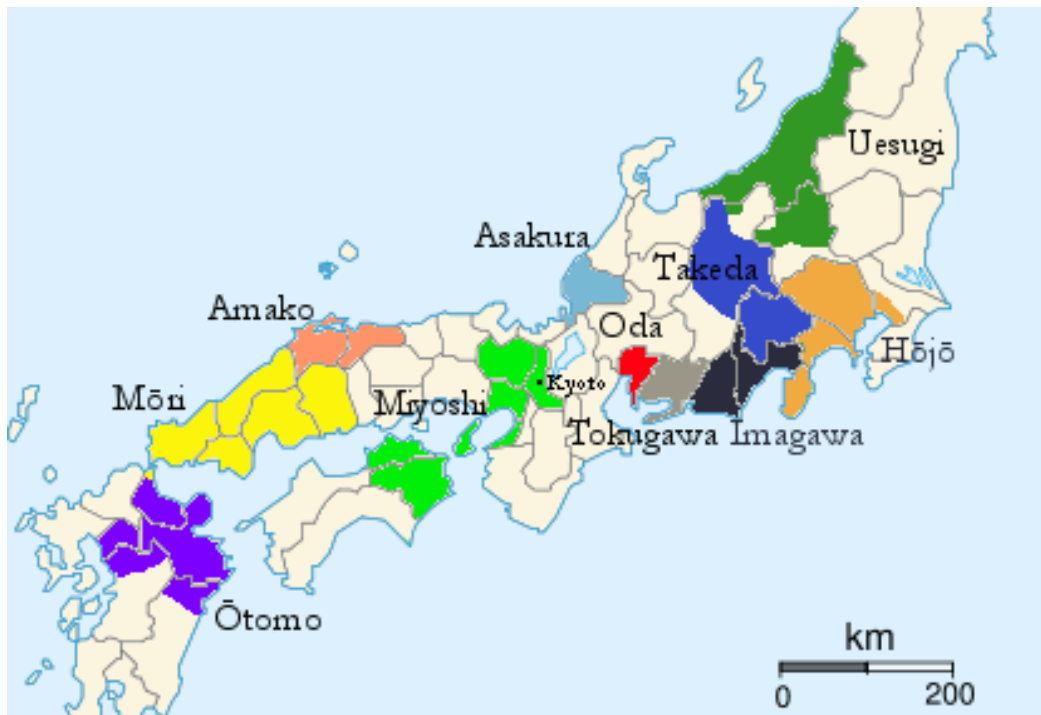


Figure 5.4 – Japan, 1561



The Shiba governed three provinces, Echizen, Owari, and Tōtōmi, before the Ōnin War. They were one of the three clans that traditionally cycled in the deputy shogun post and their duties in the shogunate required their presence in Kyoto. Their provinces were actually managed day-to-day by their deputy governors. In true *gekokuujō* fashion, two of the three deputies managed to cast off their Shiba lords and take control of their respective provinces.⁴⁰⁵ The Shiba were cast off in Echizen by their deputy, Asakura

⁴⁰⁵ Lamers 2000, 19-20.

Toshikage, just after the Ōnin War.⁴⁰⁶ In Owari, their deputies, the Oda clan, took over. This is where the future unifier, Oda Nobunaga, would begin his domination seeking. Meanwhile, Tōtōmi Province was taken by the neighboring Imagawa clan from the Shiba during the Ōnin War.⁴⁰⁷

Other examples of *gekokuujō* abound. We can see that the Hosokawa clan was eventually replaced in the mid-16th century by their vassals the Miyoshi, whose clan head Nagayoshi was prominent in battles over the hollow shogunate in the 1550s.⁴⁰⁸ One warrior in the late 15th century, Hōjō Sōun, left his position as a retainer in the central provinces and moved to the eastern provinces to join up with the Imagawa clan. After ingratiating himself with the Imagawa leadership, he was given a castle in Izu Province. He soon availed himself of an opportunity to take nearby Odawara Castle, and with a small band of loyal men he split from the Imagawa and began conquering nearby territory in the southern Kantō region. His son and grandson continued his work so that the Hōjō became one of the strongest clans in Japan by the 1550s, dominating the fertile Kantō plains region of modern day Tokyo.⁴⁰⁹

The Hōjō often battled against the Uesugi clan, which was then divided into two branches and was dominant in the Kantō plains. The Uesugi were an important clan in the Ashikaga shogunate – they were governors and the most important vassals of the *Kantō kubo*, a special Ashikaga deputy shogun for the eastern provinces, which were considered too distant for the shogunate in Kyoto to watch over. The *Kantō kubo* position faded out

⁴⁰⁶ Matsubara 2006, 68-73.

⁴⁰⁷ Owada 2004, 31-32.

⁴⁰⁸ Hall 1990, 229.

⁴⁰⁹ Nagahara 1975, 23-27; Suzuki 1988, 10-20. Historians also refer to the Hōjō clan as the Go-Hōjō, or Late Hōjō clan, to differentiate them from the earlier and unrelated Hōjō clan which ran the Kamakura shogunate (1185-1333) as regents during most of its duration. Hōjō was not Sōun's original surname. His

in the 1490s and the Uesugi became the main power holders in the region. As the Hōjō grew more powerful however, the Uesugi were pushed back and their branches declined until they were eventually absorbed by their own powerful vassal to the north, Nagao Kagetora of Echizen Province. Kagetora gave shelter to his Uesugi lord after he was routed by the Hōjō in 1551 and ten years later adopted the Uesugi surname and became the famous warlord, Uesugi Kenshin.⁴¹⁰ By this time he was already engaged in his famous rivalry with another neighbor, Takeda Shingen.

The Tokugawa clan (then known as the Matsudaira) reappears as daimyo after 1560 when they came out from under the shadow of the Imagawa clan. As we will read in the next chapter, the Imagawa were defeated by a young Oda Nobunaga in 1560. One of the officers in the Imagawa force was the future shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had been pressed into service with Imagawa against his will (Imagawa held some of his family as hostages). Upon Yoshimoto's defeat, Ieyasu claimed his freedom and went back to his home province of Mikawa to begin rebuilding his own clan and reclaiming their lands.⁴¹¹

In the west, the dominant Ōuchi clan was first upended by a vassal named Sue Harukata in 1551. He ruled over the Ōuchi territory for four years, but was rivaled within the clan by another powerful Ōuchi vassal, Mōri Motonari. After deciding that he needed to act to displace Sue before he himself was targeted, Motonari gathered forces of his clan and the two clans his sons ruled, the Kobayakawa and the Kikkawa, and attacked and defeated the Sue clan in a series of famous engagements in 1555, including one at the

son and successor changed the family name from Ise to Hōjō because the clan was new to the region, which included Kamakura, and he wanted to tie his clan to the earlier Hōjō regents.

⁴¹⁰ Sansom 1961, 241-246.

⁴¹¹ Totman 1983, 31.

sacred island of Miyajima, now a popular tourist site in the Inland Sea. The Mōri then took over the Ōuchi lands.⁴¹²

The Sengoku daimyo were new types of leaders who had to recreate their ruling institutions and legitimize their authority. Even if the daimyo were the old governors, they were now independent from Kyoto and thus still had to refashion their rule. Many warlords began to issue house codes for their vassals and legal codes for the domains. A warlord naturally needed military power most of all to maintain local authority, but many also saw the need to use house codes to provide justification for their rule to keep vassals and as many of the independent warriors in line as possible. These men, also known as *kokujin* (a term which is sometimes used synonymously with *jizamurai*), had become more independent as well in the 15th and 16th centuries as a result of the breakdown of the large feudal manor (*shōen*) system, which had dominated the landscape before the Muromachi period. Manors were large estates held by private land holders, often aristocratic imperial court officials or temples, and peasants were often coerced into working on them. The *shōen* system conflicted with the prerogative of the provincial warlords – both the pre-Ōnin War governors and the later Sengoku daimyo – to consolidate their authority and streamline taxation so both groups were took destroy it.⁴¹³ The *kokujin* gained direct control of land and the peasantry with the breakdown of the manors.⁴¹⁴ Men such as Hōjō Sōun and Asakura Toshikage had not ruled much of anything on their own before and thus they had to create a whole new structure to keep these men as well as their domainal inhabitants in line.

⁴¹² Ike 2009, 111-117.

⁴¹³ Totman 2005, 203-205.

⁴¹⁴ Arnesen 1979, 208; Nagahara 1990, 295-300.

The legal codes helped as well to justify rule over peasants and temples. It was also a representation of their independence from the shogunate and their identification as an individual entity separate from other domains.⁴¹⁵ Arnesen writes that the “appearance of daimyo law was perhaps the clearest single manifestation of the degree to which the Sengoku daimyo had begun to assume the role of prince within his own province.”⁴¹⁶ The Imagawa clan head wrote in 1526 that “the basis for rule over the *kuni* is not attained by being appointed *shugo* by the shogun. Control is achieved when the daimyo, by his own efforts, brings peace to the *kokka* by establishing the laws of the *kuni*.”⁴¹⁷ Warlord rulers used this word *kokka* to imply the marriage of the warlord’s house and the domain (*kuni*) he controlled; it is the equivalent of our modern meaning of the state. This mirrors the composite of the private (the house) and the public (the governing authority) spheres that the Ashikaga themselves created.⁴¹⁸

The law codes drew sharp distinctions between the warlord’s domain and those of other warlord’s. It was stated in many law codes that residents were forbidden from establishing ties with other domains, and that residents of other domains were subject to the domain law when visiting. Perhaps most concrete was the creation of standards, measures, and currencies for each domain. Exchange rates existed as well. Katsumata and Collcutt argue that the individual measures and currencies are “the clearest expressions of this sense of the autonomy and integrity of the domain.”⁴¹⁹ The creation of barriers between provinces facilitated the sense of independent states. Hall argues that the type of “states” that the feudal warlords formed in their domains constituted a form of revolution

⁴¹⁵ Katsumata and Collcutt 1981, 104, 113.

⁴¹⁶ Arnesen 1979, 194.

⁴¹⁷ Totman 2005, 206.

⁴¹⁸ Katsumata and Collcutt 1981, 112-113; Totman 2005, 206.

in ruling in Japan. Previously, the legitimacy of rule for *shugo* governors was derived from the shogun or the emperor. But now the warlords were invoking a new rationalization for their rule that was based on the “implied consent of the public will” and on protecting the “common good.” This justification had to be made to the domain’s inhabitants partly to accommodate the demands of the peasants and stave off *ikki* uprisings.⁴²⁰

Analyses of the Systemic Hypotheses

Regional domination seeking campaigns dominated Japanese inter-warlord politics during this century. There was no attempt made to unify the system, thus there was no system-level balancing. The Hosokawa clan and their successors the Miyoshi, dominated Kyoto and the broken shogunate but even this could be characterized as regional domination, focusing on the region surrounding Kyoto. In fact, the last Miyoshi interference in Kyoto which resulted in the assassination of Shogun Yoshiteru was performed in order to prevent the shogun from reclaiming old powers over the warlords. The Hosokawa and Miyoshi did not attempt nor did they have the power to dominate other warlords outside the Kyoto region. They were too weak from internal fighting and *gekokujo* rebellions to attempt any wider stab at hegemonic power (remember that the Miyoshi themselves came to power as a result of an overthrow of the Hosokawa). Here, we will analyze the system-level hypotheses (Hypotheses 3-5) to make sense of the nature of the systemic balance of power; we will leave analyses of the unit-level

⁴¹⁹ Katsumata and Collcutt 1981, 113.

⁴²⁰ Hall 1990, 227.

hypotheses which require domination seeking to the next section, in which we look at the domination seeking and balance of power dynamics in the eastern and western regions.

Balance of Power Hypothesis

Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

The Project's Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

Covering the last two hypotheses first, we can say that hypotheses 4 and 5 are not supported. There was no movement toward hegemony at the system level and the number of warlords did not contract during this period. In fact, the number of warlords increased at the start of this period after the Ōnin War as the multiple nonadjacent holdings of the powerful governors were broken up and taken over by their deputies and other powerful local warriors. A look back at Figures 5.2-5.4 show a certain degree of consolidation in the west where the Ōuchi ruled and in the eastern Kantō area where the Takeda, Uesugi, and Hōjō clans ruled but little consolidation in the rest of Japan. There were a great number of minor warlord houses, possibly between 200-300, until the 1550s-60s, when a

few powerful warlord houses started to expand and increase the power gap between them and the rest of the warlords.⁴²¹

Regarding the system-level prediction of balance of power theory, my first inclination is to say that Hypothesis 3 is supported in the period, 1467-1568 because no hegemonic order was formed over the system, but when we consider the end of the statement “due to the balancing mechanism,” I feel that we must draw back from saying that the hypothesis is supported. Because there were no attempts to create a system-wide hegemonic order, there were generally no system-level balancing attempts. Only once did a clan outside of the Hosokawa, their vassals (the Miyoshi), and other clans closely involved in the shogunate (the Hatakeyama) interfere in Kyoto affairs. This occurred in 1508, when Ōuchi Yoshioki came from the west to stop fighting over the shogunate and help one of the Hosokawa members install his puppet Ashikaga member as shogun. But Ōuchi Yoshioki did not attempt to establish a system-wide hegemonic order; he returned home on his own volition and never returned. This was not domination seeking nor a balancing attempt. It was infighting between warlords who perceived that the shogunate still was a working entity or that it was still necessary.

What is a balance of power if there are no attempts to dominate the system? This brings us to the distinction discussed in the English School literature of a fortuitous balance.⁴²² A fortuitous balance is a balance that exists before the creation of balancing norms that lead to a sustainable balance of power. It is considered to be fragile and easily overturned. This characterizes the balance of power in the Warring States Period before Nobunaga began his domination seeking in 1568. As we will see in the next two chapters

⁴²¹ Sansom 1961, 248.

⁴²² Little 2007b, 48.

covering Nobunaga's and Hideyoshi's domination seeking campaigns, it became apparent that there was widespread balancing norm and that the balance of power that existed previous to 1568 was indeed a fragile, fortuitous balance.

Regional Balances of Power

As the mid-16th century rolled around, a few powerful warlords began to distance themselves from the other 200 plus warlords in terms of power and territory. Using their house codes and personal military power to control ever larger bands of retainers and their legal codes for conscription, these warlords created larger armies which enabled them to expand into neighboring territories. Conquering territory led to controlling greater numbers of retainers, who either accepted the new leadership or were forced to exile or suicide. Totman states that Hōjō Sōun conquered Izu Province with an estimated 300 warriors in 1491 but by the mid-16th century, battles with 10-20,000 men to a side were common.⁴²³ The technology of warfare also changed. Castle fortresses became more common, which in turn led to improved siege warfare tactics (the unifier Toyotomi Hideyoshi was among the most innovative in this regard). Mounted men were on a long decline in favor of pike-carrying foot soldiers (though the Takeda cavalry was still a feared fighting unit). An additional, important development was the introduction of firearms from the Europeans. Several Portuguese sailors shipwrecked on Kyushu in 1542; soon primitive musket firearms known as arquebuses were being reproduced and in 1548 the first battle with arquebuses took place (though Turnbull states these were of Chinese origin).⁴²⁴ Cannon was also reproduced on a more limited scale – more cannons were

⁴²³ Totman 2005, 206; Sawada 2009.

⁴²⁴ Turnbull 2004, 211.

probably bought from European traders than were made in Japan. Though soldiers carrying arquebuses were included in most armies, they often fought in isolation from each other and thus firearms did not completely revolutionize Japanese warfare until Nobunaga's notable victory at Nagashino in 1575.

Clans such as the Hōjō, Takeda, and Uesugi clans in the east and the Mōri, Ōtomo, Amako clans in the west conquered large tracts of territory which brought them into conflict with each other. This led to two regional balances of major powers within the Japanese system. In the east there existed a balance between the Hōjō, Takeda, and Uesugi clans that was focused on the Kantō area surrounding modern day Tokyo and Hokuriku area along the Japan Sea coast. This will include the provinces that the three main rivals competed over: Echigo, Kōzuke, Musashi, Shinano, Kai, Sagami, and Izu (7 provinces, total area: 45,861.69 km²). We will refer to this as the Kantō region for simplicity's sake, though it should be clear this area is technically larger than the true Kantō plains region. The second balance occurred between the Mōri, Ōtomo, Amako clans in Western Honshu and the northern part of Kyushu. This will include the provinces of Hōki, Mimasaka, Bizen, Bitchū, Izumo, Bingo, Iwami, Aki, Nagato, Suō, Chikuzen, Buzen, and Bungo (13 provinces, total area: 43,789.38 km²). We will refer to this region as Western Japan. These balances are described using balancing logic by the historian Sansom.⁴²⁵ We will now explore each of these in more detail.

Balancing and Rivalry in the Kantō Region.

The balance in the Kantō centered on the great rivalry between Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin, formerly known as Nagao Kagekora. Shingen and Kenshin fought a

series of battles, occurring in 1553, 1555, 1557, 1561, and 1564, at a place called Kawanakajima in Shinano Province, all of which were fought to a draw. Despite the indecisiveness, these battles are legendary in Japanese history. Through the dramatization of these battles and the two leaders' antagonism on Japanese television specials, virtually every Japanese person knows of these two leaders' rivalry with each other. The battles at Kawanakajima should be considered balancing and not self-defense as Kenshin first confronted Shingen in response to pleas for help from Shinano warlords who had been attacked by Shingen. Aside from the battles at Kawanakajima, the two also sparred through proxies in Musashi and Kōzuke Provinces, sometimes along with the Hōjō clan, and in Etchū Province, where Takeda often incited minor daimyo to mount diversionary attacks on Kenshin's Echigo Province.⁴²⁶

The rivalry and balanced power between the two prevented either from launching a hegemony threatening drive to Kyoto. Sansom states that most of the powerful warlords had "visions of national hegemony" and that Takeda in particular had long intended to make a push to Kyoto.⁴²⁷ It is possible that Shingen wanted to do this, but Sansom offers no concrete evidence. Lamers notes that scholars have debated his motive for attacking Nobunaga and Ieyasu's forces in 1572; some argue that this was a regional expansion, while others state that the size of his army indicate a drive to Kyoto.⁴²⁸ It is known through primary sources (letters) however that Kenshin wished to launch a campaign to

⁴²⁵ Sansom 1961, 263, 275, 282-284.

⁴²⁶ Darling 2000, 88-90.

⁴²⁷ Sansom 1961, 273, 284

⁴²⁸ Lamers 2000, 214, n. 155.

Kyoto to restore Ashikaga rule after the murder of Shogun Yoshiteru, but he knew he could not with the threat of invasion from Shingen.⁴²⁹

The balance of power also included the third rival, the Hōjō clan. Much of the earlier Hōjō expansion under the second generation leader Hōjō Ujitsuna (1487-1541) had been at the expense of the older Uesugi clan, and as they were the expanding power, the Takeda joined with the Uesugi clan in balancing their rise in the 1520s and once again in the 1540s.⁴³⁰ In 1551, the Hōjō pushed the older Uesugi clan out of the Kantō region. The pursued Uesugi clan head sought refuge with his nominal vassals, the Nagao clan, whose head Nagao Kagetora adopted the Uesugi name ten years later and became Uesugi Kenshin. The balancing dynamics between these three clans resulted in multiple configurations of alliances: In 1554, a three-state alliance between the Hōjō, Imagawa, and Takeda clans resulted in Uesugi drawing together a counter balancing coalition of minor warlords from the area.⁴³¹

After a period in which he was not active in the Kantō but involved in neighboring Etchū, in 1560-61 Kenshin renewed the Uesugi-Hōjō rivalry by attacking deep into Hōjō territory, even laying siege to their largest castle in Odawara for two months. It was during this campaign on a quick venture to the old capital of Kamakura that he adopted the name Uesugi from his nominal lord, who had now been staying with him in Echigo for ten years. Kenshin's Odawara campaign struck the Hōjō clan hard. Kenshin came with a large army that included those of his minor warlord allies, and he managed to burn much of their capital of Odawara (though the castle was left intact) before withdrawing. Takeda Shingen reacted to threat this posed to his Hōjō ally by

⁴²⁹ Okuno 1960, 117-119; Taniguchi 2006, 56.

⁴³⁰ Darling 2000, 61, 87.

provoking allied forces in Etchū to once again hit the Echigo. Aside from using minor warlords in these cases, Shingen also urged *Ikkō ikki* forces in Etchū to attack the Uesugi. Shingen was the brother-in-law of the True Pure Land sect, Kennyō. After Uesugi withdrew from Odawara, he managed to maintain a hold on Hōjō castles in Musashi Province (and also managed to return to Shinano Province in time for his famous Fourth Battle of Kawanakajima with Shingen). In reaction to the Uesugi expansion, Hōjō Ujiyasu strengthened his alliance with Shingen through Shingen's adoption of one of Ujiyasu many sons and together they attacked Uesugi-held positions in Kōzuke and Musashi Province over the next few years.⁴³²

The Hōjō, Imagawa, and Takeda alliance lasted until 1567-68, when Takeda Shingen began attacking the Imagawa lands. The Imagawa were in a long decline caused by their loss to Oda Nobunaga in 1560 and the replacement of their capable leader, killed in the battle with Nobunaga, by an unskilled and unambitious son. They came under attack from Tokugawa Ieyasu to the west and Shingen to the north. This expansion against a common ally and into land that was very proximate to Odawara led Hōjō Ujiyasu to seek an alliance with Uesugi Kenshin. The two reached an agreement and Kenshin began hitting Takeda positions and allies. Takeda for his part began directly attacking the Hōjō in 1569. The rest of the history of the relations between these three great powers is continued in the next chapter. Figure 5.1 below summarizes the main balancing actions in the Kantō region in this period.

⁴³¹ Sugiyama 1965, 114, 138; Darling 2000, 67.

⁴³² Darling 2000, 73-84.

Table 5.1 – The Balance of Power in the Kantō Region

1520s – Hōjō expansion leads the Takeda to create a balancing alliance with the Uesugi clan.
 1545 – A multistate alliance including Uesugi and Takeda balance resurgent Hōjō expansion.
 1553 – Takeda Shingen's expansion into Shinano Province leads to balancing by Uesugi Kenshin (Nagao Kagetora), resulting in the Uesugi-Takeda rivalry.
 1554 – The Imagawa, Hōjō, and Takeda clans form an alliance and Uesugi balances by forming an alliance with regional minor warlords.
 1560-61 – Uesugi expansion into Hōjō lands leads to Takeda-Hōjō countermoves.
 1568-71 – Takeda attacks against the Hōjō lead to a Hōjō-Uesugi alliance.
 1571 – Giving in to Takeda attacks, the Hōjō quit the Uesugi alliance and join with Takeda.

Analyses of the Hypotheses

Balance of Power Theory's Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability.*

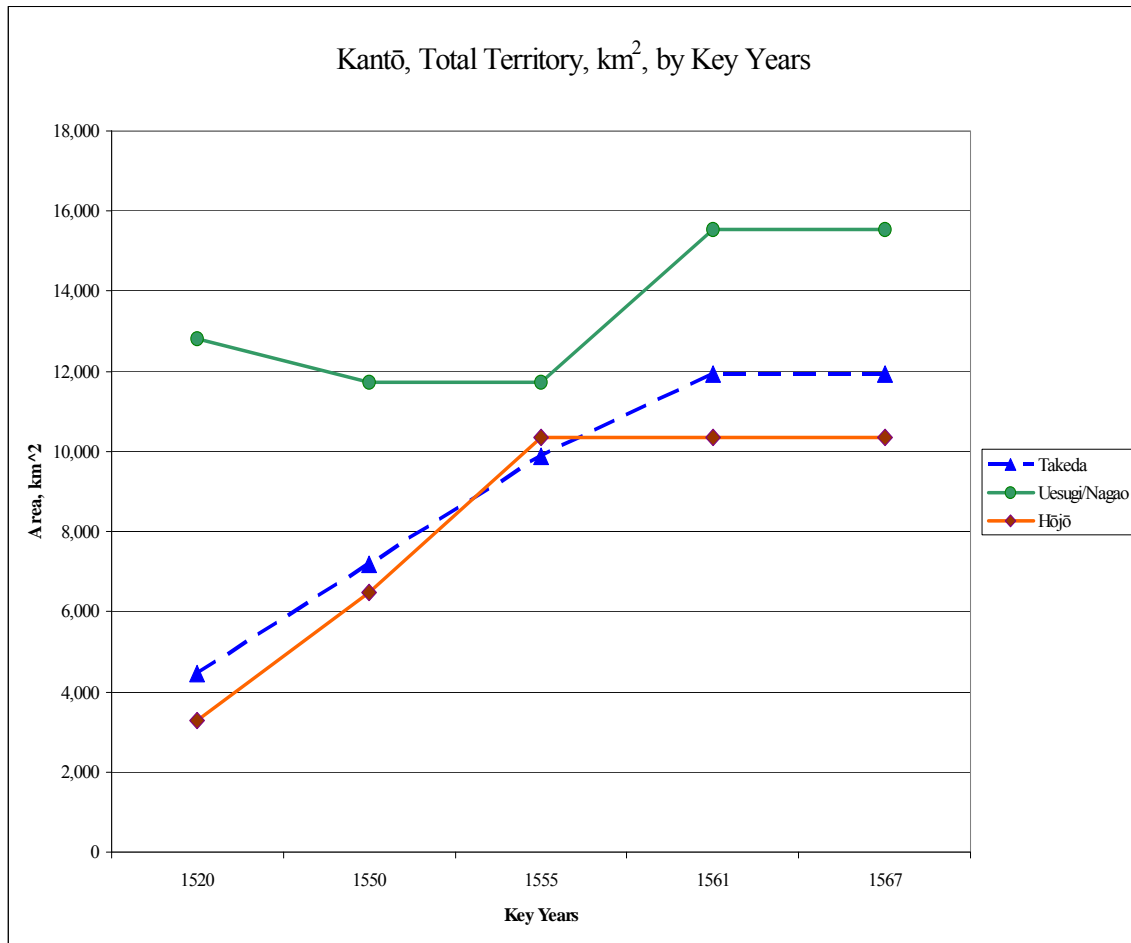
Hypothesis 2: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability and the great power or alliance displays a clear intent to dominate.*

Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

We can see from this short regional case study that the major powers in the Kantō performed balancing that adequately prevented the rise of a regional hegemon. On six occasions highlighted in Figure 5.5, expansion or aggression by one of the three rivals led to balancing from one or both of the others. It is not clear if any of the warlords had the intent to unify the whole region under a hegemonic order however, so we cannot test the distinction between Hypotheses 1 & 2. Nonetheless, we can see that both the system-level hypothesis and the general unit-level prediction of balance of power theory are strongly supported until the beginning of the 1570s, when the Hōjō clan began bandwagoning with the dominant Takeda clan.

Were the targets of balancing always the most powerful in the Kantō region? Could they lay claim to controlling a high disproportion (33%) of the region? Figure 5.5 shows the distribution of power (measured by territory) in the region.

Figure 5.5 - Distribution of Power in the Kantō



From Figure 5.5 we can see that the warlord with the most territory was the Uesugi. Given that all three powers were balanced against by combinations of the others, it is apparent the most powerful warlord was not always the focus of balancing from this way of measuring power. It does however make sense that Uesugi Kenshin was the target of balancing in the 1550s and early 1560s. But if we consider the fastest rising clans, the

ones that are most upsetting the status quo, as the ones who draw the focus of balancing efforts, then it makes sense that the Hōjō were the targets of balancing in the 1520s and 1540s (the Takeda-Uesugi alliance against the Hōjō) and that Uesugi Kenshin was the target of balancing in the late 1550s and 1560s. Still, the 1554 alliance between the Takeda, Hōjō, and Imagawa clans seems premature since both the Takeda and Hōjō clans were rising powers and therefore competitors. Overall, it is unclear whether the target of balancing is the greatest power or the fastest rising power.

It is not supported in this regional case that the target of balancing requires holding a high disproportion of the system's capability to cause trigger balancing. The region's total area is 45,861.69 km² and 33% of that is 15,287 km². If total area controlled by a warlord accurately measures power, then holding 33% of the region's territory was not necessary to trigger balancing. Only Uesugi Kenshin surpassed this threshold with his drive in Kōzuke Province in 1560-61. This indeed triggered Takeda-Hōjō balancing, but on all of the other balancing occasions against Uesugi, Hōjō, or Takeda passing this threshold was not necessary to trigger balancing.

Can we say that balancing was performed against the power with 33% of the system's capabilities if he did not hold intentions to dominate? Overall it is difficult to say for this case – the only evidence of intent is expansion, which due to the measure of power employed here is the same as increasing power. This would make an increase in capabilities equal to the existence of the intent to dominate. This problem was noted in Chapter 4, where it was stated that we need a distinct statement or sign of intent – taking Kyoto represents intent to dominate at the system-level. Unfortunately, there is no such

parallel in this region and no evidence of explicit statements of intent to dominate were uncovered. Therefore, we cannot say anything about this distinction here.

The Project's Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

The number of independent units in the region was reduced by the expansion of the three major powers. The Uesugi clan for instance, actually had two separate branches during the Warring States Period, the Yamanouchi and the Ōgigayatsu. However, both houses would perish due to Hōjō expansion. This left the Nagao clan to take over the Yamanouchi branch. Weak warlords who were pushed out by expansion often had to seek protection and become vassals of one of the other great powers. This was the fate of the Ogasawara, Murakami, Suda, and Takanashi clans of Shinano Province. Attacks from Takeda Shingen drove them to the Uesugi clan for protection. Some Shinano clans, such as the Suwa, Nishina, and Kiso, were defeated and forced to become Shingen's vassals while yet other clans, such as the Sanada, willingly joined the Takeda as vassals.⁴³³ However, it is hard to say that Hypothesis 5 is supported because a rough balance was maintained between the three major powers – the system did not verge toward a hegemonic order headed by any one of the three powers.

⁴³³ Ikegami et al. 1995, 702-710.

Hypothesis 6: *The more proximate a great power is to the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will balance. The more distant a great power is, and the more great powers there are between it and the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will buckpass.*

Hypothesis 7: *A distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in its direction.*

Hypothesis 8: *If a great power's rival is threatening hegemony, then that great power is more likely to balance.*

Hypothesis 9: *If a great power's rival balances against a hegemonic threat, then the great power is likely to buckpass or bandwagon with the hegemonic threat. The balancer is more likely to be the more proximate of the two to the hegemonic threat.*

Hypothesis 10: *If a great power engaged in a rivalry buckpasses or bandwagons a hegemonic threat and the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction, it will turn to balancing late and ally with its rival.*

It is difficult to see what the value added is from these alternative hypotheses in the Kantō regional case. All three major powers balanced efficiently without buckpassing or bandwagoning (until the Hōjō in 1571, which is actually a part of the next chapter). Moreover there is no variance in the rivalry variable since all three were rivals of each other. Regarding the proximity variable, since the Hōjō and Takeda clans were adjacent to each other, we would gather from Hypothesis 4 that balancing between these two against each other would take precedence over balancing against Uesugi, but that obviously did not occur, as we can see from the Takeda-Hōjō-Imagawa alliance in the

1550s and early 1560s. Overall, the predictions of balance of power theory have more support in the Kantō regional case.

Balancing and Rivalry in Western Japan.

The balancing and rivalries in Western Japan was centered primarily on the Ōuchi/Mōri, Ōtomo, and Amako clans. Unlike in the Kantō, where there was no clear dominant power, in Western Japan the dominant clan was clearly the Ōuchi clan and their successors, the Mōri clan. In the first half of the 16th century, the Ōuchi held the provinces at the western end of the main island of Honshu as well as the two northernmost provinces of the island of Kyushu. Their greatest competitor was the Ōtomo clan in northern Kyushu, with whom they had an ongoing rivalry since the 1430s. The border between them saw recurrent skirmishes, with the minor warlords in between them choosing one or the other side.⁴³⁴

The Amako caused problems for the Ōuchi as well though. In 1508, it will be recalled, Ōuchi Yoshioki helped reinstall Shogun Yoshitane into the shogunate and was made governor of the capital province of Yamashiro. Yoshioki left Central Japan however in 1518 to take care of issues back in his territories. In 1523, the Amako took advantage of the Ōuchi problems and launched a drive into Ōuchi territory, which was only stopped by the intervention of the skillful Ōuchi vassal, Mōri Motonari. The Ōuchi wanted to drive the Amako out of their territory, but they were diverted by occurrences in Kyushu, where the Ōtomo launched an invasion of Ōuchi territory in 1527.⁴³⁵ Ōuchi affairs were also complicated by the death of Yoshioki in 1528.

⁴³⁴ Elisonas 1991b, 306.

⁴³⁵ Arnesen 1979, 216.

The Ōuchi eventually regained their territories however. The new Ōuchi leader Yoshitaka even launched an invasion of the main Ōtomo province of Bungo in 1534. The invasion was stopped by the Ōtomo and a peace agreement was reached whereby the Ōuchi retreated. Yoshitaka was able to extend his influence into other parts of northern Kyushu by this action though. With Mōri Motonari's help, the Ōuchi drove the Amako back into their provinces.⁴³⁶ By 1540, the Ōuchi peaked as the most powerful warlord clan in Japan.

Ōuchi power declined thereafter. Yoshitaka launched an invasion of the Amako province of Izumo in 1542 but was repulsed. After this failure, Yoshitaka decided against further expansion of the Ōuchi territories and retired to a life of leisure. This worried one of his most powerful retainers, Sue Harukata, who worried about the Amako aggressions against the eastern territories. Sue rebelled and overthrew Yoshitaka in 1551 and invited the Ōtomo clan's leader, Sōrin, to send his younger brother to rule the Ōuchi clan with him. Mōri Motonari, not to be outdone by a fellow vassal, diligently gathered the support of others behind the scenes and in 1555 rose up and destroyed Sue and his followers.⁴³⁷

The Mōri replaced the Ōuchi in their rivalry with the Ōtomo clan.⁴³⁸ The fighting between the Ōtomo and Mōri stemmed from the Mōri takeover of the Ōuchi clan. When the Ōuchi vassal Sue Harukata briefly took over the clan, he requested that Ōtomo Sōrin's younger brother be adopted into the Ōuchi clan to serve as the official head while Sue pulled the strings behind him. Thus, when the Mōri defeated Sue and forced his suicide, the younger Ōtomo brother was chased out and forced to commit suicide in 1557. In the same year, the Mōri launched their invasion of northern Kyushu.

⁴³⁶ Arnesen 1979, 217; Elisonas 1991b, 306.

⁴³⁷ Ike 2009, 111-117.

Between 1557 and 1561, the Mōri and Ōtomo clans fought a series of see-saw battles over the northern tip of Kyushu, a place called Moji Castle overlooking the Straights of Shimonoseki. The Ōtomo did not hold the area at the tip, but sent troops to repel the Mōri after it became apparent that the Mōri were in secret talks with Ōtomo vassals planning to rebel against the Ōtomo.⁴³⁹ In one battle of their famous battles over Moji Castle, Ōtomo Sōrin persuaded a group of Portuguese traders to use the ships' cannons to bombard the Mōri position. Though it initially surprised the Mōri, the action eventually proved ineffective when the Portuguese ran out of cannonballs. This was probably the only military engagement by foreigners in the Warring States period, outside of cases of self-defense.⁴⁴⁰

As in 1523 when the Ōuchi were facing internal troubles, the Amako once again in 1556 took advantage of political strife to invade the Ōuchi-Mōri territory and took over strategic silver mines in Iwami. However, the Amako were declining relative to the Mōri and could not achieve much offensively above the taking of the mines.⁴⁴¹ In the late 1550s or early 1560s, the Amako and Ōtomo began cooperating to balance Mōri expansion in either direction.⁴⁴² The attachment of the Ōtomo to the Amako could not have been that strong though, because in 1562 the Ōtomo agreed to a ceasefire with the Mōri, which allowed Motonari to concentrate his forces on the Amako.⁴⁴³ Motonari was able to boot them out of Iwami and reduce their holdings in their own Izumo Province to

⁴³⁸ Elisonas 1991b, 327.

⁴³⁹ Toyama 1975, 46.

⁴⁴⁰ Turnbull 2004, 268-269, Elisonas 1991b, 325.

⁴⁴¹ Ike 2009, 146.

⁴⁴² Toyama 1975, 47.

⁴⁴³ Ike 2009, 158-160.

one castle at Toda-Gassen.⁴⁴⁴ In 1566, Motonari was able to completely reduce the Amako and remove them from their status as daimyo.⁴⁴⁵

At the Mōri clan's renewed attention to affairs on the eastern front in Honshu, the Ōtomo began expanding across Kyushu. The Amako defeat in 1562 led Ōtomo Sōrin to ponder attacking Mōri positions again. An advantage arose in 1567 when the Mōri clan invaded the island of Shikoku. The dominant clan, the Ichijo, struck an alliance with Ōtomo Sōrin to provide help in securing sea lanes from the Mōri navy.⁴⁴⁶ In 1568, the Mōri led a large army back to Kyushu to attack the Ōtomo again, in cooperation with certain minor warlords who were troubled by the recent Ōtomo expansion.⁴⁴⁷

Coming on the heels of this action in Kyushu, a resurgent though underwhelming Amako clan in 1569 teamed up with the Ōtomo as well as another minor Honshu clan, the Urugami, to once again surround and attack the Mōri from two sides. The fighting forced the Mōri to fully withdraw from Kyushu.⁴⁴⁸ In Central Japan, Oda Nobunaga and the new Shogun Yoshiaki had been in Kyoto for a year. Yoshiaki, upon coming into power, had called upon the western daimyo to stop their fighting, but he ignored the Mōri request for help. At this point however, Mōri Motonari thought the help and alliance with the new power in Kyoto might be useful, so he requested help directly from Nobunaga in calming his eastern front with the Amako and Urugami, a request which Nobunaga fulfilled.⁴⁴⁹ This issue is covered further in the next chapter. Figure 5.2 summarizes the most important events in Western Japan in this period.

⁴⁴⁴ Ike 2009, 151-152.

⁴⁴⁵ Sugiyama 1965, 342.

⁴⁴⁶ Ike 2009, 172.

⁴⁴⁷ Ike 2009, 173-174.

Table 5.2 – The Balance of Power in the Western Japan

1523 – The Amako clan attacks the Ōuchi during time of internal disturbances.
 1527 – The Ōtomo invade Ōuchi holdings in Kyushu.
 1530s – The Ōuchi drive back both the Amako and Ōtomo clans and invade Ōtomo territory.
 1542 – An Ōuchi invasion is repelled by the Amako.
 1551-55 – Ōuchi internal rebellions: The Ōuchi vassal Sue Harukata overthrows the Ōuchi, and is later overthrown by another vassal, Mōri Motonari.
 1556 – The Amako attack Ōuchi/Mōri territory in Iwami Province, taking strategic resources.
 1557-62 – The Mōri and Ōtomo begin a series of see-saw battles in northern Kyushu.
 1562 – The Ōtomo and Amako cooperate in balancing the Mōri. The Mōri and Ōtomo arrive at a ceasefire. The Mōri expel the Amako from Iwami to start a series of offensive actions.
 1566 – The Amako are driven out of their domains and lose their status as daimyo.
 1567 – The Mōri clan invades Shikoku. The Ichijō clan from Shikoku forms an alliance with the Ōtomo.
 1568 – Fighting in Kyushu breaks out again between the Mōri and the Ōtomo clans.
 1569 – A resurgent Amako clan allies once again with the Ōtomo to attack the Mōri from two sides. Mōri Motonari withdraws from Kyushu and appeals for help from Oda Nobunaga.

Analyses of the Hypotheses

Balance of Power Theory's Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability.*

⁴⁴⁸ Toyama 1975, 49; Elisonas 1991b, 327.

⁴⁴⁹ Watanabe 1982, 45-46; Ike 2009, 175-176.

Hypothesis 2: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability and the great power or alliance displays a clear intent to dominate.*

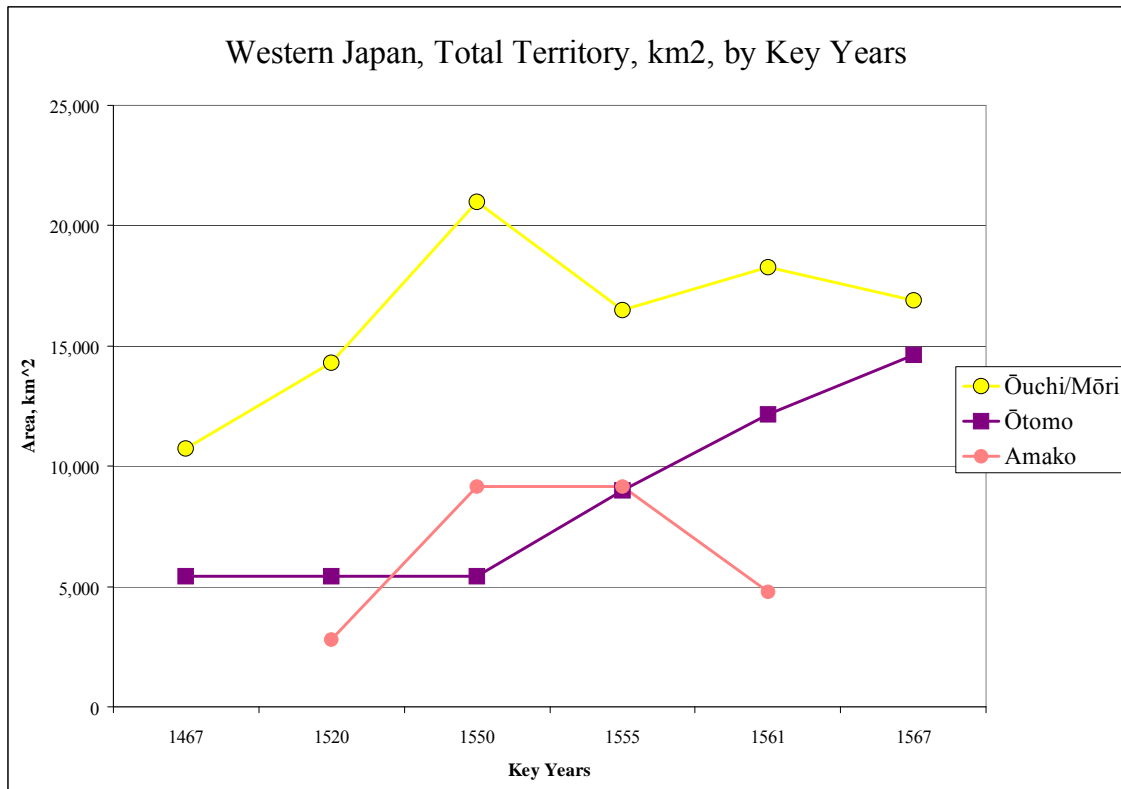
Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

In this case, the unit level prediction of balancing performed well as balancing was performed against the most dominant power, the Mōri clan, though it was not entirely successful toward the end of period. A regional hegemonic order was not imposed by 1568 because the Mōri and Ōtomo were roughly balanced at the end of the period. It is possible that the Mōri and Ōtomo might have effectively split the region into two separate regions (Kyushu and western Honshu) if they stopped interacting with each other and set up separate hegemonic orders. Nonetheless, Hypothesis 3 is supported in that a hegemonic order did not form during this period due to balancing.

As with the previous case, it is not entirely clear that the Ōuchi or Mōri intended to dominate by conquering all of the territory of the region. In fact, there is an indication in the 1540s that the Ōuchi before their ouster by Sue Harukata were going to be satisfied with their amount of territory under their control. But the Amako gains-seeking during Sue's rebellion might indicate that the balancers in this region did not require signs of intent to dominate to balance.

Were the Ōuchi and Mōri clans always the most powerful in the region? Did they control a high disproportion (33%) of the region? Figure 5.6 shows the distribution of power (measured by territory) in the region.

Figure 5.6 – Distribution of Power in Western Japan



From Figure 5.6 we can see that the warlord with the most territory was always the Ōuchi and Mōri clans. And these two were always the target of balancing by the other two major powers, the Amako and Ōtomo clans, so in this case it is unambiguous that balancing was performed against the dominant power, not the fastest rising power. The high disproportion qualification needed to trigger balancing is supported as well. The region's total territory is 43,789.38 km², and 33% of that is 14,450.5 km². In 1520, the Ōuchi/Mōri held near that, 14,300 km². After that, they held well over that amount to

satisfy the 33% threshold. This case supports the most basic form of unit-level prediction of balance of power theory – that units balance the most dominant power – as well as the operational qualification that a high disproportion of capabilities is at least 33%.

As in the Kantō case, there is no evidence of explicit statements of intent to dominate on the part of the Western Honshu warlords. Therefore, we cannot say anything about this distinction between balancing versus capabilities or capabilities and intent.

The Project's Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

The Amako clan is the most notable western clan to be reduced during this period. Similar to the Kantō region, Mōri expansion pushed some warlord houses out of the area or into the service of one of the great powers. The Yamanouchi clan came to serve the Mōri. Not all clans were destroyed by one of the great powers. The Urakami were vanquished by a minor yet still powerful Ukita clan. The Kobayakawa and Kikkawa clans were independent until they were subsumed within the Mōri clan when they were taken over by his Motonari's sons.⁴⁵⁰

However, it is hard to say that Hypothesis 5 is supported because a rough balance was maintained between the three major powers – the system did not verge toward hegemony of any one of the three powers.

⁴⁵⁰ Ikegami et al. 1995, 719-721.

Hypothesis 6: *The more proximate a great power is to the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will balance. The more distant a great power is, and the more great powers there are between it and the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will buckpass.*

Hypothesis 7: *A distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in its direction.*

Hypothesis 8: *If a great power's rival is threatening hegemony, then that great power is more likely to balance.*

Hypothesis 9: *If a great power's rival balances against a hegemonic threat, then the great power is likely to buckpass or bandwagon with the hegemonic threat. The balancer is more likely to be the more proximate of the two to the hegemonic threat.*

Hypothesis 10: *If a great power engaged in a rivalry buckpasses or bandwagons a hegemonic threat and the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction, it will turn to balancing late and ally with its rival.*

Again, much like the Kantō case, since the unit-level prediction of balance of power theory performs well here, it is difficult to see how these alternative hypotheses can add anything. Only in 1562 did one of the balancers, the Ōtomo buckpass. The Mōri took advantage of this to defeat the Amako and remove them from daimyo status. But this buckpassing was not due to distance or rivalry. There was no rivalry between the Amako and Ōtomo. One could argue that Hypothesis 8 is supported since the Ōtomo and Amako balanced their rivals, the Mōri, but the causality of this is actually reversed. They balanced due to the expansion of the Ōuchi/Mōri clans, and this caused their rivalry.

Distance is not a variable, since both the Ōtomo and Amako clans were adjacent to the Ōuchi/Mōri territory. Overall, the unit-level predictions of balance of power theory outperform these hypotheses.

Conclusion

While the description of the events in Kyoto during this period show that a fortuitous balance existed at the system level, it can be seen in the regional analysis that two regional balances of power that were the result of purposive balancing existed in regions in the east and west of Japan. In the East, the Hōjō clan was the early rising power, and the Uesugi and Takeda clans balanced their expansion. After the Takeda clan pushed closer to Uesugi territory, the Uesugi and Takeda became opposed to each other. When the Uesugi clan came charging down from Echigo, the Takeda and Hōjō clans joined forces to balance them. Balancing also involved minor powers in the region as well as the Imagawa clan to the south and through the years of fighting rivalries formed between each of the three clans, particularly between Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin.

In the West, a balance existed between the Ōuchi/Mōri, Ōtomo, and Amako clans, with the Amako and Ōtomo clans balancing the central, dominant Ōuchi and Mōri clans. The Mōri managed to largely eliminate their opponent to the east, the Amako, but the Ōtomo expanded enough in Kyushu that by the end of the period the two were roughly equal in power. These analyses show that balances of power existed among great powers at the regional level and that these balances were not fortuitous but the result of their purposive balancing.

In conclusion, three points must be made to address the questions at the start of this chapter regarding the nature of the balance of power in Japan. First, the analysis of this chapter clearly shows that Japan formed a multistate system of independent units during the Warring States period. The wars fought in this period were interstate wars between separate and fully functioning miniature “states.” These states formed their own laws and legitimating institutions for their Sengoku daimyo leaders, warlords who did not derive power from the shogun or the emperor but from their own personal ability to protect the public good in the domain, an ability backed by their clan's local military predominance. The central government was a shell of its former self with no authority. Proponents of typifying the Warring States as a civil war may still argue this point, based on the argument that central governments often fail in civil wars, but the point must be accepted that theories of interstate war can be applied here. This analysis thus legitimizes the exercise of applying international relations theories to Warring States Japan.

Second, the system was balanced during the long century between the start of the Ōnin War in 1467 and Nobunaga's entry into Kyoto in 1568, but not in the typical way. The main difference is a general lack of system-level domination seekers. The system's strongest powers in these first hundred years are more accurately depicted as seeking local power, that is, as conquering territory and consolidating power within small sub-system regions.

Even the strong warlords of the Kyoto area, the ones who seated and unseated their own puppet shoguns, were really just local domination seekers. They may have held delusions that the shogunate was still functional and held power over the provinces, but it does not appear that the Hosokawa or the Miyoshi really made an attempt to unify Japan.

The Hosokawa actually became reliant on stronger daimyo such as the Ōuchi in the early 6th century. Nor did the Miyoshi and Matsunaga Hisahide try to establish a hegemonic order in the 1550s-60s. On the contrary, it appears that they deposed the shoguns because the shoguns were trying to reestablish the authority of the shogunate.

It is probable however that there would have been more overt domination seeking if the balancing at the regional level did not exist. There were those who held goals of unifying the system but did not try because they knew they would be balanced or their home provinces attacked. Uesugi Kenshin and possibly Takeda Shingen were among those warlords who wanted to march onto Kyoto but were deterred by the possibility of attack. One warlord who definitely tried to march onto Kyoto was Imagawa Yoshimoto from Suruga Province. But Imagawa was stopped when he tried to march onto Kyoto in 1560, not by balancing but rather by self-defense. He invaded the domain of Oda Nobunaga on his way, and was stopped by the future domination seeker in the Battle of Okehazama, which made Nobunaga a familiar name in the east.

Third, regarding the balance of power at the regional level, we can see that the warlords had the capability to form balancing alliances and to switch alliance partners as necessary to adjust to new threats. The warlords understood the logic of balancing, which in the words of Hume is grounded in “common sense and obvious reasoning.”⁴⁵¹ As we will see in the next two chapters however, understanding how to balance does not ensure that a balance of power will be sustained.

⁴⁵¹ Hume 1975, 62-63.

Chapter 6 – The Case of Oda Nobunaga, 1568-1582

Oda Nobunaga was the first of the unifiers, the warlords who united the warring states of Japan at the latter part of the 16th century. He arrived on the scene in the 1560s, at a time in which yet another weak shogun had been assassinated and replaced by local strongmen. Sensing an opportunity, Nobunaga championed the claimant to succeed to the shogunate – the dead shogun's brother – as his excuse to push into Kyoto in 1568. His domination seeking efforts unraveled slowly though. He first attempted to rule the central provinces alongside the new shogun he had installed with decrees to the local warlords to come pay their respects in Kyoto and to contribute men and arms. Additionally, he tried to settle conflicts over land. Yet within two years, he began taking territories and collecting enemies threatened by his land-grabbing and attempts to rule. These enemies soon began collaborating and rebelling against Nobunaga in an attempt to displace him and preserve their independence. Their resistance took shape in two alliances, known as the First and Second Anti-Nobunaga Leagues. Figure 6.1 presents a map of Nobunaga's position and those of the warlords who play major roles in this period.

Figure 6.1 – The Positions of Oda and other warlords, 1568



The Emergence of Nobunaga's Hegemony-Seeking

Oda Nobunaga was born in July 1534 the second son of a minor lord in Owari Province, which was a small province in the area of modern-day Nagoya. Nobunaga's father, Nobuhide, was head of one of the lesser branches of the Oda, and though he came to a position of relative strength by the time of his death in 1551, his position was fragile. So when Nobunaga took over from his father upon his death, his position even within his

own clan was precarious and quickly challenged.⁴⁵² Only after a lengthy struggle with relatives from the rival branches and his own brothers was Nobunaga able to unite his clan's branches and consolidated power in 1559.⁴⁵³

After this, it took only a year for Nobunaga to begin to make a reputation for himself. In the spring of 1560, the warlord Imagawa Yoshimoto from nearby Suruga Province (located east of Owari) decided to march onto Kyoto to restore order and install himself as the new strongman. His route took him into Owari Province, which he must have presumed was still a fractured Oda clan. After celebrating their initial foray into enemy territory, Imagawa's troops encamped in a festive manner in a valley outside of the town of Okehazama in Owari. When Nobunaga became aware of the intrusion, he was counseled by his senior advisors to surrender. But Nobunaga knew the terrain of the Imagawa encampment well and decided on a bold tactic. Armed with between 2,000-3,000 men on horseback against an Imagawa force estimated to be over 25,000 men, Nobunaga used this superior home turf knowledge to bypass Imagawa's main force and strike at Yoshimoto's headquarters directly. Without fighting a major battle, Nobunaga's small force killed Yoshimoto and sent the confused Imagawa army reeling in retreat back to their territory.⁴⁵⁴

Flush with this victory, Nobunaga then turned his attention toward conquering the territory to his north, the large province of Mino mostly controlled by the Saitō clan. Nobunaga had been the son-in-law of clan leader Saitō Dōsan, but in 1556 Dōsan was killed by one of his sons, who then took over the clan. Nobunaga attempted to redress this

⁴⁵² Lamers 2000, 24-26.

⁴⁵³ Ōta [c. 1610] 1980a, 118-119; Taniguchi 2008a, 128-131, 133-134.

situation but was rebuffed. When the son died in 1561 and was replaced by his heir, Saitō Tatsuoki, Nobunaga began efforts to conquer the territory, which he was only able to accomplish in 1567. However, once he did, he was in a greater position to perform the feat of marching into Kyoto that Imagawa Yoshimoto had strived for. Mino and Kyoto were only separated by Ōmi Province.

The lengthy durations of Nobunaga's internal struggle in the Oda clan and his campaign against the Saitō clan, eight and seven years respectively, belie the relative quickness at which he was able to conquer the whole of Central Japan between the years 1570 and 1582. Nobunaga historian Jeroen Lamers surmises that he only lacked the manpower in his early years, a factor which he reversed as he conquered more clans and territory and absorbed the vassals and soldiers of the vanquished into his military organization. In fact, several Mino vassals figured prominently in his upper command just below his Owari men.⁴⁵⁵

While Nobunaga was in the process of conquering Mino Province, he was in communication with the claimant for the Shogun's seat, Ashikaga Yoshiaki, brother of the assassinated Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiteru. Yoshiaki was making a circuit of the warlords of Central Japan looking for a warlord to champion his installation in Kyoto as shogun. His current host, Asakura Yoshikage, had refused to do so as had each previous warlord on his tour. Asakura preferred the current situation, in which the shogunate was ineffective.⁴⁵⁶ Nobunaga was one of the few warlords interested in helping Yoshiaki,

⁴⁵⁴ Ōta 1980a, 92-98. Taniguchi 2008a, 131-133. This is the defeat which allowed the future shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, then known as Matsudaira Motoyasu, to escape his service with the Imagawa and return to his home province of Mikawa.

⁴⁵⁵ Lamers 2000, 29-39, 104.

⁴⁵⁶ Taniguchi 2006, 56-57. Matsubara 2006, 148-149.

though Yoshiaki did not think him capable of doing providing adequate help.⁴⁵⁷ Yoshiaki wanted the powerful warlord Uesugi Kenshin to help him enter Kyoto, and Kenshin showed interest in doing so, but Kenshin was unable to leave his territory due to his ongoing conflicts with his rivals, the Takeda and Hōjō clans, both of whom would attack his territories if Kenshin vacated them to march on to Kyoto.⁴⁵⁸ Nobunaga, on the other hand, promised Yoshiaki he would install him upon completing his conquest of Mino. Seeing no other alternative, in August 1568 Yoshiaki left Echizen Province to the chagrin of Asakura Yoshikage and traveled to Mino.⁴⁵⁹

Standing in between Nobunaga and Kyoto were the Rokkaku clan of Ōmi and the Miyoshi clan and Matsunaga Hisahide in Kyoto. Nobunaga first tried to reach an agreement with the Rokkaku in order to allow him to pass through Ōmi without fighting. The Rokkaku though were allied with Matsunaga and the Miyoshi and like Asakura did not want either Nobunaga or Yoshiaki in Kyoto.⁴⁶⁰ Faced with fighting his way into Kyoto, Nobunaga combined the manpower resources of Mino and Owari and amassed an army estimated at 60,000 troops in September 1568. He pushed through the Rokkaku and the Matsunaga/Miyoshi forces in Kyoto in less than a month's time. Matsunaga quickly made peace with Nobunaga after the initial fighting. Yoshiaki then entered Kyoto safely afterward and was given the title of Shogun by Emperor Ōgimachi in November.

Yoshiaki and Nobunaga continued to be opposed by the Miyoshi Triumvirs, who took part in the assassination of Shogun Yoshiteru in 1565, and the Rokkaku clan, who were still fighting Oda troops in parts of Ōmi. A mere three months after his investiture

⁴⁵⁷ Lamers 2000, 56.

⁴⁵⁸ Okuno 1960, 117-119; Darling 2000, 103; Taniguchi 2006, 56.

⁴⁵⁹ Suitō 1981, 80.

⁴⁶⁰ C. Kanda 2008, 46-47; Lamers 2000, 57-58.

as shogun, in January 1569, while Nobunaga was back in Mino Province, Yoshiaki was attacked by the Miyoshi Triumvirs in a bid to restore their power over Kyoto. They were repulsed, but the attack gave Nobunaga leverage over the shogun and convinced him of the need to consolidate his own power over both the shogun and over the provincial warlords close to Kyoto.⁴⁶¹

Since Yoshiaki had relied on Nobunaga to enter Kyoto and be installed as Shogun, he was in reality no stronger than any of the Ashikaga shoguns since the Ōnin War (1467-1477) had been. All had relied on strongmen and regents (*kanrei*) to provide them support and the power of these governments rarely if ever extended outside of Kyoto. But they did not have power over the provincial warlords, who always exhibited a degree of autonomy during the Minamoto and Ashikaga shogunates that grew to full-blown independence in the decades after the Ōnin War. These warlords did not see themselves being subservient to the strongmen manipulating the shogunate, men who were just warlords of the same standing. By the mid-16th century, these strongmen would not have been able to extend any power beyond the immediate area around Kyoto; they were relatively weak compared to the great power warlords who were actively engaged in the consolidation of territory in the provinces. Instead, the strongmen were satisfied with reaping the financial benefits of controlling Kyoto.⁴⁶²

The effectiveness and power of Yoshiaki during his reign would be little different from his recent predecessors. Contrary to the shogun's role as legislator, Nobunaga began to issue his own edicts regulating the territories that had come under his control. Yoshiaki had no authority to back up his own laws, but Nobunaga did for his own. Nobunaga was

⁴⁶¹ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 155-156; Lamers 2000, 60-63.

⁴⁶² Berry 1994.

careful to not place himself in a position of subservience to the shogun by refusing titles and land investitures from the new shogun. The emperor issued matching documents simultaneously to both the shogun because he was nominally in charge and to Nobunaga in order for the requests contained within to have effect. It did not take long for Nobunaga to begin to issue his own edicts, the Regulations (produced in January 1569 after the attack by the Miyoshi clan) and the Capitulations (February 1570), restricting the shogun's political power and access to others.⁴⁶³ Growing increasingly impatient with his situation role vis-à-vis Nobunaga, Yoshiaki would soon begin to push against Nobunaga, a role that would involve him in the two coalitions known as the First and Second Anti-Nobunaga Leagues.

The First Anti-Nobunaga League, 1570-1575

The origins of the First Anti-Nobunaga League stem from a summons issued by Nobunaga in 1570 to the warlords of Central Japan to come to Kyoto to pay respect to the shogun. The summons was issued in February at the same time as the Capitulations document issued by Nobunaga to the shogun as mentioned above. Those receiving the summons included Asakura Yoshikage, Tokugawa Ieyasu (Nobunaga's ally), Matsunaga Hisahide (a participant in the assassination of Shogun Yoshiteru), and Azai Nagamasa (Nobunaga's brother-in-law), among others. Lamers argues that this summons was meant to provoke warlords who did not want to heed Nobunaga so that he could see which Central Japan warlords were behind him and which opposed him and Yoshiaki.

⁴⁶³ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 153-161.

Asakura alone declined to obey the summons. Asakura was relatively weaker than Nobunaga but his clan had an older tradition than the Oda, and he presumably thought Nobunaga an upstart who was unsuitable to command others to Kyoto.⁴⁶⁴ To Nobunaga, this refusal meant that Asakura would become the focus of his efforts to pacify Central Japan. He thus began preparations to attack the Asakura clan and demanded soldiers from the attending warlords. He set out with a force of 30,000 to attack the Asakura in May 1570.

However, even with this large force, an unforeseen problem arose. The Asakura domain of Echizen lies to the north of Ōmi Province. Before marching into Kyoto in September 1568, Nobunaga had made an alliance with Azai Nagamasa of northeastern Ōmi Province in order to provide protection for his backside during his march, sealing the deal as was often done in medieval Japan through the marriage of Nobunaga's younger sister to Nagamasa. Nobunaga now relied on this alliance to pass through Ōmi in his campaign against the Asakura.⁴⁶⁵ However, the Azai had an older alliance with the Asakura clan.⁴⁶⁶ Nagamasa and his advisors decided to hold to the older alliance. Thus, while Nobunaga was in the midst of campaigning against the Asakura, Nagamasa broke his alliance with Nobunaga and attacked him from the rear, cutting off his supply lines and path of retreat to Kyoto. Nobunaga quit his campaign and was only able to retreat back to Kyoto by dividing his forces. So the Asakura and Azai clans, who would from now on fight in tandem, joined the Rokkaku clan, the clan residing in Ōmi Province through whose territory Nobunaga had fought through to Kyoto in September 1568, and

⁴⁶⁴ Lamers 2000, 72.

⁴⁶⁵ Taniguchi 2008b, 115-116; Y. Kanda 2008, 100.

⁴⁶⁶ Owada 2008, 26.

the Miyoshi Triumvirs, who had participated in the assassination of Ashikaga Yoshiteru, in an emerging coalition that began to encircle Nobunaga and Kyoto.

Table 6.1 – The First Anti-Nobunaga Coalition, 1570-1575

Asakura Yoshikage (died 1573)
 Azai Nagamasa (d. 1573)
 Rokkaku Jōtei
 Miyoshi Triumvirs (until 1573)
 Miyoshi Yoshitsugu (d. 1573)
 Ishiyama Honganji & the *Ikkō ikki*
 Matsunaga Hisahide (defected from Oda in 1572)
 Enryakuji monks (destroyed 1572)
 Takeda Shingen (d. 1573) & Takeda Katsuyori[†]

[†] denotes great power status.

Against this array, aside from more minor warlords in the Kyoto area providing men, Nobunaga's only ally was Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was also in the midst of expanding eastward from his province of Mikawa into the territory of the declining Imagawa clan. Ieyasu's help would prove crucial in helping Nobunaga tackle the Asakura/Azai. After several small, successful skirmishes against foes in the vicinity of southern Ōmi, Nobunaga had Ieyasu join their forces to meet and defeat the Asakura/Azai forces at the Battle of Anegawa on the northeastern side of Lake Biwa in late July 1570. Both Asakura Yoshikage and Azai Nagamasa survived the battle and returned to their capitals. Nobunaga and Ieyasu did not follow up on their advantage.

Nobunaga instead turned toward the Miyoshi Triumvirs to the south of Kyoto in late September 1570. Bringing a force large enough to lay siege to two Miyoshi

fortresses, Nobunaga seemed on the verge of taking the castles when a new enemy in the form of an army of militant Buddhists joined in against Nobunaga. Militant Buddhist sects had long been a feature of Japanese politics. They often plagued warlords and towns across Central Japan as well as the capital, by themselves or in conjunction with peasants.⁴⁶⁷ This particular sect, the Buddhist True Pure Land sect, was an armed sect based at the impregnable Ishiyama Honganji temple fortress in Osaka, which was part of Settsu Province. Their chief abbot, a priest named Kōsa, was also head of *Ikkō ikki* followers spread throughout Central Japan.⁴⁶⁸ The *Ikkō ikki*, as should be recalled from the last chapter, describe the particular mix of irregular warriors that was comprised of Buddhist True Pure Land monks and peasants and was spread throughout Central Japan. They were sufficiently strong to scare the warlords in this region, and in Kaga Province north of Echizen, they were actually strong enough to overthrow warlord rule in the late 15th century and establish their own.⁴⁶⁹ Kōsa mobilized his armed monks at the Honganji in October 1570 and attacked Nobunaga in relief of the Miyoshi. Kōsa and the Honganji had a friendly relationship with the Miyoshi and Rokkaku clans, but he had also been asked to help fight Nobunaga by the Azai Nagamasa.⁴⁷⁰ Then he called on his *Ikkō* followers in the provinces captured by Nobunaga to rise up against Oda troops and allies.⁴⁷¹ Kōsa and the *Ikkō ikki* would continue to plague Nobunaga until 1580.

Now Nobunaga's foes began to fully coordinate their actions together. While Nobunaga was engaged in the south, Asakura and Azai marched on Kyoto from the north

⁴⁶⁷ Nagahara 1975, 75; Berry 1994, 148-149. For a book length account of militant Buddhists, see McMullin 1984 or Tsang 2007.

⁴⁶⁸ Buddhist priests typically went by one name during the medieval period. Kōsa was also known as Kenryo, and is sometimes called both names, Kenryo Kōsa, in the historical literature.

⁴⁶⁹ Kawasaki 1984, 68; C. Kanda 2007, 62-72.

⁴⁷⁰ C. Kanda 2008, 46-47.

⁴⁷¹ C. Kanda 2008, 20-23.

and attacked Nobunaga's rear. They launched this attack in mid-October 1570 after regrouping from their defeat at Anegawa in July. As their forces rounded Lake Biwa and came to bear on Kyoto, Nobunaga beat a hasty retreat northward to defend the city, leaving part of his forces to hold Kōsa and the Miyoshi. He arrived just as Asakura/Azai forces entered Kyoto's outskirts.⁴⁷²

This set up a chain of events which led Nobunaga to commit one of his most infamous acts, one that is the most responsible for what is generally a ruthless reputation. As his forces approached the Asakura/Azai forces in October 1570, Asakura and Azai retreated to Mount Hiei, north of Kyoto and home to the Enryakuji, a large complex of several hundred Buddhist temples.⁴⁷³ There they set up camp. The Enryakuji monks were not aligned with Kōsa's sect, thus they did not heed Kōsa's call to arms against Nobunaga. But they were one of the Buddhist sects that had ravaged the capital over the years. Nobunaga had asked them to stay out of his conflicts with the 1st League, but they decided to throw their lot in with his ever widening circle of enemies. Lamers states that the Enryakuji's conflict with Nobunaga stems from a dispute resulting from his confiscation of some of their estates in 1569.⁴⁷⁴

With the combined Asakura/Azai and warrior monk forces comfortably on higher ground, and with Nobunaga's forces at less than full strength, Nobunaga settled for waiting into the winter. As the cold winter months made conditions worse though, men on both sides started to suffer and Shogun Yoshiaki was able to broker a truce between the two sides in January 1571. Nobunaga and the Asakura/Azai forces returned to their

⁴⁷² Suitō 1981, 98-99.

⁴⁷³ Suitō 1981, 99.

⁴⁷⁴ Lamers 2000, 76.

respective home bases for the remainder of the winter. Nobunaga's troops in the southern sector kept the Miyoshi and Kōsa at bay in the meantime.

The truce ended the threat to Kyoto but left the Enryakuji monks exposed to Nobunaga the following year. With Nobunaga at full force after his winter break, they were at his mercy since the Asakura/Azai troops did not return. Mt. Hiei was in a strategic position overlooking Kyoto from the north. The Enryakuji monks had often come down and easily raided Kyoto in the past.⁴⁷⁵ Moreover, they had just collaborated with Nobunaga's enemies who had come too close to entering Kyoto. So after spending the spring and summer of 1571 in indecisive skirmishes with Asakura/Azai forces and an embarrassing defeat at the hands of *Ikkō* irregulars in Ise Province, Nobunaga returned to Mt. Hiei in September 1571 with a massive force. He ordered his men to completely surround the mountain's base and then to advance up the slopes side by side and destroy or kill everything they encountered. The temple complex contained over 400 temples, over 1500 monks, and over 1500 secular men, women, and children; all were destroyed or killed.⁴⁷⁶ This action set a precedent for Nobunaga's method of dealing with *Ikkō* and other irregulars from below the warrior class in the future.

The following year saw the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League reach the height of its power. First, Matsunaga Hisahide and Miyoshi Yoshitsugu, who both participated along with the Miyoshi Triumvirs in the assassination of Shogun Yoshiteru but had submitted to Nobunaga in 1568, rebelled and joined the 1st League. They were then joined by the legendary warlord Takeda Shingen of the Kantō Plains area. The first great power warlord to challenge Nobunaga, Takeda controlled Kai Province and much of Shinano

⁴⁷⁵ Berry 1994, 165-166.

⁴⁷⁶ Lamers 2000, 75-76; Ōta 1980a, 191-192.

Province, one of the largest in Japan. He had a long history of conflict with his neighboring rivals, Uesugi Kenshin and Hōjō Ujiyasu, which had prevented him from marching on Kyoto as Imagawa had tried earlier. During these early years of the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League, Takeda had kept up correspondence with Shogun Yoshiaki, Matsunaga Hisahide, Asakura Yoshikage, and Kōsa of the Honganji.⁴⁷⁷ In 1572 he joined the campaign against Nobunaga. By coming up from the northeast on Nobunaga's home base territories of Owari and Mino, as well as those of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Shingen opened up a new front and greatly raised alarm within the Oda camp.

In addition, Shogun Yoshiaki reached his decision to openly split from Nobunaga. He had been subtly pushing for warlords to rise as a counterweight against Nobunaga. Yoshiaki had also made it a major, public initiative to make peace between the Takeda and Hōjō clans and his old supporter Uesugi Kenshin in order to free Kenshin to act as a counterweight against Nobunaga. But Kenshin and Nobunaga had become allied with each other and Kenshin thus became less likely to counter Nobunaga.⁴⁷⁸ Yoshiaki had been corresponding with Shingen since 1570; by 1572 he began pleading with him to become involved against Nobunaga.⁴⁷⁹ Nobunaga's suspicions of Yoshiaki's diplomatic activity and correspondence lead him to publicly denounce the Shogun in October of 1572 in a famous document consisting of seventeen articles, entitled the Remonstrance. Scholars have differing views of this rebuke. Some historians view it as a provocation of the Shogun on Nobunaga's part that left the Shogun no choice but to revolt,⁴⁸⁰ while

⁴⁷⁷ Hirayama 2006, 80-81.

⁴⁷⁸ Ike and Yata 2007, 118-119; Darling 2000, 112-115.

⁴⁷⁹ Owada 1987, 209-210; Fujiki and Elison 1981, 163.

⁴⁸⁰ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 169.

Lamers, who is generally more sympathetic to Nobunaga, views it as a last-ditch effort by him to get the Shogun to give up his overtures to warlords such as Takeda.⁴⁸¹

Within weeks of the issuance of the Remonstrance, Takeda finalized his months-long military preparations and on November 8, 1572 his forces took the field against Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Nobunaga had been busy campaigning in Ōmi against the Asakura/Azai, and Takeda's strategy was to sweep through the Tokugawa-controlled lands east of Owari (the former Imagawa territories) and then charge into Nobunaga's home base territories while the Asakura/Azai forces regrouped and hit Nobunaga from the northwest. The Miyoshi clan and Kōsa's Buddhist forces would continue to pressure Nobunaga south of Kyoto. It would have been a more powerful encirclement than that which Nobunaga had been facing, but Takeda's plans took a hit when the Asakura/Azai forces, tired from months of constant campaigning and the cold winter, returned home in January 1573.⁴⁸² Nobunaga had already left Ōmi with advanced warning of Takeda's attack and was preparing for Takeda's offensive at his headquarters in Mino.

Nevertheless, Takeda enjoyed unprecedented success against Nobunaga and Ieyasu. His forces swept through much of what Ieyasu had taken from the broken Imagawa clan, and reached into Tokugawa's native Mikawa Province as well as Mino Province in the winter of 1572-73. Takeda's greatest victory over Nobunaga and Ieyasu occurred at the Battle of Mikatagahara on January 25, 1573. The Takeda were famous for their cavalry forces, ideal for sweeping through the plains of these provinces.

⁴⁸¹ Lamers 2000, 81.

⁴⁸² Marushima 2008, 51.

As Takeda's forces were achieving victories over Nobunaga and Ieyasu, Yoshiaki felt the situation sufficiently in his favor to revolt.⁴⁸³ In March 1573, with only 5000 men in his personal guard and with only his own fortified castle in Kyoto, Yoshiaki sent letters to Anti-Nobunaga League members notifying them that he was openly turning against Nobunaga.⁴⁸⁴ Unfortunately for Yoshiaki, Takeda took ill while on campaign, retreated in late March, and then died on May 13, 1573. The Takeda advance was paralyzed and Nobunaga and Ieyasu counterattacked.

The loss of Shingen to the Anti-Nobunaga League was compounded by the Takeda clan leadership's attempt to hide his death: Nobunaga and Ieyasu were aware that Shingen had withdrawn from the field, but Shingen's allies, including Yoshiaki, were not.⁴⁸⁵ Yoshiaki thus struck out on his own Nobunaga and, much like the monks at the Enryakuji, was left exposed by his allies to Nobunaga's wrath. After negotiations with Yoshiaki proved fruitless, Nobunaga attacked in early May 1573, burned down parts of Kyoto, and surrounded the Shogun's castle. Yoshiaki sued for peace and was mercifully allowed to stay in Kyoto. He immediately started making plans for a second revolt, however, by contacting the League members and trying to recruit to the cause the Mōri clan, the most powerful in western Japan. The Mōri were in control of most of the western end of Honshu and had powerful naval forces as well. But before he could guarantee Mōri participation in the cause against Nobunaga, Yoshiaki prematurely gathered what little forces he could from his shogunal officers, left Kyoto for a more secure location, and declared hostilities against Nobunaga once again at the end of July

⁴⁸³ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 171.

⁴⁸⁴ The later Ashikaga shoguns typically only direct control over this many troops, Hall 1990, 217.

⁴⁸⁵ Lamers 2000, 94. Though it is a partially fictionalized account, the Takeda clan's attempt to cover up Shingen's death is the subject of the 1980 Akira Kurosawa movie, *Kagemusha*.

1573. Nobunaga put down this revolt as easily as the first one and permanently exiled Yoshiaki from the Kyoto area, finally putting an end to the Ashikaga shogunate.

Within a few weeks of Yoshiaki's exile, Nobunaga successfully performed the *coup de grâce* on the Asakura and Azai clans by defeating them in their home territories in the early fall of 1573. This time, he fully pressed his victory by advancing his forces to the clans' castles and forcing the clan heads to commit ritual suicide. He took his sister and her daughters back from Asakura's castle. He also broke the resistance of the Miyoshi clan. Though they never again played any major role, the Rokkaku clan continued to persist in a guerrilla campaign against Nobunaga's forces; the clan head, Rokkaku Jōtei miraculously survived until 1598. With all of his allies out of action, the head of the Ishiyama Honganji Buddhist warrior-monks, Kōsa, sued for peace at the end of 1573, though he broke this truce and mobilized his troops again in 1574. Nobunaga would spend the majority of 1574 laying siege to the Ishiyama fortress and trying to root out *Ikkō* insurgents in areas already under his control.

Then, in the last act of the First Anti-Nobunaga League, in 1574-75, the Takeda clan rose once again to pose a threat. After a period of consolidating rule and regrouping his forces, Shingen's son Katsuyori took the Takeda army and its vaunted cavalry into the field once more. In 1574, Katsuyori attacked and took the castle at Takatenjin in Tokugawa-held territory in Tōtōmi Province. Then, in June 1575 Katsuyori turned his troops toward the Tokugawa-held castle at Nagashino. It was at this point that Nobunaga turned his focus away from the Honganji and back toward this re-emerging threat.

At the famous Battle of Nagashino, Nobunaga scored a devastating defeat over the Takeda clan. Nobunaga drew his forces up close to the Takeda to limit the space with

which the Takeda could mount a cavalry charge and then he quickly erected a wooded palisade on the opposite side of a small river which would slow the cavalry charge at the last instant. Nobunaga then had anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 arquebusiers (the number varies according to the source) form three ranks behind the palisade to fire in volleys, with spear carriers next to them to stop any horsemen who made it through the volleys of gunfire.⁴⁸⁶ The combination worked to deadly effect. The Takeda forces suffered around 10,000 out of a total force of 15,000 men, according to contemporary accounts, with large casualties among the top ranks and leaders, while the Oda forces suffered very few casualties. The Takeda were so decimated at this battle that, though Katsuyori continued to resist in until 1582, the clan had no effect on events playing out in Central Japan. Of all of Nobunaga's foes up to this point, the Takeda clan had been most likely to defeat him. With their defeat at Nagashino, Nobunaga was able to finish the year 1575 as one of Japan's most dominant military powers.⁴⁸⁷

Nagashino is typified in the historical literature as the first modern battle in Japanese history due to the argument that Nobunaga mounted three-ranked volley arquebus gunfire. Doubt has been cast on the possibility of true ranked volley gunfire though. Turnbull mentions that most of the troops with Nobunaga that day would have been those of his subordinates, and that the troops would have been sorely lacking in the ability to countermarch once they had discharged their fire in the first rank (Turnbull 2009, ix-x). Lamers gives the same argument (2000, 112, 245, n. 242). Still, Turnbull states that Nobunaga created a revolutionary concentration of gunfire to defeat a powerful enemy. The arquebus was included in most warlords' armies, but not in such a systematic

⁴⁸⁶ Ōta 1980a, 268-277.

⁴⁸⁷ Lamers 2000, 109.

way before Nagashino.⁴⁸⁸ Nobunaga was the first Japanese general to see the superiority of the weapon when used appropriately. His successors Hideyoshi and Ieyasu learned well from him that day, leading a decade to a prolonged stand off by the two, neither one willing to mount a charge against the other's defenses.

The Second Anti-Nobunaga League, 1576-1582

Fighting slowed in early 1576 but a second Anti-Nobunaga Coalition soon started to take shape to challenge Nobunaga's burgeoning hegemony. After crushing an *Ikkō* rebellion in Echizen Province, previously home of the Asakura, Nobunaga installed there one of his longest tenured generals, Shibata Katsuie. Katsuie's army began to spread out from Echizen into neighboring Kaga Province and was soon encroaching on the sphere of influence of Uesugi Kenshin, the powerful lord of Echigo Province. Kenshin was the long-time nemesis of Takeda Shingen and had maintained a nominal alliance with Nobunaga and Ieyasu, though this alliance had not resulted in any cooperation or coordinated actions.⁴⁸⁹

The former shogun, Yoshiaki, now in exile in western Japan, began to write to his old correspondent and supporter Kenshin to encourage him to take up arms against Nobunaga.⁴⁹⁰ Kōsa of the Honganji, at the time involved in another truce with Nobunaga, became involved as well in efforts to enlist Kenshin as well. There was bad blood between Kōsa and Kenshin however. In 1572, in order to allow Takeda Shingen the opportunity to confront Nobunaga without being hit from behind by Kenshin, Kōsa urged

⁴⁸⁸ Fujimoto 2003, 196-197; Sansom 1961, 288; Keegan 1993, 43.

⁴⁸⁹ Ike and Yata 2007, 141-143.

⁴⁹⁰ Haga et al. 1993b, 79, 169 (docs. #434, #575).

his *Ikkō* followers in Uesugi-held territory to revolt to keep the Uesugi occupied.⁴⁹¹

Yoshiaki, by now a shrewd negotiator, attended to peace between these two.⁴⁹² Kōsa soon spurned his truce with Nobunaga and mobilized his forces again, drawing Nobunaga's attention back to the south of Kyoto and a prompt siege in June 1576 of the Honganji. Yoshiaki also enticed Kenshin to reach peace with the Takeda clan, no small effort since the Takeda were Kenshin's greatest rivals and their post-Nagashino weakness made them ripe for exploitation.⁴⁹³

When Kenshin and the Takeda clan achieved a truce, Yoshiaki turned to another great power, the Mōri clan. Yoshiaki's place of exile was deep inside the western territory of the Mōri clan. He had first written the Mōri about joining the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League shortly before being exiled by Nobunaga in 1573 but they had declined his request. Whereas these previous pleas to the Mōri fell upon deaf ears, his pleas in 1576 produced the desired effect. Mōri's entrance onto the scene quickly altered the landscape. Within a few months of Yoshiaki's arrival in Mōri territory, the Mōri fleet sailed supplies to Osaka, broke Nobunaga's blockade, and relieved the siege of Kōsa's fortress. The Mōri fleet then engaged and destroyed a smaller naval force put together by Nobunaga in early August 1576. While Nobunaga was occupied rooting out *Ikkō* irregulars in Kii Province in spring 1577, Mōri's land forces entered Harima Province, located only two provinces away from Kyoto.

⁴⁹¹ Kasahara 1994, 694; Yata 2005, 117-118.

⁴⁹² Taniguchi 2009, 99. Lamers 2000, 150-151.

⁴⁹³ Ike and Yata 2007, 165.

Table 6.2 – The Second Anti-Nobunaga Coalition, 1576-1582

Mōri Terumoto[†]
 Uesugi Kenshin[†]
 Takeda Katsuyori[†]
 Bessho Nagaharu
 Araki Murashige (defector)
 Kōsa & the *Ikkō ikki*
 Ukita Naoie
 Matsunaga Hisahide (defector)

[†] denotes great power status.

Uesugi Kenshin provided a powerful counter to Nobunaga from the north. Militarily, the Uesugi were equals of the powerful Takeda clan, having drawn with them in several battles over the years, so Kenshin had the capacity to incur upon Nobunaga a certain level of damage as the Takeda had done (though that capacity decreased given that Nobunaga had grown more powerful). Because there were two great power warlord clans involved, the 2nd Anti-Nobunaga League was potentially more dangerous to Nobunaga than the 1st League had been. Mōri wrote Uesugi in July 1575 to request that he bring his full forces without delay southward against Nobunaga.⁴⁹⁴ Kenshin in response entered Etchū and Noto Provinces in the fall of 1576, putting Oda forces under Katsuie to flight. Meanwhile, Kōsa called for *Ikkō* to rise against Katsuie in Kaga Province. Nobunaga rushed north to bolster Katsuie, and in their first and only meeting

⁴⁹⁴ Ike and Yata 2007, 166.

on the battlefield, Kenshin soundly defeated Nobunaga and Katsuie at the Battle of Minatogawa in Kaga Province.⁴⁹⁵

Buoyed by this victory but needing more forces and wary of the approaching winter, Kenshin returned home in October 1577 to mobilize more forces. Bad snowstorms in his mountainous domain curtailed his preparations and he postponed further campaigning until the spring. Unfortunately for the 2nd League, his anticipated spring campaign never occurred. Kenshin died in April 1578 of a stroke at the age of forty-eight before he could press his advantage against Nobunaga, and the clan became embroiled in a succession dispute which ended any further challenge against Nobunaga.⁴⁹⁶

The Mōri clan thus was left alone against Nobunaga. The other two clans that could be considered great powers, the Hōjō clan in the Kantō region and the Ōtomo clan on Kyūshū, still remained but did nothing for either side. The Mōri and their kinsmen, the Kikkawa and Kobayakawa clans, were joined by the nearby Ukita clan as they advanced in Harima Province. A Harima-based clan, the Bessho, defected from their pro-Nobunaga stance to join the Mōri camp.⁴⁹⁷ This should have amounted to an adequate force to take Kyoto, but faced with only one offensive threat, Nobunaga was able to stop their advance. His very capable general and future successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, stemmed the advance with reinforcements from other Nobunaga generals. In addition, Nobunaga was able to use his superior resources to put the blockade of the Honganji in Osaka back in force in 1578 with iron-sided ships, designed specifically to counter the Mōri fleet.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁵ Darling 2000, 110

⁴⁹⁶ Lamers 2000, 158.

⁴⁹⁷ Taniguchi 2006, 187-192.

⁴⁹⁸ Taniguchi 2006, 195-196.

So Nobunaga was able to overcome the combination of two great powers fighting in tandem. The Mōri continued to be held off by Hideyoshi until Nobunaga's death in 1582. Kōsa also continued to be a thorn in Nobunaga's side, though he was holed up in the Ishiyama Honganji. Kōsa was finally coaxed out of the great Honganji fortress after the long ten-year siege in 1580; the fortress was consequently destroyed by fire, though the cause is uncertain. Two other threats from this 2nd Anti-Nobunaga League came from within: On separate occasions, two warlords from the Oda camp defected and holed up in their castles. First, in late September 1577, Matsunaga Hisahide, the man who had played the main role in assassinating Shogun Yoshiteru and who then pledged allegiance to Nobunaga, rebelled and then rejoined Nobunaga's side, and was one of the commanders of the siege of the Honganji, defected once more upon corresponding with Kenshin. Nobunaga, probably tired of Matsunaga's tricks, had his oldest son Nobutada destroy him. The other defection, in November 1578 by Araki Murashige of Settsu Province, was more dangerous due to the proximity of Mōri's forces. Araki had been playing a part in the campaign against the oncoming Mōri forces since Settsu Province was in a key position between Mōri's forces and the Honganji. He was lured to the 2nd League by Kōsa, but his defection too was settled after a siege of more than a year.

The remainder of this period saw success for Nobunaga. Hideyoshi held the Mōri in check and Shibata Katusie was able to drive all the way into Etchū Province, adjacent to the Uesugi clan's home territory of Echigo. Meanwhile, Tokugawa Ieyasu made allies of one of the two remaining great warlord clans who had yet to enter the conflict. The Hōjō clan were rivals of the Takeda clan but had signed a truce with the Takeda in 1571 just before Shingen began his drive against Nobunaga. In 1578, they made an alliance

with Ieyasu and together they began to hack off pieces of territory from the declining Takeda. The Takeda clan would be totally destroyed and its leader Katusyori forced to suicide in Nobunaga's last year, 1582.

The Hōjō thus became allies of Nobunaga through Ieyasu, and they paid tribute to Nobunaga in acceptance of his overlordship. Other warlords from the north and east began paying tribute also.⁴⁹⁹ Moreover, Oda forces were in the process of preparing an invasion of the island of Shikoku to try to bring the Chōsōkabe clan under his rule. By the time of his death in 1582, Nobunaga was thus the undisputed ruler of Central Japan and was well positioned to add to his territory.

His death on June 21, 1582 was the result of betrayal from one of his longtime generals and right-hand men, a vassal named Akechi Mitsuhide from Mino. While preparing to join Hideyoshi to oversee fighting with the Mōri, Nobunaga stopped in Kyoto for an overnight stay at Honnōji, a Buddhist temple in central Kyoto. Akechi had been ordered to join him and Hideyoshi on the Mōri front as well with his troops, but while en route he turned back to Kyoto and surrounded Honnōji with his troops. Nobunaga's personal guard was light and quickly overcome and the temple set on fire. Nobunaga, wounded from the fighting, was either killed by the fire or from suicide. The rebellion and Nobunaga's destruction was quick and decisive. There is widespread speculation by historians on Akechi's reasons but little agreement. After the assassination, Akechi surrounded and forced the death of Nobunaga's eldest son and successor, Nobutada, and then quickly tried to have himself installed as Nobunaga's replacement in the bureaucratic structure (a bureaucracy that he himself had largely created). But he did not have long to enjoy his newly elevated position. Hideyoshi had

intercepted a message from Akechi to Mōri regarding Nobunaga's death, and he moved quickly. He made peace with Mōri and then marched his forces quickly toward the Kyoto area, where he met and destroyed Akechi a mere thirteen days after Nobunaga's death.⁵⁰⁰ Hideyoshi then began jockeying for power with his fellow generals in the Oda military structure, a topic which is covered in the next chapter.

Analysis of the Hypotheses

Balance of Power Theory's Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability.*

Hypothesis 2: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability and the great power or alliance displays a clear intent to dominate.*

Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

Balance of power theory is said to be a theory of great power behavior, but in this case the mid-level warlords closest to Nobunaga and Kyoto performed much of the balancing against Nobunaga.⁵⁰¹ These were the Asakura and Azai clans, the *Ikkō ikki*

⁴⁹⁹ Lamers 2000, 162.

⁵⁰⁰ Berry 1982, 71-72.

⁵⁰¹ Aron 1967, 94-95; Waltz 1979, 72-73; Claude 1989, 78; Mearsheimer 2001, 5; Levy 2003, 140.

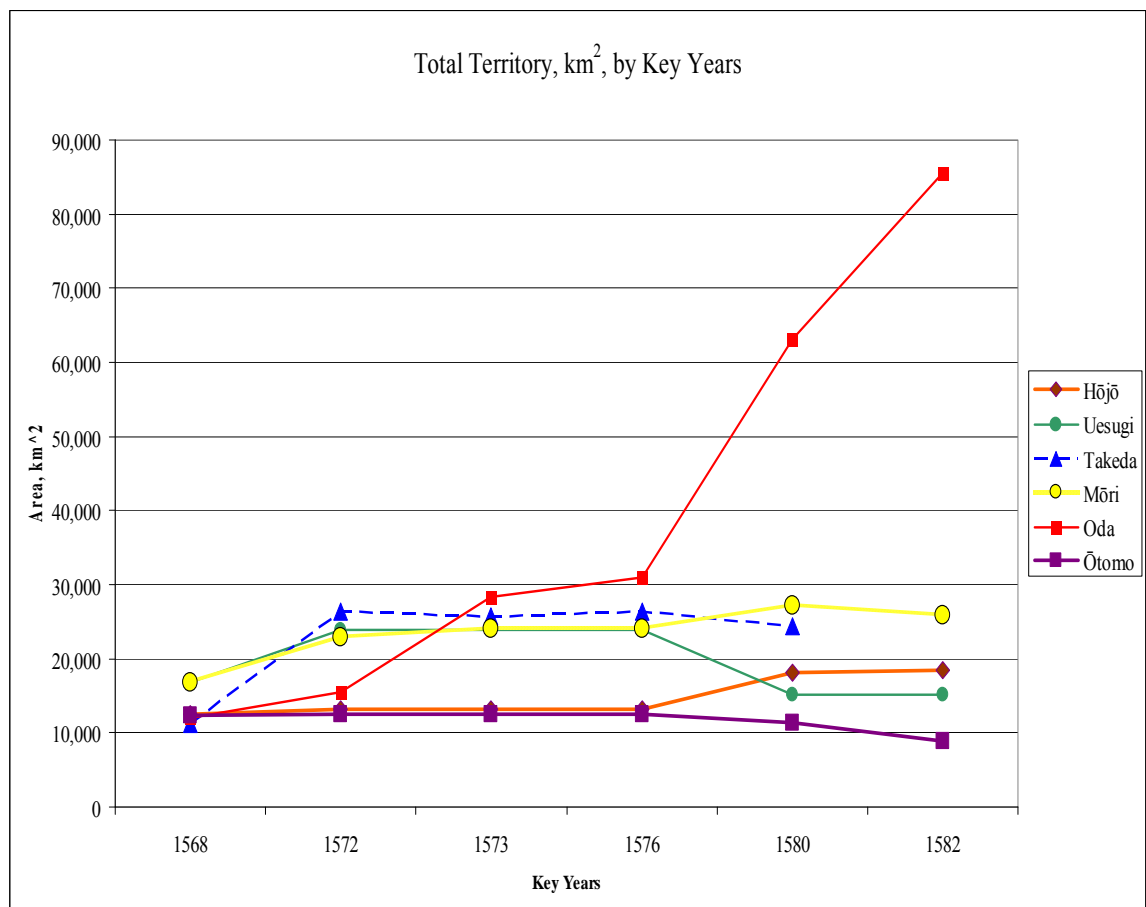
Buddhist militants, and Miyoshi Triumvirs.⁵⁰² The strongest warlords buckpassed at first and then balanced late (Takeda in 1572, Mōri and Uesugi in 1576) or did not balance at all (the Hōjō). Nobunaga's nascent domination seeking campaign was dangling on a string in the first two years – Nobunaga had to constantly dash back and forth between the southern and northern parts of Central Japanese provinces surrounding Kyoto. If a warlord as powerful as Takeda had joined the balancing in 1570, which he was inclined to do, then Nobunaga would have been in all likelihood sufficiently balanced. But these powerful warlords were too worried about their positions vis-à-vis their regional rivals (Takeda, Uesugi, Hōjō) or about establishing their own regional hegemonic order (Mōri). With Uesugi Kenshin dead and the Mōri clan stopped dead in their tracks in 1582, there is little doubt that Nobunaga could have continued along and completed unification as Hideyoshi did over the next eight years. In the turbulent times of the Warring States Period, a period as realist and Hobbesian as one can get, the great powers were so concerned about their own defense and about gaining advantage over their own rivals that they did not see in time the threat to the system which endangered their own autonomy.

The system thus was tending toward hegemony during this case. That it was momentarily halted due to Nobunaga's assassination matters little – he was not stopped from balancing or even overexpansion (a hegemonic realist factor) but by rebellion from within his own organization, which is not predicted by balance of power theory. Moreover, his domination seeking was picked up by Hideyoshi and the hegemonic trend was complete by 1590. This case does not support balance of power theory's systemic hypothesis (Hypothesis 3) that hegemonic orders do not form due to balancing.

⁵⁰² The Asakura technically were performing self-defense in 1570, not balancing. But their behavior changed to balancing with they decided to attack Nobunaga when he was campaigning in the south.

The trend toward hegemony notwithstanding, three of the four potential great power balancers did nonetheless balance Nobunaga, though their decisions to balance should be considered late. Figure 6.2 summarizes the distribution of power among the great powers, including Nobunaga, with power measure by the total area of territory under control by each warlord.

Figure 6.2 – The Distribution of Power, 1568-1582



In defense of the balancers' tardiness, it may not have been apparent who the most threatening great power was. Takeda Shingen was also seeking to expand his territories, as were the Uesugi and Mōri clans. Nobunaga was the quickest rising power, but he was distant from the Mōri, Uesugi, and Hōjō clans, and Takeda became the greatest threat in 1572. For Uesugi then, it made sense to balance Takeda and buckpass the Nobunaga threat. Figure 6.2 makes it look sensible for Uesugi and Mōri to balance Nobunaga in 1576, since he became the most powerful warlord and had just defeated the Takeda clan at Nagashino in 1575. The Hōjō showed themselves to be inveterate bandwagoners. They bandwagoned with Uesugi Kenshin in the late 1560s, when he (along with Mōri) was the most powerful, then they switched to bandwagoning with Takeda in 1572 when he became the most powerful, and then they switched to Nobunaga in the late 1570s when it was obvious that he was the dominant power. For three of the four units nonetheless, their balancing supports the general unit-level prediction of balance of power theory.

The effect of multiple domination seekers had a role in the inefficient balancing. Uesugi Kenshin chose the wrong rising power to balance and the Mōri chose to let events in Central Japan play out a little more before involving themselves. The presence of a rival domination seeker in Takeda Shingen undoubtedly effected Kenshin's choice to target Shingen instead of Nobunaga. Overall, the effect of multiple domination seekers caused a delay in the balancing of both Uesugi and Mōri, which proved crucial since Nobunaga grew relatively powerful after defeating Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin died only a few months into his campaign. It is an important conclusion that the timeliness of balancing is relevant to the prevention of the establishment of hegemonic order. This

factor is not usually taken into account in the balancing literature. It is usually just assumed that late balancing is still balancing, and that it can still prevent hegemony. The results of the case suggest otherwise.

The balancing hypothesis, with qualification, is thus supported, but there are two remaining issues to discuss regarding the Hypotheses 1 and 2. We first must discuss the threshold of power that triggers balancing, and second, the debate between balancing versus capabilities or balancing versus capabilities *and* the intent to dominate. The threshold of power needed to trigger balancing was operationalized at 33% of the system's capabilities. With power measured by proxy by the territory under a warlord's control, controlling 33% of the total land mass of Japan (without Hokkaido, which was then not considered part of the system) represents an extremely high hurdle. The total area of Japan minus Hokkaido equals 284,940 km², and 33% of this equals 94,980 km². Nobunaga was clearly the greatest hegemonic threat in 1580, yet he only controlled between 63,000 km². He controlled roughly 85,000 km² at the time of his death. This threshold thus appears unreasonably high. Given that control of the far north of Honshu and the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku was not crucial to establishing a hegemonic order for the Ashikaga shogunate, I have reduced the threshold from controlling all of Japan to just what I call "relevant Honshu," the part of Honshu minus the two massive but sparsely populated northern provinces of Mutsu and Dewa. Honshu by itself equals 230,500 km²; "relevant Honshu" equals 163,612 km² and 33% of this equals 53,992 km². Nobunaga gained this level of territory in 1579 when Hideyoshi conquered and cajoled his way out west to meet the Mōri while Shibata Katsuie, in the wake of Uesugi

Kenshin's death, marched up to the borders of the Uesugi home province of Echigo.⁵⁰³

But of course, Uesugi and Mōri had already decided to balance Nobunaga by then, so this threshold still seems high. It is probably that perception is a factor; 33% is a good place to start with an operationalization but perceiving whether one warlord or state has 33% of the system's capability or not is probably a difficult thing to do. This could also be a problem of using conquered territory as a measure of power, although territory is a much more visible sign of power than armaments. Figure 6.2 and the balancing that took place indicate that balancing the leading power might be what actually takes place.

The second matter regards whether the warlords needed to see signs of Nobunaga's intent to dominate to begin balancing. This matter is complicated by the measure of power employed here. By this measure, a warlord expands his territory when he increases his power, which is a manifestation of the intent to expand. But it is not necessarily intent to dominate the whole system. For that, he would have to continue expanding. Intent to dominate is distinct from the measure of power employed here.

The question of intent draws attention to Nobunaga's entry into Kyoto and his seal, established in 1567, which read "*tenka fubu*," or "the realm under the military class." *Tenka* in this sense meant "realm" and Nobunaga at the same time chose the name Gifu for his new headquarters in the recently captured capital of Mino. Gifu was partly taken from the capital of the Zhou Dynasty, who conquered China in 1045 BCE. This can be taken as an indication that Nobunaga in the 1560s intended to unify Japan under his rule. *Tenka* could also mean state, and after 1570, he began issuing documents in which he repeatedly associated the word *tenka* with his own name, implying that he was the

⁵⁰³ Lamers 2000, 161-162.

state, though the biographer Lamers argues this was just a matter of personal political advantage seeking between him and Shogun Yoshiaki.⁵⁰⁴

Whether other warlords took these as indications of his intent to dominate is another matter however. There is no evidence that other warlords took his seal to heart and began arranging to stop his ascension to Kyoto. After all, as we saw in the last chapter, many had done that in the 16th century without trying to establish dominance over the other warlords. More concrete manifestations of Nobunaga intentions are what started the balancing in 1570. In 1569 and again in 1570, he ordered warlords from the provinces surrounding Kyoto to come to Kyoto. He also started issuing his own documents and judgments, acts that were ostensibly the prerogative of the Shogun.⁵⁰⁵ It was one of these acts, the order to attend an audience with the Shogun in 1570, which led to the Asakura clan's decision to resist. Some of the Nobunaga's judgments went against the Buddhist militants at the Honganji and the Enryakuji which precipitated their involvement in the First Anti-Nobunaga Alliance. Thus his actions, more than his intentions, led to the first attempts at balancing.

But these were just the minor powers, not the great powers. The Uesugi and Mōri do not seem to have been bothered by these initiatives on Nobunaga's part – they were on friendly terms with him in these early years. The actions of the first great power balancer, Takeda Shingen, are important to this issue. As the closest warlord to Nobunaga, he began to be concerned with Nobunaga as a new growing power on his western flank beginning in the mid-1560s, before Nobunaga's entry into Kyoto.⁵⁰⁶ As a great power in a century that had not experienced a central ruling authority, Shingen was probably

⁵⁰⁴ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 167; Lamers 2000, 70-71; Totman 2005, 207.

⁵⁰⁵ Lamers 2000, 62, 67, 72.

concerned with Nobunaga's capability and less with his intentions. Thus, capabilities alone seem to have more support as the cause of balancing.

The Project's Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

Hypothesis 6: *The more proximate a great power is to the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will balance. The more distant a great power is, and the more great powers there are between it and the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will buckpass.*

Hypothesis 7: *A distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in its direction.*

Hypothesis 8: *If a great power's rival is threatening hegemony, then that great power is more likely to balance.*

Hypothesis 9: *If a great power's rival balances against a hegemonic threat, then the great power is likely to buckpass or bandwagon with the hegemonic threat. The balancer is more likely to be the more proximate of the two to the hegemonic threat.*

Hypothesis 10: *If a great power engaged in a rivalry buckpasses or bandwagons a hegemonic threat and the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction, it will turn to balancing late and ally with its rival.*

⁵⁰⁶ Hasegawa 1993, 55.

The Nobunaga case shows support for Hypotheses 4 and 5. The system was moving in the direction of hegemonic order and Nobunaga swept up most of Honshu between the Kanto region and the Mōri clan's territories. The following series of maps (Figs. 6.3-6.7) show the consolidation of territory during this period into the hands of the few, as the other great powers expanded their territories as well.

Figure 6.3 – Japan, 1568

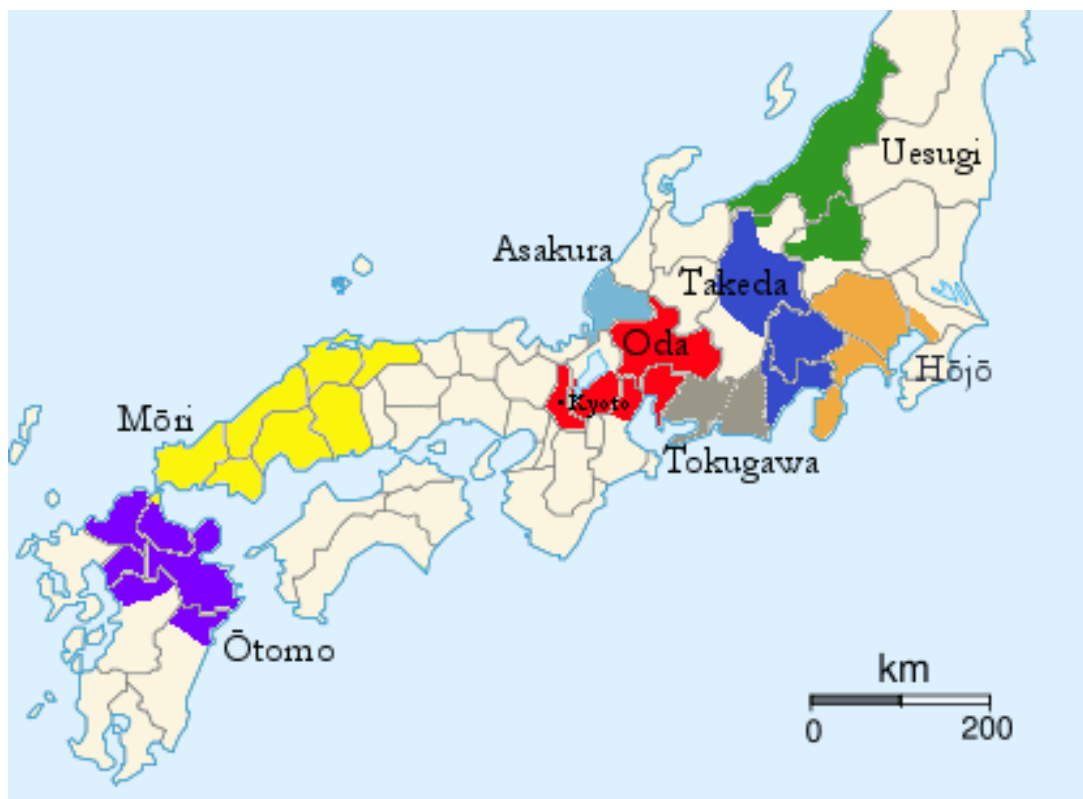


Figure 6.4 – Japan, 1572

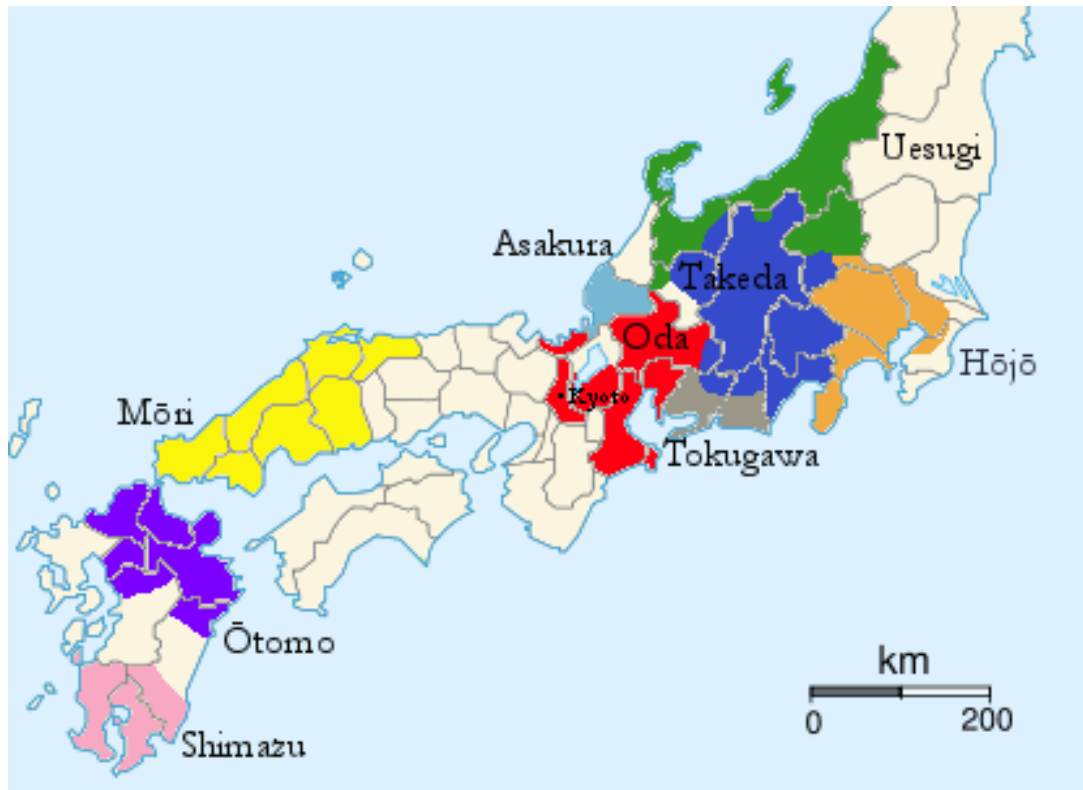


Figure 6.5 – Japan, 1576

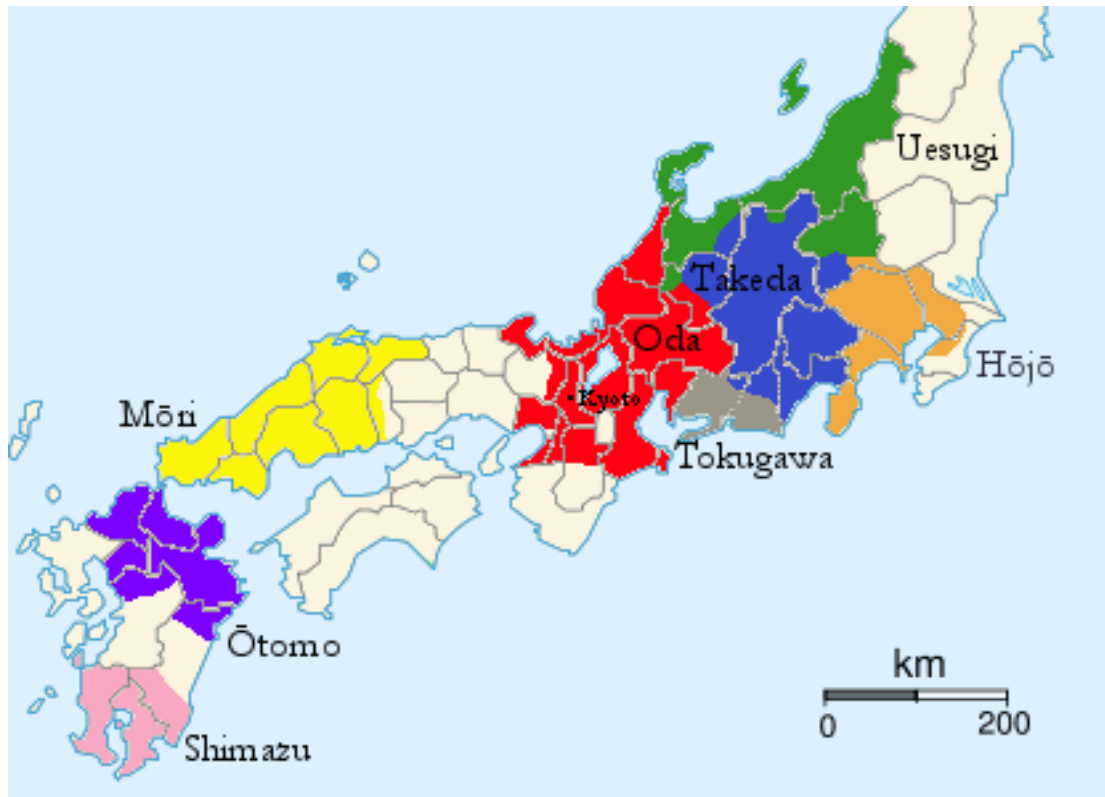


Figure 6.6 – Japan, 1580

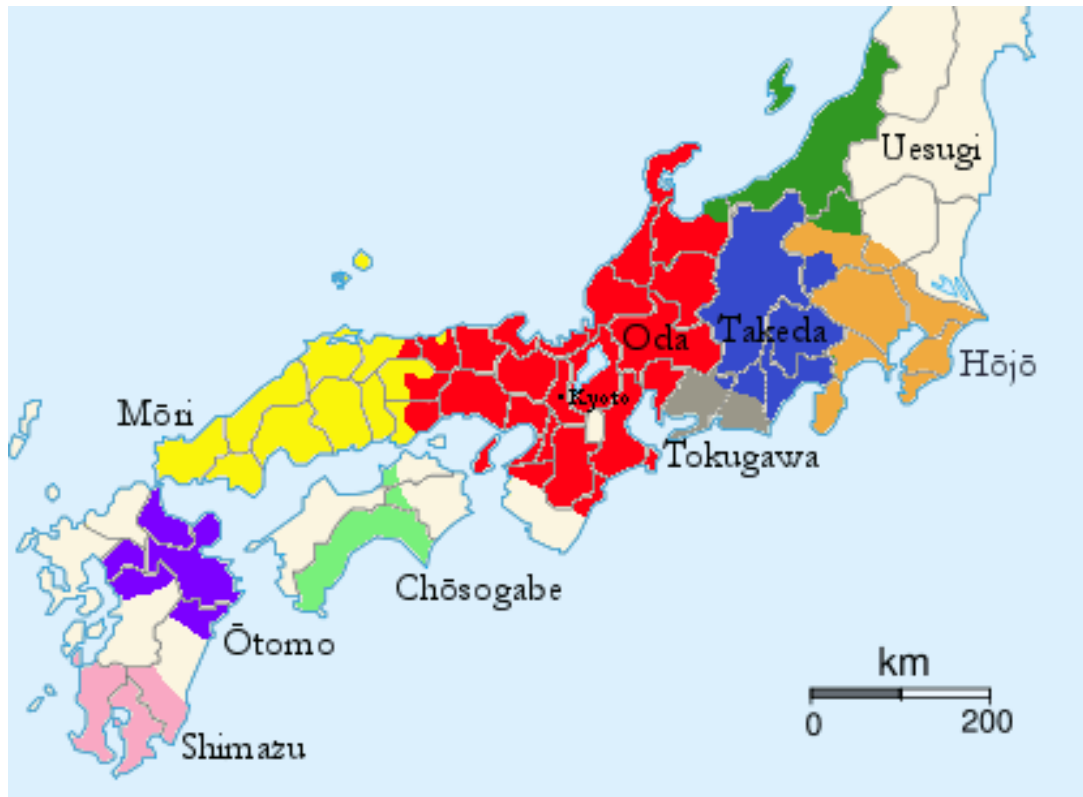
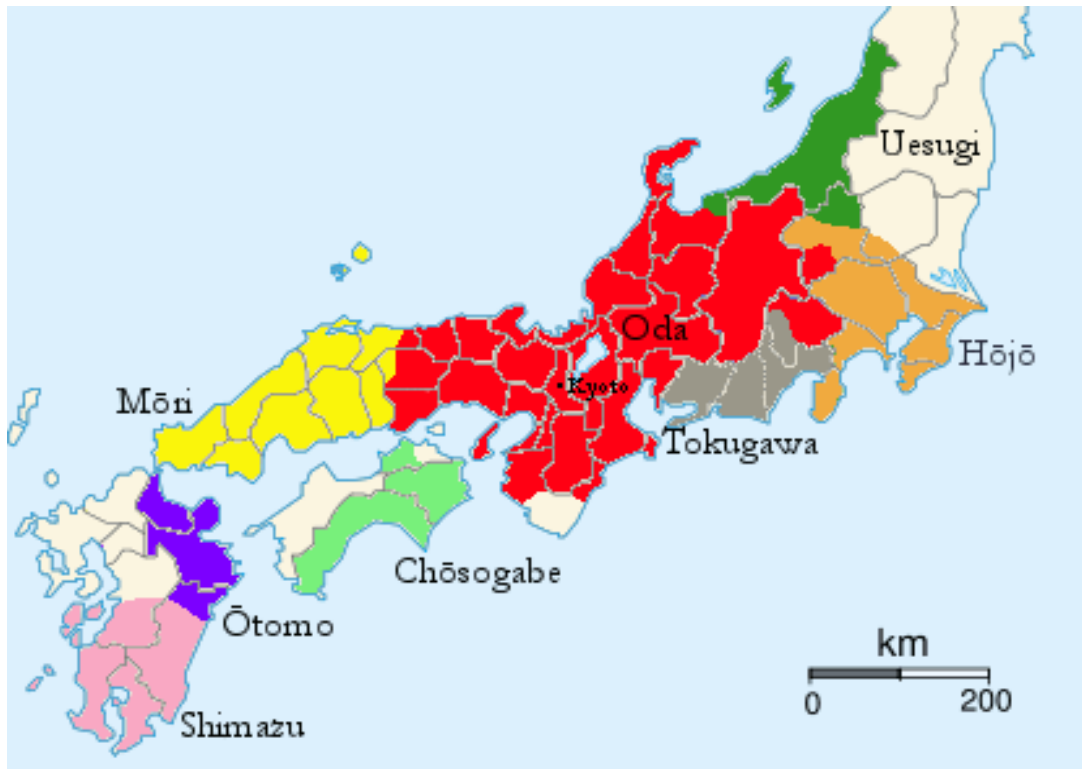


Figure 6.7 – Japan, 1582



This is not full support of the hypothesis – the system did not achieve a full transformation to a hegemonic order during Nobunaga’s time and it is possible that it would not have endured given his strictness and high-handedness, but it nonetheless shows support for the type of dynamics that Watson spoke of in *The Evolution of International Society*: When a system swings too far in the direction of anarchy, and the Warring States Period was clearly an extreme case of anarchy, the pendulum tends to swing back in the direction of hegemony.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁷ Watson 2009, 123-125.

The unit-level hypotheses will be handled with more detailed analyses of the individual great power warlords' decisions.

The Takeda Clan – Kai and Shinano Provinces

After the unifiers, Takeda Shingen is perhaps the most well known Sengoku warlord. He is best known for his fierce rivalry with Uesugi Kenshin as discussed in the previous chapter. This rivalry saw the two battling five times at the same location in Shinano Province over the period 1553-1564, among various other times and places. The Takeda and Uesugi also allied off and on with their rival in the Kantō region, the Hōjō clan. After a long period of rivalry, the Takeda and Uesugi clans finally aligned with each other with Kenshin's belated decision to balance against Nobunaga after the Takeda clan's overwhelming defeat at Nagashino in 1575.

The Takeda clan were the first great power clan to balance Nobunaga and the only great power in the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League. The central question that must be answered is why Takeda Shingen decided to balance Nobunaga and why he did so when he did. Was it due to the reasons described by balance of power theory? The question of his months-long delay in directly attacking Nobunaga must also be addressed, since by the time he attacked, winter was nearing and his Asakura/Azai allies were already exhausted from being on campaign for several months. Shingen was angered when Asakura and Azai retired from the field at the moment he was joining it, but if he had joined the campaign earlier, his allies would not have been in such bad shape. This delay was crucial in the failure of the warlords to halt Nobunaga's rise at an early point. But first, we

must explore the background of the relationship between the Takeda and Nobunaga, starting with an attempted alliance between the two in the 1560s.

Nobunaga and Shingen's first encounter occurred in the mid 1560s, when they began to try to arrange an alliance marriage between Shingen's eldest son and a daughter of Nobunaga, a marriage which was completed in 1565. However the daughter died during childbirth and it was recognized by both sides that the alliance was not yet complete.⁵⁰⁸ A second attempt was proposed by Nobunaga to marry his eldest son Nobutada, then eleven years old, with a daughter of Shingen, who was not yet seven years old. This attempt did not immediately come to fruition, probably because both lords realized it was too early for the children, but importantly it resulted in a dispute between Shingen and his advisors over his attempts to ally with Nobunaga.⁵⁰⁹

According to the Takeda clan historian, Hasegawa Hiromichi, Shingen thought that he needed the alliance because Nobunaga was a proximate rising power who was completing his takeover of the large province of Mino, located only two provinces to the west of Takeda's Kai Province.⁵¹⁰ In Hasegawa's account, Shingen sought to protect his western flank and preempt the possibility that he would be totally surrounded by enemies in the near future; this is echoed by another Takeda scholar, Kamogawa Tatsuo.⁵¹¹ However, his senior advisors saw a dilemma. They sensed that Nobunaga's ambitions were great, and they knew not where these ambitions would lead, so they advised him

⁵⁰⁸ Owada 1987, 199. Interestingly, in this case a successful marriage was deemed necessary for the Oda-Takeda alliance. There are cases of alliances without a marriage or adoption (e.g., the Oda-Uesugi and later the Mōri-Hideyoshi alliance), while in many well-known cases, the existence of a marriage or adoption did not prevent an alliance from breaking down (e.g., the Azai-Oda, Takeda-Imagawa, Uesugi-Hōjō, and Toyotomi-Tokugawa alliances). One gets the sense that the requirement of a marriage or adoption was a norm that was not followed by everyone and more importantly, that such marriages and adoptions often did not constrain warlords from making decisions to break alliances.

⁵⁰⁹ Owada 1987, 201.

⁵¹⁰ Hasegawa 1993, 55.

against the second alliance marriage proposal. Thus, there were considerations of Nobunaga's intent very early on within Shingen's policy making body, though it is probable that the council believed Nobunaga's expansionist intent was much more local than it later turned out to be. However, Shingen did not take their advice and instead continued to pursue the alliance with Nobunaga.⁵¹²

Then in 1567, at a point during which Owada argues the prospects for an Oda-Takeda alliance were improving, Shingen invaded Suruga Province, directly south of the Takeda homeland of Kai Province and the last remaining province of the former great power Imagawa clan, who were near the end of their long decline prompted by their swift defeat in 1560 at the hands of Nobunaga at Okehazama.⁵¹³ Nobunaga's close ally, Tokugawa Ieyasu, was also picking at the Imagawa domains, having recently taken Tōtōmi Province to the immediate west. He was also advancing toward Suruga. It was publicly known that Ieyasu had an alliance with Nobunaga, so Shingen's actions indirectly brought him into conflict with Nobunaga. The relationship between the two spiraled downward from that point. In 1568, Ieyasu began alliance negotiations with Shingen's rival, Uesugi Kenshin, and in 1569 a Tokugawa patrol on the border between Tōtōmi and Suruga ran into a larger Takeda contingent patrolling the same area, which marked perhaps the first direct military action between the two.⁵¹⁴ As negotiations for the Uesugi-Tokugawa alliance neared completion, one of the conditions Kenshin set was that Ieyasu would ensure that Nobunaga end his efforts to complete the as yet unrealized marriage alliance with Shingen; Ieyasu sent a reply to Kenshin in the fall of 1570 to

⁵¹¹ Kamogawa 2007, 170

⁵¹² Owada 1987, 200-201.

finalize the Uesugi-Tokugawa alliance and Nobunaga subsequently canceled all further plans for an alliance with Shingen.⁵¹⁵

Shingen, possibly aware of the Tokugawa-Uesugi negotiations, but in full knowledge that his conflict with Ieyasu would spoil any relations he had with Nobunaga and bring encirclement, started preparing for opposing Nobunaga as early as 1570. After fighting had broken out between the Asakura/Azai coalition and Nobunaga in May 1570, Shingen began secretly corresponding with Asakura Yoshikage. Shingen also started negotiating with Shogun Yoshiaki and some disaffected warlords, such as Matsunaga Hisahide.⁵¹⁶ These letters were initially just friendly overtures and coded language without obvious references to fighting Nobunaga, lest they were intercepted. But the correspondence built up and Yoshiaki, Shingen, and Kōsa of the Ishiyama Honganji, became the men primarily responsible for coordinating the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League (Kōsa was Shingen's brother-in-law). Shingen's correspondence with Yoshiaki led to suspicions on the part of Nobunaga and played a large part in the eventual breakdown of Yoshiaki and Nobunaga's relationship.⁵¹⁷ Yoshiaki's own armed rebellion against Nobunaga in 1572 came after Shingen started his major advance.⁵¹⁸

If Shingen had started planning in 1570 to oppose Nobunaga, why did he not campaign against him until 1572? Rivalries explain this. The main impediment against movement toward Kyoto by Shingen or Uesugi Kenshin was the balancing constraint

⁵¹³ Owada cites an exchange of gifts between the Oda and Takeda, Owada 1987, 201-202. Shibatsuji describes the decline of the Imagawa, whose clan leaders ended up holding a ceremonial post in the Tokugawa clan, Shibatsuji 2006, 99.

⁵¹⁴ Owada 1987, 202; Ike and Yata 2007, 140.

⁵¹⁵ Haga et al. 1993a, 10-11 (doc. #15); Owada 1987, 208; Shibatsuji 2006, 99; Ike and Yata 2007, 139-142.

⁵¹⁶ Hirayama 2006, 80-82; Shibatsuji 2006, 186.

⁵¹⁷ Lamers 2000, 80-87.

⁵¹⁸ Owada 1987, 209-212; Hirayama 2006, 81-82.

they faced in their home region – each feared that if he left with a large army to march on Kyoto, the other plus the Hōjō clan would doubtlessly invade their territories. Shingen had tried to bring Kenshin to a rapprochement in 1570 but Hōjō Ujiyasu broke this up.⁵¹⁹ But in the winter of 1571-72, Hōjō Ujiyasu died and was replaced by his son, Ujimasa, who was conveniently more disposed toward peace with Takeda in order to concentrate on expanding into Kōzuke Province against the Uesugi. Ujimasa broke his standing alliance with Uesugi and made a treaty with Shingen to protect the Takeda rear that winter.⁵²⁰ To further occupy Uesugi, one of Shingen's correspondents, Kōsa, provoked *Ikkō* insurrections in Uesugi territory beginning in the first half of 1572 to tie down Kenshin's forces.⁵²¹ These two instances demonstrate both the complex alliance coordination of the 1st League and the consequences of rivalries in balancing matters.

On the battlefield during the time leading up to his campaign against Nobunaga, Shingen continued challenging Ieyasu in the Tokugawa-held territories, reaching into the Tokugawa home province of Mikawa in 1571.⁵²² But from the summer of 1571 until fall of 1572, Shingen was at home mobilizing for his decisive confrontation with Nobunaga himself. Two Takeda scholars, Shibatsuji Shunroku and Hirayama Yū, affirm that Shingen declared this to be his push through to Kyoto to destroy Nobunaga.⁵²³ The campaign, launched on November 8, 1572, was very successful. Shingen's original plan was for the 1st League to encircle Nobunaga, with Asakura/Azai forces in the north, Kōsa and Miyoshi troops in the south, and Shingen advancing from the east to deliver the main blow. But the chance for the encirclement was lost when Asakura and Azai decided to

⁵¹⁹ Hirayama 2006, 67-69.

⁵²⁰ Owada 1987, 207.

⁵²¹ Kasahara 1994, 694; Yata 2006, 117-118.

⁵²² Shibatsuji 2006, 186; Owada 1987, 276.

return home for winter after a long campaigning season in which they had been hit hard by Nobunaga. Shingen was angered at Asakura, but persisted in his seemingly unstoppable push.⁵²⁴ But then fate struck: Shingen suddenly took ill, left his campaign, and died in May 1573. His death temporarily ended the threat to Nobunaga; his successor Katsuyori was forced to regroup the Takeda clan leadership to consolidate his power before he could take the field again.

After his consolidation of power, Takeda Katsuyori restarted the march against Tokugawa and Nobunaga in early 1574. But their overwhelming defeat at Nagashino in 1575 largely ended the Takeda offensive threat, though they continued to hold on to their territory and play a lessened role until 1582. Katsuyori, for instance, took up his father's correspondence with the anti-Nobunaga allies and wrote Mōri Terumoto to ask for more troops to be sent.⁵²⁵ The Takeda were vanquished when Katsuyori was destroyed in 1582.

So why did Shingen choose to balance? He balanced because he feared encirclement, but also because he was making his own play for domination of Japan. Hiramama states that he saw the Yoshiaki-Nobunaga rift as his chance to move, and that his support for Yoshiaki was thus just a pretense for his own power play.⁵²⁶ The contention that Shingen was planning a drive all the way to the capital finds support elsewhere in the historical literature.⁵²⁷ We further know why the general timing of his balancing occurred in 1572 – he waited until his rear was guarded through reaching an alliance with one rival and keeping the other occupied. But what about the specific timing of the start of his campaign, the months long delay? Why did Shingen only retake the

⁵²³ Shibatsuji 2006, 186; Hiramama 2006, 79.

⁵²⁴ Lamers 2000, 88-90.

⁵²⁵ Okuno 1983, 379.

⁵²⁶ Hiramama 2006, 79.

field in November 1572 when he had been mobilizing since the summer of 1571, he had the truce with the Hōjō in place in the winter of 1572, and the Uesugi had been kept occupied since the spring? Unfortunately, other than a need for an extended preparation period in order to march all the way to Kyoto, we have no answer. Given the similar delays that Uesugi Kenshin needed when he began to balance Nobunaga, this is the most probably explanation. This delay in balancing nevertheless cost the 1st League its best chance to stop Nobunaga.

The delay caused by Katsuyori's need to consolidate power also proved crucial. Though Shingen was well regarded as a military leader by most historians, so were his famous generals, thus his loss and replacement by Katsuyori, whose military leadership skills were questionable, should not have caused too great of a difference if the Takeda had been able to quickly resume their offensive.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6): The proximity hypothesis is supported. It is not coincidental that the Takeda were the first great power clan to balance Nobunaga and that they were also the closest to Nobunaga.⁵²⁸ There is evidence that Shingen's advisors considered Nobunaga a threat before 1570 because of his proximity and status as a rising power; they feared encirclement from Nobunaga and the Hōjō and Uesugi clans. Shingen initially had the opposite reaction – he wanted to ally with Nobunaga – but for the same reason, the fear of encirclement. If we loosen up the conditions of observing only great

⁵²⁷ Sansom 1961, 284; Shibatsuji 2006, 186.

⁵²⁸ Though their status as the most proximate great power clan is obvious from Figure 6.2, to be exact the most narrow distance between Nobunaga's territory and the Takeda capital between 1568 and 1572 was about 99 km in straight line distance, and ranging from 115 to 175 km via modern paths which may or may not have been in existence then (there is a large mountain range, the Minami Alps, separating Nobunaga's Mino Province from Takeda's Kai Province). Distance was calculated between the modern cities of

powers, we can see the proximity hypothesis supported even more strongly: The initial minor power balancers were all in the vicinity of the Kyoto area.

Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): This hypothesis states that a distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction. Takeda Shingen did buckpass for the two years but that was only because he looking to bolster his rear through the alliance with the Hōjō. He began balancing in 1572 without Nobunaga having moved closer. So there is nothing here to support this hypothesis, though it is not countered.

Balancing a Rival (Hypothesis 8): There is some support for this. A great power is more likely to balance a rival, but Nobunaga and Shingen were not rivals, having no experience of fighting between them. But before moving on to campaign against Nobunaga, it could be said that Shingen made sure to “balance” against his main rival Uesugi by allying with the Hōjō. This is stretching the concept of balancing since we have not considered Uesugi a domination seeker at all, but it captures the spirit of the argument that the warlords were primarily concerned with their rivals.

Buckpassing/Bandwagoning when Rival Balances (Hypothesis 9): This hypothesis requires that a great power’s rivals balance, but Takeda Shingen’s rivals did not balance before he did, so it is not supported here. If we considered the inverse hypothesis, “when a rival bandwagons, then a great power balances,” then we would have support from the

Nagatsugawa and Kōfū. Compare this to the straight line distances to the other great powers, Hōjō (152 km), Uesugi (218 km), and Mōri (308 km).

Takeda side since he knew that Uesugi was allied to Nobunaga through his alliance with Ieyasu.

Late Balancing/Alliance with Rival (Hypothesis 10): This rivalry-based hypothesis is also not supported from the Takeda side since Shingen balanced first among his Kantō rivals. The Takeda did however turn to alliance with their Uesugi rivals after their catastrophic defeat at Nagashino.

The Uesugi Clan – Echigo Province

Uesugi Kenshin is another one of the great, colorful figures of the Sengoku Period. Kenshin was an earlier supporter of Yoshiaki's efforts to become shogun; in fact, Yoshiaki preferred him over Nobunaga. Kenshin likely would have helped him if it were not for his Kantō rivals; for he knew that any movement deep into Central Japan would leave his northern territory exposed.⁵²⁹ He was a Buddhist priest, like his rival Shingen, but unlike Shingen, he never married or sired any children. His lack of successors forced Kenshin to make two adoptions: One was his sister's son and the second was a son from the Hōjō clan. The latter was an "alliance adoption" similar to the practice of marriage alliances, but like many marriage alliances this attempt failed when Hōjō Ujimasa aligned with Takeda Shingen against Kenshin in 1571. The nephew eventually succeeded him.

The central questions that must be answered by this analysis are why Uesugi Kenshin chose to ally with Nobunaga during the 1st Anti-Nobunaga League, whether he considered himself to be balancing against Takeda Shingen during this period, and why he then chose to balance against Nobunaga during the 2nd League. It is well known that

there was initially an alliance or friendship of some type between Kenshin and Nobunaga. But what was the nature of this relationship and how did it come to a close?

Two Uesugi biographers, Ike Susumu and Yata Toshifumi, date the relationship back to 1564, when Nobunaga was still trying to conquer Mino Province and wrote a letter to one of Kenshin's vassals. Kenshin later wrote back to Nobunaga in 1567 to congratulate him on his victory in Mino.⁵³⁰ From there, Ike and Yata write that the correspondence between Nobunaga and Kenshin "quickly became intimate."⁵³¹ Though Ike and Yata later characterize the relationship as an "alliance dating back to 1564," it is apparent later that this had simply been a friendship characterized by exchanges of letters and sometimes gifts without any specific military goals or plans for coordinated actions: In 1568, Nobunaga's close ally Tokugawa Ieyasu, who opposed Shingen from the southwest in the provinces of Suruga and Tōtōmi, first began making overtures to the Uesugi with the goal of making an alliance to counter Shingen. Negotiations stretched on until 1570, when Kenshin agreed with the condition that Ieyasu urge Nobunaga to join a three-way attack on the Takeda. Ieyasu promised to do this in an October 1570 letter which finalized the alliance.⁵³² Since Kenshin had to use Ieyasu to get Nobunaga to join, it would seem that the previous relationship between Nobunaga and Kenshin was less than a military alliance. Nonetheless, Darling writes that by 1573 an alliance had been established between Kenshin and Nobunaga.⁵³³

When Shingen made his major western advance in 1572 and continuing into 1573, Nobunaga and Ieyasu's forces were encircled by Takeda and the rest of the 1st

⁵²⁹ Fujiki and Elison 1981, 152; Darling 2000, 103.

⁵³⁰ Darling 2000, 112.

⁵³¹ Ike and Yata 2007, 119; Dai Nihon Shiryō Hensanjo 1973a, 492-492 (doc. #500, 501).

⁵³² Haga et al. 1993a, 10-11, doc. #15; Ike and Yata 2007, 139-142.

League and they called upon Kenshin to hit the Takeda from their rear.⁵³⁴ Kenshin informed associates that he planned on moving to relieve them but he became occupied putting down the Buddhist and peasant *Ikkō* insurrections in his territories created by League member Kōsa and could not attack Takeda.⁵³⁵ He did at one point in 1572 send a force into neighboring Kōzuke Province to test the new alliance between the Hōjō and Takeda clans, but was chased away by their combined forces.⁵³⁶ In 1573, Shingen died and the pressure on the Takeda front alleviated for Nobunaga and Ieyasu. The following year, Nobunaga and Ieyasu again asked Kenshin to invade the Takeda territories to press the advantage against the Takeda. But seeing that the Takeda front was quiet, Kenshin instead placed higher priority on putting down more *Ikkō* insurrections in Etchū and fighting the Hōjō clan, who were advancing against the Uesugi in Kōzuke Province.⁵³⁷

The lack of results from the alliance ruptured the relationship between Nobunaga and Kenshin. Interestingly enough, it was Kenshin who first found fault. In the summer of 1574, Kenshin accused Nobunaga of not doing enough by not sending his own troops (most of the troops on the scene belonged to Tokugawa) into Takeda territory when Kenshin was fighting the Hōjō. Nobunaga responded that he had been busy fighting off multiple enemies, but both Nobunaga and Ieyasu reassured Kenshin that they would send troops into Kai and Shinano Provinces in the coming fall.⁵³⁸ After this, there is no correspondence between Kenshin and Nobunaga or Ieyasu over the next year as Kenshin continued to deal with the Hōjō and issues with his own retainers. Nobunaga and Ieyasu

⁵³³ Darling 2000, 113.

⁵³⁴ Darling 2000, 114.

⁵³⁵ Darling 2000, 114; Ike and Yata 2007, 142-143, 151.

⁵³⁶ Shibatsuji 2006, 187.

⁵³⁷ Ike and Yata 2007, 143, 156-159.

⁵³⁸ Taniguchi 2009, 99-100.

did not send troops into Takeda territory as promised once the Takeda became active again under Katsuyori.

Then two things occurred that greatly changed the Uesugi-Nobunaga alliance from Kenshin's perspective. First, in June 1575, Nobunaga and Ieyasu had their great victory over the Takeda army at Nagashino. Kenshin had broken their correspondence impasse by writing Nobunaga in May 1575, and Oda took the opportunity after Nagashino to reply and inform Kenshin of the exceptional rout over the Takeda.⁵³⁹ Kenshin must have been taken aback – he had not managed to accomplish a decisive victory in all of his attempts against the Takeda – so much that he did not write back to Nobunaga again. Taniguchi remarks that it is possible that a person, who he says was probably Yoshiaki, helped to cause the split between Kenshin and Nobunaga.⁵⁴⁰ Even if this is true, Kenshin would need a reason to begin listening to Yoshiaki two years after Nobunaga had exiled him. Nevertheless, there are no more records of correspondence between the two after this last letter from Nagashino.⁵⁴¹ Second, Oda forces commanded by Shibata Katsuie invaded Etchū and Noto Provinces, encroaching on a region that Kenshin regarded as his sphere of influence. Though Katsuie had taken care not to directly attack Uesugi troops, the movement into this area combined with the victory at Nagashino probably had the effect of leading Kenshin to see that the foe he had been balancing against, the Takeda clan was much less dangerous and widespread than the man he had been nominally allied with. Sensing Kenshin's change of heart, Nobunaga began communicating directly with other warlords in the Kantō area and areas of north of that, instead of going through Kenshin as he had done previously. Though he left an

⁵³⁹ Ike and Yata 2007, 163; Taniguchi 2009, 100.

⁵⁴⁰ Taniguchi 2009, 100.

opportunity to enter Shinano Province himself, he asked smaller warlords who also had gripes with the Takeda clan, such as the Satake clan, to help in dismantling the Takeda.⁵⁴²

In 1576, after repeated requests, Kenshin responded favorably to overtures from Mōri and Yoshiaki regarding a 2nd Anti-Nobunaga League.⁵⁴³ Yoshiaki had picked up his correspondence with his old supporter and would-be champion Kenshin in December 1575 and asked him to make peace with the Takeda and Kenshin responded positively to this and contacted Takeda Katsuyori.⁵⁴⁴ Yoshiaki also started negotiating peace between Kenshin and Kōsa of the Ishiyama Honganji, instigator of the erstwhile *Ikkō* attacks of the last few years against the Uesugi.⁵⁴⁵ Mōri Terumoto, who was now hosting Yoshiaki and taking a lead part in coordinating the 2nd League, also began writing Kenshin to coordinate military actions.⁵⁴⁶ Kenshin agreed to the alliance in June 1576 and made peace with the Takeda and Kōsa, although he gravely mistrusted Kōsa and the *Ikkō*. Nor did the *Ikkō*, who were not completely controlled by Kōsa, trust Kenshin. They were split on whether they should cooperate with Kenshin, thus when Kenshin moved his forces into Kaga Province, he clashed with the *Ikkō* despite the truce. Kōsa had to mediate via letters from Osaka to call off the *Ikkō* resistance.⁵⁴⁷ After being pressed by Mōri not to delay and settling his issues with the *Ikkō*, Kenshin made his first attack on Oda forces in Etchū and Noto Provinces in September 1576.⁵⁴⁸ This marks the official end of the

⁵⁴¹ Taniguchi 2009, 100; Ike and Yata 2007, 163.

⁵⁴² Ike and Yata 2007, 165.

⁵⁴³ Taniguchi 2009, 101.

⁵⁴⁴ Haga et al. 1993a, 35 (doc. #53), 1993b, 79, 169 (docs. #434, #575); Ike and Yata 2007, 165.

⁵⁴⁵ Kasahara 1994, 694; Haga et al. 1993a, 35 (doc. #53).

⁵⁴⁶ Dai Nihon Shiryō Hensanjo 1973b, 62-63 (doc. #646); Haga et al. 1993a, 2 (doc. #3); 1993b, 196-197 (docs. #614-615).

⁵⁴⁷ Kasahara 1994, 694-695; Yata 2005, 154; Darling 2000, 107.

⁵⁴⁸ Ike and Yata 2007, 166.

alliance with Nobunaga and the beginning of Kenshin's balancing. Additionally, even though this was probably enough to end his alliance with Ieyasu as well, Kenshin ensured sure it was by unsuccessfully trying to recruit the head of the Imagawa clan, who had become vassals of the Tokugawa, to rebel against Ieyasu.⁵⁴⁹

Kenshin's efforts were initially very promising. Kenshin overwhelmed Shibata Katsuie's forces. Moreover, on Kōsa's orders, the *Ikkō* were giving Katsuie headaches behind the lines in his base of Echizen Province.⁵⁵⁰ Kenshin's offensive lasted until March 1577, when he returned to Echigo Province to prepare more troops and to attack the Hōjō front in Kōzuke, despite an appeal by Yoshiaki to continue the drive all the way to Kyoto.⁵⁵¹ By late summer, he was in Etchū driving against Oda forces once more. In September 1577, the only meeting on the battlefield between Nobunaga and Kenshin occurred at Tedorigawa in Kaga Province.⁵⁵² Though greatly outnumbered 50,000 to 30,000 men, Kenshin proved his military acumen by soundly defeated Nobunaga and four of his generals, including Hideyoshi and Katsuie, in a night battle.⁵⁵³

Unfortunately for the 2nd League, this was all they would see from Kenshin. He had great success in this campaign, and then returned home once again to mobilize a great army to march south and destroy Nobunaga. But like Takeda Shingen, Kenshin's great potential was cut short by his sudden death on April 19, 1578 of a hemorrhage (foul play was suspected but has never been proved). A succession dispute between his two adopted sons, the nephew Kagekatsu and the Hōjō scion Kageatora, roiled the clan for a year and prevented them from playing any further serious role during Nobunaga's

⁵⁴⁹ Ike and Yata 2007, 143.

⁵⁵⁰ Ike and Yata 2007, 166.

⁵⁵¹ Yata 2005, 155.

⁵⁵² Taniguchi 2009, 105-106; Hanagasaki 2007, 181-182.

lifetime. Kagekatsu eventually defeated Kagekatsu and attempted to keep his clan relevant in the unification wars by attacking Oda forces in Etchū one more time in 1582, but he was forced back when Oda forces counterattacked in Echigo.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Both of these hypotheses are supported. Kenshin was distant to Nobunaga and so felt less danger from him than he did from Takeda Shingen or the Hōjō clan. He only started to balance Nobunaga late after Oda forces entered his sphere of influence in Etchū Province and approached his home of Echigo Province. The proximity hypothesis is also supported in the context of comparing the proximity of the Hōjō and Uesugi clans. The Hōjō clan was closer to Nobunaga in the early 1570s (see fn. 77), but in 1575, the Oda forces under Katsuie extended closer to Kenshin's capital, within 140km, while Oda forces did not come any nearer to the Hōjō capital.

Balancing a Rival (Hypothesis 8): This hypothesis is supported if Takeda Shingen is considered the domination seeker in the early 1570s. From Figure 6.1, we can see that from 1568 to 1572, Takeda Shingen was the fastest rising power and he was the greatest power in 1572. Given their proximity and the rivalry between them, it is reasonable that Kenshin continued to focus on his greatest rival, the Takeda clan, at the expense of balancing Nobunaga. The support is mild though: Kenshin allied with Ieyasu and Nobunaga to balance Takeda, but when the need arrived for his heightened balancing by means of military cooperation with Ieyasu and Nobunaga, he became focused on smaller threats in neighboring provinces and buckpassed the effort to Ieyasu and Nobunaga. He

⁵⁵³ Yata 2005, 156.

only started to balance Nobunaga when the rival Takeda clan was effectively neutralized at Nagashino in 1575 and when Oda forces approached Uesugi territory.

Buckpassing/Bandwagoning when Rival Balances (Hypothesis 9): If Nobunaga were considered the domination seeker throughout, then there is support for this hypothesis. But Kenshin presumably did not think this way until 1576. This hypothesis is not supported if Takeda is considered the domination seeker. In this case, Kenshin's main rival is the domination seeker, and his other rival, the Hōjō clan, were buckpassers.

Late Balancing/Alliance with Rival (Hypothesis 10): This is supported. When the Takeda clan was neutralized at Nagashino and Oda forces moved into Etchū Province, Kenshin allied with the rival Takeda and began balancing late.

The Hōjō Clan – Sagami and Musashi Provinces

As mentioned, the Hōjō of Sagami and Musashi Province (modern day Tokyo Prefecture) were rivals of and alternatively allies with the Takeda and Uesugi clans. The third and fourth generation of leaders, Hōjō Ujiyasu and Ujimasa, led the clan during Nobunaga's domination seeking period. Ujiyasu retired in favor of his son Ujimasa in 1560, but ruled alongside Ujimasa until his death in 1571. Much of the earlier Hōjō expansion under Ujiyasu and his predecessors had been at the expense of the pre-Kenshin Uesugi clan, but they formed an alliance with the Uesugi under Kenshin in the 1569 when Takeda began attacking the Imagawa territories. The Hōjō abandoned this alliance with Uesugi and allied with the Takeda upon Ujiyasu's death in 1571, when Shingen was

fighting Tokugawa Ieyasu and preparing to push to Kyoto. The Hōjō are never mentioned by historians as being part of the Anti-Nobunaga Leagues though. They then abandoned this alliance and attacked the Takeda clan in 1578 in concert with Ieyasu and Nobunaga. The main questions that must be answered then are why they allied with Takeda in 1571 and whether they ever participated in an attack on Nobunaga's and Tokugawa's forces or whether they free rode on the Takeda's efforts, and why they decided to bandwagon with Tokugawa and Nobunaga in 1578 to attack the Takeda.

The Hōjō were at war with the Takeda clan in the late 1560s and early 1570s over neighboring Suruga Province when Nobunaga's threat first rose. This was during their alliance with the Uesugi.⁵⁵⁴ But troubles mounted with their Uesugi allies when Ujiyasu and Ujimasa found that Kenshin and Shingen were considering a rapprochement, just as Takeda attacks against the Hōjō in 1570 were increasing in severity. Ujiyasu and Ujimasa were dismayed that expected military relief from Kenshin had not arrived; Kenshin attacked someone else in Shimotsuke Province instead.⁵⁵⁵ First Ujiyasu tried to revive the flagging alliance with Kenshin by sending him a son to adopt (the ill-fated Hōjō son became Uesugi Kagetora), and Kenshin finally agreed to break off the proposed rapprochement with Shingen, but he still did not send the requested troops to relieve the fierce Takeda attacks on Hōjō territory.⁵⁵⁶

Then suddenly Ujiyasu died and Ujimasa began peace negotiations with Shingen. Takeda biographer Hirayama thinks it was Shingen who first proposed peace, which indicate that Shingen was more interested in securing Hōjō protection of his rear in order

⁵⁵⁴ Endō 2004, 102; Hirayama 2006, 69-72.

⁵⁵⁵ Hirayama 2006, 67-69, 76.

⁵⁵⁶ Hirayama 2006, 77.

to attack Tokugawa and Nobunaga than he was in seeking gains from the Hōjō.⁵⁵⁷ But Hirayama writes that in his will, Ujiyasu told Ujimasa to distance himself from Kenshin for his refusal to honor their alliance commitments, despite having just sent his seventh son to the Uesugi, so it is possible that the peace overtures originated from the Hōjō side.⁵⁵⁸ It is also possible that Shingen increased the ferocity of his attacks on the Hōjō while seeking peace with the Uesugi in order to isolate the Hōjō and make it more likely that they would accept his peace offer; the Hōjō would have been afraid of being left to face Shingen alone if they could not trust Kenshin.

Peace could have originated from either side then, but both were able to benefit from it. The Hōjō aligned themselves with Takeda and aligned themselves against Kenshin, and, implicitly at least, against Tokugawa Ieyasu. Did they directly attack Tokugawa or lend troops to the Takeda effort, or did they free ride on Takeda's balancing? It could even be asked whether they were bandwagoning with Takeda's own domination seeking. Turnbull asserts that the Hōjō contributed 2,000 troops to Takeda attacks against Tokugawa.⁵⁵⁹ The Hōjō additionally helped Takeda militarily by advancing into Kōzuke Province to keep Uesugi occupied. Kenshin responded by testing the new Takeda-Hōjō alliance with a drive into Kōzuke Province, but Takeda and Hōjō forces combined to hit back at the Uesugi force.⁵⁶⁰

Fighting seems to have continued in Kōzuke between the Uesugi and Hōjō clans, but these efforts and the 2,000 man detachment serving with the Takeda appear to be the only contributions that the Hōjō made to Takeda's efforts. This contribution does not

⁵⁵⁷ Hirayama 2006, 77.

⁵⁵⁸ Hirayama 2006, 78.

⁵⁵⁹ Turnbull 1977, 153.

⁵⁶⁰ Shibatsuji 2006, 187.

represent the potential of the Hōjō – they had the ability to send greater numbers against Tokugawa and Nobunaga if they wanted to (in 1590, when Nobunaga's successor Hideyoshi laid siege to the Hōjō domain, they had 50,000 troops in their main base of Odawara, in addition to the several garrisons positioned in satellite castles). It appears that Ujimasa hedged his bets by not fully supporting Shingen in his advance against Nobunaga and Ieyasu. Ujimasa tried to play between both sides, volunteering to be a mediator between Nobunaga and Takeda Katsuyori upon Shingen's death in 1573. It is also likely that he was engaging in bloodletting as it appears Kenshin did – buckpassing in the hopes that his enemies and current ally would mutually exhaust each other and leave Ujimasa in a relatively enhanced position.

In 1578, the Hōjō signed a treaty with Ieyasu and turned on the Takeda, in what looks like classic bandwagoning behavior. This scenario developed directly after Uesugi Kenshin died. Kenshin had made an alliance with the Takeda in 1576, bringing all three rivals into a nominal alliance against Nobunaga and Tokugawa. But when Kenshin died, his two adopted sons and heirs, Kagekatsu of the Hōjō and his nephew Kagekatsu, began fighting for control of the clan. Kagekatsu appealed for help from the Hōjō, who sent troops and asked their ally Takeda Katsuyori to do the same. But the Takeda ignored the request, and Kagekatsu destroyed Kagekatsu before Hōjō relief could arrive. As the new Uesugi head, Kagekatsu renewed Kenshin's alliance with the Takeda to present a united front against Nobunaga. But the Takeda's abandonment of their commitment to help the Hōjō upon request drove the Ujimasa toward the alliance with Ieyasu in 1578-79.⁵⁶¹ With Tokugawa, the Hōjō began joint military operations against the Takeda, culminating in the Takeda clan's last major battle, the Battle of Omosu in 1580.

The Hōjō also decided to recognize their implied alliance with Ieyasu's ally, Nobunaga. In 1579, Ujimasa sent his brother to Kyoto to present falcons to Nobunaga.⁵⁶² This was perhaps done at Ieyasu's behest – he would give the same advice to Ujimasa ten years later when Hideyoshi demanded he submit to him.⁵⁶³ Apparently though, the Hōjō afterward still did not feel quite that secure with Nobunaga. Okuno writes that the Hōjō were afraid in 1580 that Nobunaga was preparing to attack them, so they sent gifts once again.⁵⁶⁴ When Nobunaga and Tokugawa's massive army swept the Takeda provinces of Kai and Shinano in 1582, the Hōjō's great rival was replaced by an even greater threat. Whether they felt secure enough in their entrenched position based in Odawara or they were too afraid to attack Nobunaga's forces is unclear, but when Nobunaga's general Takigawa Kazumasu began invading Kōzuke Province, which was typically the area contested over by the Hōjō and Uesugi clans, they presumably began cautious preparations. Upon Nobunaga's sudden death in June 1582, the Hōjō quickly took advantage and successfully attacked Takigawa. That they waited until Nobunaga's death importantly indicates a tense but submitting (or fearful) relationship with Nobunaga.

Did the Hōjō bandwagon with both the Takeda and Oda? It seems likely. If their behavior in allying with Ieyasu and Nobunaga is typical bandwagoning, then so is the earlier alliance with the Takeda. Takeda was the strongest warlord in 1572 based on territory, and he had been strongly attacking Hōjō positions. The alliance switch from Uesugi to Takeda and the subsequent gains seeking in Kōzuke looks remarkably close to

⁵⁶¹ Ōta 1980b, 126; Okuno 1983, 376-377.

⁵⁶² Ōta 1980b, 118.

⁵⁶³ Berry 1982, 93.

⁵⁶⁴ Okuno 1983, 387-388; Ōta 1983b 162-164.

opportunistic bandwagoning behavior, as does the decision to take advantage of the chaos caused by Nobunaga's death by invading his newly occupied territories in the Kantō area.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6): This hypothesis is not supported by Hōjō behavior, though it is not unambiguous because of the existence of dual domination seekers. If Nobunaga were considered the greatest threat, then this hypothesis is supported between 1570 and 1578, because the buckpassing Hōjō were distant and had the Takeda in between them and the Nobunaga. If the Takeda are considered the greatest threat, and indeed the details of the case appear to make this so, then this hypothesis is not supported because the Hōjō bandwagoned with Takeda. Then, when it became apparent to the Hōjō that Nobunaga was a greater threat than the Takeda, they bandwagoned with Nobunaga.

Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7), Balancing a Rival (Hypothesis 8) & Late

Balancing/Alliance with Rival (Hypothesis 10): These balancing hypotheses are not supported since the Hōjō did not balance either Takeda or Nobunaga.

Buckpassing/Bandwagoning when Rival Balances (Hypothesis 9): This hypothesis is supported. The Hōjō allied with the Takeda, allowing Shingen to make start his balancing campaign against Nobunaga, but the Hōjō contribution to this alliance was very little and basically amounted to buckpassing. If Takeda is considered the domination seeker, then support is mixed. Considering the Hōjō-Uesugi rivalry, we could say that the Hōjō buckpassed while Uesugi balanced, but as we covered, the Uesugi balancing effort

against Nobunaga did not amount to much and could be typified as buckpassing just as the Hōjō contribution to the Takeda effort.

The Mōri Clan – Aki, Nagato, and Suō Provinces

Mōri Terumoto was the most powerful warlord in Western Japan and one of the top three strongest warlords, along with Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin. Of the great power warlords, the Mōri had the most powerful naval forces (most of the western warlord clans were more adept in naval matters than were the eastern clans). From their home base in Nagato Province, the Mōri had extended the area under their control to several provinces on Honshu and a beachhead on the northern tip of Kyushu under the guidance of Mōri Motonari, Terumoto's grandfather and predecessor. In doing so, Motonari also succeeded in putting his sons in control of two neighboring clans, the Kobayakawa and Kikkawa clans. When Terumoto came to power in 1571 upon the death of Motonari (Terumoto's father died mysteriously in 1563), he counted on the advice and support of the heads of these two clans, his uncles. The Mōri's main regional rivals were the weaker Amako clan on their eastern border in Honshu and the great power Ōtomo clan on northern Kyushu.

Though the conflict between Terumoto and Nobunaga generally takes a back seat in most of the historical literature to Nobunaga's conflicts with the Takeda clan, the Asakura/Azai clans, and even the Ishiyama Honganji, the interesting twists and turns in the relationship between Terumoto and Nobunaga are reminiscent of that between Uesugi Kenshin and Nobunaga. Despite a period of friendly relations with Nobunaga, Terumoto ultimately balanced against him in the middle of the 1570s. Once he started, he took an

active role in the coordination and fighting of the 2nd Anti-Nobunaga League and came within two provinces of Kyoto, reaching Harima Province. Furthermore, he and his uncles were still fighting Oda forces at the time of his death in 1582, though Nobunaga's general Hideyoshi was making great strides in his counter offensive against them.

The initial contact between the Mōri and Nobunaga occurred in 1569, one year after Nobunaga and the new shogun Yoshiaki entered Kyoto. Mōri Motonari was on the defensive against an alliance between the Ōtomo, Uragami, and the recently resurgent Amako. Much of the Mōri's eastern expansion had been at the Amako clan's expense, and the Mōri had kicked them out of their home province. But an Amako son brought the clan back from the dead in new territory to the east. The Ōtomo were attacking Mōri holdings in northern Kyushu, while the Amako and Uragami were threatening on their eastern border. Motonari sent a request to Yoshiaki and Nobunaga for relief, and Nobunaga in response sent Hideyoshi and a contingent of troops to lay pressure on the Amako and Uragami.⁵⁶⁵ This mission was successful and Nobunaga subsequently struck up a friendly correspondence with Motonari and the Kobayakawa and Kikkawa clan heads that was passed on to Terumoto upon Motonari's death in 1571. The *Oda Komonjo* collects over 20 letters written by Oda to these clan heads between 1570 and the start of their hostilities in 1576.⁵⁶⁶ Thus, when the 1st League opposed Nobunaga from 1570 to 1575, and when Yoshiaki directly appealed for Mōri aid during this time, Terumoto decided not to join.⁵⁶⁷

On top of the friendly relations with Nobunaga, there are two additional reasons cited for why Terumoto did not join in against Nobunaga prior to 1576. The first reason

⁵⁶⁵ Watanabe 1982, 45-46; Ike 2009, 175-176.

⁵⁶⁶ Okuno 1988a, 1988b. Hideyoshi also struck up a friendship during this time with the Kobayakawa clan head, Takakage, who played a major role in Hideyoshi's domination seeking after Nobunaga's death.

⁵⁶⁷ Watanabe 1982, 46.

was regional rivalry. The Mōri were still warring with the Ōtomo in the early 1570s, and any decision to send troops east to battle Nobunaga would have left an opening for the Ōtomo and Amako clans to exploit.⁵⁶⁸ This situation was thus similar to the regional rivalry between the Uesugi, Takeda, and Hōjō clans. The second reason is that before he died, Motonari advised Terumoto and his uncles not to try to expand their territory, to instead be satisfied and concentrate on consolidating power within their vast lands. This advice and distance of the fighting in central Japan seems to have heavily influenced the young Terumoto in his early years of rule.⁵⁶⁹

Thus, Terumoto's friendly relationship with Nobunaga and these other two factors seemed to have restrained the balancing motive initially. But Yoshiaki was also friendly with the Mōri clan, and his exile to western Honshu played a role in Terumoto's eventual decision to balance. When Yoshiaki decided to rebel against Nobunaga, he informed Terumoto and asked for supplies.⁵⁷⁰ And when he was subsequently exiled by Nobunaga, he again appealed to Terumoto to intervene, who instead tried to play peacemaker and convince Yoshiaki to make up with Nobunaga.⁵⁷¹ The negotiations to reconcile Yoshiaki and Nobunaga, with Hideyoshi representing the Oda camp, were not successful due to Yoshiaki's demands, and Yoshiaki moved to Bingo Province inside Mōri controlled territory, where he exerted himself more strongly in convincing Terumoto to start balancing Nobunaga.⁵⁷²

Upon receiving requests for help from the Ishiyama Honganji as well as seeing Nobunaga's western movement and his defeat of the Takeda at Nagashino in 1575,

⁵⁶⁸ Watanabe 1982, 46.

⁵⁶⁹ Watanabe 1982, 47.

⁵⁷⁰ Lamers 2000, 96.

⁵⁷¹ Watanabe 1982, 47.

Terumoto started paying more attention to Yoshiaki. New Year 1576 saw the last correspondence between Nobunaga and the Mōri camp.⁵⁷³ Later that year, he and his uncles Kobayakawa and Kikkawa decided to balance Nobunaga. He helped to recruit Uesugi Kenshin to the 2nd League as well. With a large army from all three clans, they began their march west which at their greatest extent would take them within one province of Kyoto.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Both of these hypotheses are supported. Like Uesugi Kenshin, the Mōri clan was distant to Nobunaga and so felt less danger from him. The events in Central Japan were distant enough. Terumoto felt secure in trying to simply consolidate his territory, as his grandfather advised. Only as Nobunaga's domination seeking continued and Nobunaga's forces began their approach toward western Honshu did Terumoto become significantly threatened that he began to heed the former shogun Yoshiaki's advice to balance Nobunaga. Thus Mōri Terumoto started to balance Nobunaga late. The proximity hypothesis is not supported in the sense that the Mōri were the next proximate great power to balance however. The Mōri were more distant than Uesugi, but they decided to balance first and they helped convince Uesugi to balance.

⁵⁷² Lamers 2000, 97, 99.

⁵⁷³ Taniguchi 2009, 101.

Balancing a Rival (Hypothesis 8): This hypothesis is supported by the Mōri's greater concern with the Ōtomo-Uragami-Amako alliance in the early years of Nobunaga's period in Kyoto (the Ōtomo were the Mōri's sole great power rival at this time, though the Amako were rivals and formerly held great power status).

Buckpassing/Bandwagoning when Rival Balances (Hypothesis 9) & Late

Balancing/Alliance with Rival (Hypothesis 10): There is nothing to support these hypotheses, since none of the leading powers in this period were rivals of the Mōri and the only great power rivals of the Mōri, the Ōtomo clan, did nothing.

The Ōtomo Clan – Bungo Province, Kyushu

Kyushu was in some ways a very different region from Honshu. It had largely escaped the authority of the Ashikaga shogunate, and some of its governors had served there unmolested since the earlier Kamakura period (1185-1333). The Ōtomo was among these long-serving governor clans. The 14th century Ashikaga shoguns did attempt to control Kyushu through an office called the Kyushu *tandai*. The power of this office peaked in the 1370s, when the *tandai* was able to gain the support of the major warlords and unify Kyushu under shogunal authority, but this success was fleeting. By the early 15th century, the Sengoku age reached Kyushu early as the powerful warlords began warring against each other for regional hegemony and the *tandai* office ceased to function.⁵⁷⁴ The political affairs of Central Japan after this rarely intruded into Kyushu, and vice versa. It could be said that the powerful clans that dominated western Honshu, the Ōuchi and their successors the Mōri, largely insulated Kyushu from events in Central

Japan. The fact that the Ōtomo did not involve themselves much in happenings in Central Japan make it reasonable to disqualify them from great power status, since playing a role in systemic affairs is a criterion of Levy's definition of a great power.⁵⁷⁵ However, the Ōtomo controlled most of northeastern Kyushu, which was an important region due to its position as the conduit for foreign trade and moreover, they were rivals of the Ōuchi and Mōri clans and participated in balancing alliances with the Ōuchi and Mōri's Honshu rivals, the Amako clan, so it is reasonable to include them as a great power.

There is really no evidence that Ōtomo Sōrin considered Nobunaga a threat or that he considered intervening in any way in the events in Central Japan. Since the Kyushu warlords viewed events in Central Japan as largely irrelevant for them, historians would probably find any suggestion that he did consider balancing out of the realm of possibility. Material on Ōtomo Sōrin in Japanese is rather sparse (most historians focus on the Honshu warlords); his biographer Toyama has nothing to say about Ōtomo and Nobunaga.⁵⁷⁶ This could reflect the motivation of actors to buckpass when their rivals (the Mōri clan) decide to balance, but it seems more likely that Ōtomo was too preoccupied with events on Kyushu, namely their resistance to the rising Shimazu clan to their south as well as the Ryūzōji clan to the west.⁵⁷⁷

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6): This is supported since the buckpassing Ōtomo were quite distant and had the Mōri in between them and Nobunaga.

⁵⁷⁴ Imatani 1990, 234-235.

⁵⁷⁵ Levy 1983, 16-18.

⁵⁷⁶ Toyama 1975.

Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7), Balancing a Rival (Hypothesis 8), & Late Balancing/Alliance with Rival (Hypothesis 10): There is no support since the Ōtomo did not balance at any point.

Buckpassing/Bandwagoning when Rival Balances (Hypothesis 9): One could say that this hypothesis is supported since the Mōri balanced while the Ōtomo continued to sit quiet and pass the buck. But this was not due to any buckpassing/bloodletting incentive; it was because the Ōtomo were preoccupied with protecting their position against the Shimazu and Ryūzōji clans on Kyushu.

Conclusion

Nobunaga could have been stopped and the creation of his hegemonic order prevented. The First Anti-Nobunaga League could have accomplished victory if their numbers had been greater earlier by having one great power join their cause. If Takeda had joined in the effort against Nobunaga a year or two earlier, he would have joined the fresher campaigns of the Asakura/Azai forces and the Miyoshi and Honganji in the south. They had all been exhausted by long months of campaigning by the time Shingen mobilized; in addition, he started finally as winter approached, when many others were getting ready to return home until spring. Shingen would have also had more time to challenge Nobunaga before his death (assuming his death was from natural causes). With his forces steamrolling into the Tokugawa and Oda home territories, Shingen seemed unbeatable up until his sudden death.

⁵⁷⁷ Elisonas 1991b, 337-338. Ōtomo Sōrin is also known to history as one of the Warring States daimyo to have converted to Christianity under the Jesuits. His Christian name was Francisco, Elisonas 1991b, 336.

The Second Anti-Nobunaga League had the possibility of being a stronger threat to Nobunaga than the First League. The Mōri and Uesugi clans were both great powers, while in First League, Shingen was the only great power. One problem however, was that the members of the second league were farther from each other, with Mōri at the western tip of Honshu and Uesugi at the other end of Honshu. This distance naturally had a negative effect on the coordination of this league. Messengers often had to go through Nobunaga-controlled territory. More importantly, Nobunaga was in a much more powerful position at the end of 1575. Thus, the Mōri and Uesugi could have clinched victory for the anti-Nobunaga forces had they joined earlier; waiting until after Nagashino had the effect of diluting greatly their relative advantage. Also similar to Shingen, Kenshin's sudden death soon after his victory over a numerically superior Oda army showed what could have been had Kenshin started sooner.

But none of this happened because the warlords were too preoccupied with defending their own home provinces against their rivals. Actors such as Uesugi Kenshin and the Hōjō clan made it difficult for Takeda Shingen to challenge Nobunaga early because he had to guard his rear against them. Similarly, the Mōri and Ōtomo clans were too concerned with regional rivals and security that they could not spare the troops for what after all might have just been another strongman seeking to exploit Kyoto for financial gain. This analysis shows that the state of balance that existed in Sengoku Japan was a simple fortuitous balance of power. It easily collapsed upon the emergence of a determined and able domination seeker who was without rivals and hailed from close to the center of the system. As English School and constructivists argue, a true balance of power system requires maintenance and effort from the great powers to be sustained. This

was not done and was probably not possible in this Hobbesian system, where cooperation was a scarce commodity and warfare was everywhere. The three strongest great powers all acted similarly: They ignored the threat at first and then began to balance late as Nobunaga grew stronger and closer. The remaining great power though, the Hōjō clan, was a bandwagoner through and through, bandwagoning first with Takeda Shingen, who for a short time was the most powerful warlord, and then later with Ieyasu and Nobunaga. Their behavior, as with bandwagoners generally, confounds balance of power theory.

Several conclusions that affect balance of power theory can be drawn. First, proximity plays an important role in who balances and in the timing of balancing. Distant powers were less likely to join in the balancing in a timely manner. They waited until the threat was too powerful when they should have attacked to squash the threat early on. Second, rivalry also plays a role in balancing decision making. It would seem that some actors are more concerned with destroying and seeking gains from their rival than they are with their own long-term security vis-à-vis a rising and encroaching domination seeker. This presents evidence of great short-sightedness and/or the emotive power of hatred of a rival power. This is relevant since rivalry has been rarely considered as a factor in balancing theory.

That this system was a newly anarchic order – similar to Wendt’s Hobbesian stage of anarchy – is something to keep in mind. Warfare was more rampant and “state” death, or rather the extinction of a warlord clan was a real possibility; a far more likely event than state death or the destruction of a government in Europe during its balance of power period. This made cooperation less likely and increased the magnitude of the effects of proximity and rivalry in balancing decisions. Actors in such a system simply did not have

respect for sovereignty, which existed in Europe after Westphalia (with the exception of the partitions of Poland duly noted). The increased possibility of invasion and extinction in the Hobbesian anarchy of the Warring States Period made it even less likely that a distant warlord or a warlord with rivals would leave the security of his home territory to go attack Nobunaga, unless he felt he was next in line for attack.

Thus, far from the automatic conception of Waltz, the balance of power cannot be sustained simply because the system is populated by two or more units wishing to survive. The timing of balancing is important, and real aspects of the international system such as geography and rivalries have great effect on the decision to balance.

Chapter 7 – The Case of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 1582-1590

Hideyoshi Takes Over from Nobunaga

At the time of Nobunaga's assassination by Akechi Mitsuhide at Honnōji temple in Kyoto on June 21, 1582, Toyotomi Hideyoshi was leading Oda troops against the forces of Mōri Terumoto and his uncles' clans, the Kikkawa and the Kobayakawa. Hideyoshi was nearing the end of a successful siege of the Mōri-held Takamatsu Castle in Bitchū Province at the time, but the main contingent of Mōri-led troops were bearing down upon him so he requested aid from Nobunaga. So Nobunaga as well as Akechi was in the middle of deploying to the west when Nobunaga chose to rest with his small retinue of bodyguards at Honnōji, and Akechi turned his troops around and attacked his lord. Akechi then killed Nobunaga's eldest son, plundered Nobunaga's Azuchi castle, and then moved to have himself declared Nobunaga's successor. The stunned Imperial Court tepidly sent a letter of congratulations to Akechi.⁵⁷⁸

With the exception of Hideyoshi, Nobunaga's generals and surviving sons were either too stunned or too distant to attack Akechi. Lower ranked generals in the Kyoto area made no move against Akechi. One high ranking general, Niwa Nagahide, was in nearby Osaka with Nobunaga's third son, Nobutaka, and a large army in preparation for an invasion of the island of Shikoku. They were in the best position to strike, but did nothing.⁵⁷⁹ Nobunaga's second son, Nobukatsu, also did nothing. The most senior Oda general, Shibata Katsuie, was closer to Kyoto than Hideyoshi; he began marching from

⁵⁷⁸ Berry 1982, 71

⁵⁷⁹ Berry 1982, 71.

Echizen, north of Lake Biwa, toward Kyoto but he was too late to beat Hideyoshi.⁵⁸⁰

Another senior general, Takigawa Kazumasu, was engaged in the Kantō region.⁵⁸¹

Meanwhile, Nobunaga's erstwhile ally, Tokugawa Ieyasu, was in the nearby city of Sakai, south of Osaka, but was without his army when he heard the news; he hastily traveled back to his native Mikawa Province in secrecy to prepare his army.⁵⁸²

Though he was engaged in battle at moderate distance from Kyoto, Hideyoshi was the only general or warlord to move against Akechi without hesitation. Having learned of the coup by intercepting a messenger sent by Akechi to the Mōri clan, Hideyoshi quickly summoned the Mōri clan's negotiator, a Buddhist monk named Ankokuji Ekei. Unaware of Nobunaga's death and with Takamatsu Castle close to surrender, Ekei quickly accepted a truce, the terms of which handed over Takamatsu to Hideyoshi and otherwise allowed each side to hold onto the territory they currently held.⁵⁸³ An older description of this negotiation states that the Mōri first offered peace negotiations prior to the assassination when they heard that Nobunaga was due to arrive with the bulk of his troops and that Hideyoshi had turned them down, only to abruptly change his answer when he caught word of the assassination.⁵⁸⁴ In any case, Hideyoshi concluded peace with the Mōri, spent a few more days in Bitchū making preparations, and then marched to Kyoto. En route, Hideyoshi met with Niwa Nagahide and Nobutaka's forces, but Hideyoshi kept command of the troops to himself. On July 2, 1582, less than two weeks after the Honnōji Incident, Hideyoshi met and devastated

⁵⁸⁰ Turnbull 1977, 167.

⁵⁸¹ Yashiro and Ōtsu 1999, 214.

⁵⁸² Totman 1983, 45.

⁵⁸³ Berry 1982, 71-72. Ekei was his sole name as a Buddhist monk, but he hailed from a temple known as Ankokuji and so is often referred to as Ankokuji Ekei in historical texts.

⁵⁸⁴ Murdoch 1903, 140.

Akechi's forces in the Battle of Yamazaki. In this manner Hideyoshi picked up after Nobunaga and continued the drive to unify Japan.

If Nobunaga was an unlikely hegemon due to his origins as the son of a mid-level warlord, then the odds should have been nearly impossible for Hideyoshi to rise to hegemon. Hideyoshi was not born into the warrior class but to peasants in Owari Province in 1536.⁵⁸⁵ His father was a farmer but also served part-time as a foot soldier (he was an *ashigaru* – not part of the samurai class) in the Oda army. Hideyoshi left home around fifteen or sixteen and first became a page in the Imagawa clan's army, but fortuitously joined the Oda clan two years before Nobunaga defeated Imagawa Yoshimoto at Okehazama in 1560.⁵⁸⁶ After Okehazama, Hideyoshi took part in Nobunaga's seven-year long campaign to conquer neighboring Mino Province, and it is said that he played a key role in taking the Saito clan stronghold of Inabayama. Hideyoshi's role in the Oda army in these early years could be described as a construction manager. He erected a fortress near the Inabayama stronghold which facilitated its capture. The intelligence and resourcefulness that Hideyoshi displayed as a decision maker and which helped his meteoric rise from page to general to hegemon are well-remarked upon in the historical literature. During his career, if he could take a castle without force by bribing the garrison commanders, he did it. Throughout most of his career, he showed compassion and great respect toward defeated enemies, part of his belief that reformed former enemies made good allies. His innovative and strategic skills

⁵⁸⁵ As with his contemporaries, Hideyoshi was known variously by many names during his lifetime. Prior to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the most commonly referenced names are Kinoshita Tokichirō, which was most probably his name as a young adult, and Hashiba Hideyoshi, his name after 1573. He was awarded the surname Toyotomi by the Imperial Court in 1586, and this is the name he is most known by today. He additionally used his honorary and official titles in his correspondence, including *Chikuzen no kami*, *Kampaku* (Imperial regent), and *Taikō* (retired regent).

⁵⁸⁶ Asao 1991, 45-46.

in construction, as shown by his role in taking Inabayama, also served him well later on; on more than one occasion, he constructed dikes and barriers that diverted water toward strongholds he was laying siege too, including the afore-mentioned Takamatsu Castle. Nobunaga duly noted Hideyoshi's value and promoted him to general by the early 1570s, which did not always sit well with his fellow generals in the Oda military structure.⁵⁸⁷

Within a month of the Battle of Yamazaki, Nobunaga's general staff and his two eldest surviving sons, Nobukatsu and Nobutaka, gathered at Kiyosu in the Oda clan's native Owari Province to select a successor and divide Nobunaga's territories. Through their direct control of great armies and territories, the individual power of the generals relative to the Oda sons showed as they dominated the discussion over the fate of the Oda clan. The most powerful two of these generals, who directed most of the discussion and around whom two sides were formed, were Shibata Katsuie, the senior Oda general, and Hideyoshi, due to his destruction of Akechi.⁵⁸⁸ Katsuie favored Nobutaka, but after much debate over which of the sons should succeed Nobunaga, the majority decided on accepting Hideyoshi's alternate proposal that Nobunaga's infant grandson by his first son and not the two sons succeed Nobunaga.⁵⁸⁹ This clever ploy on the part of Hideyoshi ensured the end of the Nobunaga clan as power holders.

The generals also agreed to divide the Oda territories. With a few exceptions they held onto the territories currently in their possession. Though Hideyoshi biographer Berry states that the division of domains gave no great advantage to any one conference participant, a quick look at the provinces involved would suggest that this was extremely beneficial to Hideyoshi, since he held the vast number of territories west of Kyoto that he

⁵⁸⁷ Berry 1982, 38.

⁵⁸⁸ Berry 1982, 73-74.

had taken while marching against the Mōri as well as Akechi's territories.⁵⁹⁰ In all, he had control over thirteen provinces: Three from Akechi (Yamashiro, Kawachi, and Tamba), and ten from his marches against the Mōri (Bitchū, Harima, Awaji, Bizen, Mimasaka, Wakasa, Hōki, Tango, Tajima, and Inaba). By contrast, Shibata Katsuie controlled the provinces of Echizen, Etchū, Kaga, and Noto, and was given Hideyoshi's territories in adjacent the northern half of Ōmi Province, amounting to only four and a half provinces.⁵⁹¹ Figure 7.1 presents a map of Hideyoshi's position and those of the warlords who play major roles in this period.

⁵⁸⁹ Owada 2006, 59-60.

⁵⁹⁰ Berry 1982, 74; Lamers 2000, 225.

⁵⁹¹ Berry 1982, 257-258, n. 35.

Figure 7.1 – The Positions of Hideyoshi and other warlords, 1582



The generals left the Kiyosu Conference no longer as Oda vassals but as independent warlords. The strongest of these were Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie. The other great power warlords at this time were Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was consolidating control over the large holdings recently taken from the Takeda clan; his ally Hōjō Ujimasa, who dominated the Kantō plains; Mōri Terumoto, still in control of the western end of Honshu; Shimazu Yoshihisa, who had replaced the Ōtomo clan as the local

hegemonic power on Kyushu, and Chōsogabe Motochika, who was in the process of uniting the island of Shikoku under his control.

Hideyoshi would have to conquer or cajole these individuals into submission in order to complete the unification of Japan. An agreement with the other generals left Hideyoshi in control of Kyoto for the time being. This was supposed to be a power-sharing agreement, with control over the capital being rotated among the generals. But once there, Hideyoshi quickly began ingratiating himself with the Court and the nobility to gain their support. He also continued Nobunaga's policy of easing economic barriers such as toll gates to boost the local economy (as well as in conquered territories), an outcome which would not only win him support among the capital's population but also enrich his coffers.⁵⁹²

Consolidating Power

Resistance from Shibata Katsuie to Hideyoshi's unilateral measures after the Kiyosu Conference did not take long to materialize. In the fall of 1582, Nobutaka pushed his claims as successor and Shibata renewed his support. Joining him was the Oda general, Takigawa Kazumasu, now the warlord of Ise Province. While Nobutaka had a military force, its size and Nobutaka's adeptness as a commander were not close to those of the former Oda generals. Hideyoshi, cognizant that Nobutaka was plotting with Shibata and Takigawa, sent him a provocative letter pushing him to either submission or an open declaration of war in the fall of 1582.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹² Sansom 1961, 301; Yamamura 1981, 362, Berry 1982, 75.

⁵⁹³ Dai Nihon Shiryō Hensanjo 1979, 15-23; Berry 1982, 76-77.

Nobutaka opted to declare war in December 1582. This proved to be unfortunate timing for Shibata, whose forces were held up by snow in Echizen Province. Hideyoshi quickly marched from Kyoto to confront Nobutaka, holed up in his father's former headquarters in Gifu, Mino Province. Nobutaka's resistance was feeble; he quickly submitted and was allowed by Hideyoshi to stay in Gifu. But the weak Nobutaka was not Hideyoshi's true target. He wanted his former comrades Shibata and Takigawa to make their moves. Just then Takigawa began preparing his troops in Ise, south of Mino, in coordination with one of Shibata's sons, ensconced south of his snowbound father in a castle in northern Ōmi. Hideyoshi moved quickly. He took the Shibata son's castle through bribery of the garrison commander while moving to besiege Takigawa in his castle in early 1583. Takigawa also surrendered quickly. At this point, Nobutaka again declared war against Hideyoshi, who then once again laid siege to Gifu Castle.

It was at this time however that Shibata's army was finally released by an early thaw and began marching downwards. While Katsuie remained at home to prepare more troops, his army drove successfully against a series of forts that Hideyoshi had quickly built up in northern Ōmi. Alerted to this, Hideyoshi abruptly left Gifu to rush overnight toward northern Ōmi. There, Hideyoshi rallied his troops and met and quickly defeated the vassal in charge of the Shibata army at the famed Battle of Shizugatake. Hideyoshi then pressed his advantage and pursued the retreating Shibata troops to Katsuie's castle in Echizen, where Katsuie was taken by surprise and committed suicide.⁵⁹⁴ Nobutaka was forced to do the same soon after. Hideyoshi had thus overcome the first challenge to burgeoning hegemony. Hideyoshi confiscated Shibata's lands and distributed them

⁵⁹⁴ Turnbull 1977, 167-171.

among several generals, including the Shibata vassal and former Oda general Maeda Toshiie, who became from that point on a stalwart Hideyoshi ally.

If they had coordinated their actions better, it is quite possible this alliance could have defeated Hideyoshi.⁵⁹⁵ Nobutaka's impetuosity is obviously to blame. Still, if the seasoned generals Takigawa and Shibata had left Nobutaka to his own fate and waited to strike together when they were fully prepared they would have had a better chance. They thus share most of the burden for the failure to stop Hideyoshi in the first few months after Nobunaga's death.

Sharing in the blame are the other warlords, who did not participate or take advantage of the opportunity presented by Shibata's challenge of Hideyoshi. Through these initial months after Nobunaga's death, Terumoto instead held to his truce with Hideyoshi and did not resume fighting, even after he heard news of the assassination. The Hideyoshi biographer Mary Elizabeth Berry writes that the Terumoto's restraint was due to the Mōri advisors Ekei and Kobayakawa Takakage. Both men had been on familiar terms with Hideyoshi for a decade, and both would reap vast territorial benefits in the near future from their association with him.⁵⁹⁶ The Hōjō clan on the other hand, former allies of Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu, had reacted to Nobunaga's assassination by turning their back on the Oda military and attacking Oda troops in the area under the command of Takigawa Kazumasu; Hōjō Ujimasa sent a note of congratulations to Hideyoshi upon his victory over Shibata. Uesugi Kagekatsu also sent his congratulations, and even contributed militarily to Hideyoshi's side by skirmishing with Shibata's rear

⁵⁹⁵ Turnbull 1977, 167.

⁵⁹⁶ Berry 1982, 73.

guard.⁵⁹⁷ The Shimazu and Chōsogabe clans ignored the happenings in Central Japan and continued with their conquests of the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku, respectively. Another senior Oda general, Niwa Nagahide, threw his support behind Hideyoshi.⁵⁹⁸ The remaining warlords waited to see the result of the fighting among the Oda generals.

For his part, Ieyasu also sent congratulations to Hideyoshi.⁵⁹⁹ During the next year, however, Ieyasu belatedly turned to resistance and faced off with Hideyoshi for several months, culminating in two major battles. Ieyasu had kept busy after Nobunaga's assassination. He sent troops to seize the former Takeda provinces of Kai and Shinano, territories which he had conquered with Nobunaga months earlier.⁶⁰⁰ Hōjō Ujimasa, who had just expelled Takigawa Kazumasu from the area, was initially alarmed and he and Ieyasu appear to have had a least one clash, but the two allies reconciled and stuck to their Nobunaga-era truce. They split up the Kantō region, with Ieyasu taking most of Kai and Shinano and the Hōjō getting most of Kōzuke. Ieyasu's large presence in the East and his alliance with the Hōjō presented a large obstacle to Hideyoshi.

The split between Hideyoshi and Ieyasu occurred when Nobunaga's surviving adult son, Nobukatsu, began to stir up trouble against Hideyoshi. Though he had heretofore played no part in the succession quarrel, Ieyasu was allied with Nobukatsu and he continued this support.⁶⁰¹ Anticipating a confrontation, Hideyoshi gathered his forces and moved to place them in a better position to fight Ieyasu by taking a fortress in Owari, the Oda-held province adjacent to Ieyasu's Mikawa Province. Tokugawa reacted by also moving his forces into Owari. Both generals had participated at Nobunaga's resounding

⁵⁹⁷ Berry 1982, 78-79.

⁵⁹⁸ Owada 2006a, 76, 79.

⁵⁹⁹ Berry 1982, 78.

⁶⁰⁰ Totman 1983, 45-46.

defeat of the Takeda clan at Nagashino in 1575 and so both understood the importance of the defense. The dual movements resulted in the start of fighting at a site called Komaki nearby modern Nagoya in the early months of 1584. The battle was a standoff, and the two sides built a series of forts to hold their position and settled in for a long wait. Fighting erupted again in May 1584 when some of Hideyoshi's forces peeled off and attempted an excursion into Tokugawa's Mikawa Province.⁶⁰² This was foiled by Ieyasu at the Battle of Nagakute, but Hideyoshi's main force rushed to meet Ieyasu only for both sides to retreat behind their series of forts to prolong the standoff.⁶⁰³

This impasse lasted several months and only came to an end when Nobukatsu submitted to Hideyoshi and Ieyasu lost his nominal reason to oppose Hideyoshi. Negotiating from a position of equal strength and with Hideyoshi eager to settle their differences before others joined in against him, Ieyasu arrived at a truce with Hideyoshi by the end of 1584 and in 1586, traveled to Osaka Castle to pledge allegiance. In turn Hideyoshi confirmed Ieyasu's control over the five provinces of Mikawa, Tōtōmi, Suruga, Kai, and Shinano.⁶⁰⁴ Ieyasu's ally Hōjō Ujimasa did not involve himself on Ieyasu's behalf; neither did any of the other major clans.⁶⁰⁵

The consolidation of land in Japan to the major warlord houses meant that many of these clans had much to lose by challenging the status quo. Still the problem of trusting a new hegemon existed – how could warlords risk everything by trusting that they would be allowed to keep their possessions under a new hegemonic regime? The warlords may have begun to believe that the unification begun by Nobunaga was eminent

⁶⁰¹ Nakamura 1965, 220-223.

⁶⁰² Nakamura 1965, 225.

⁶⁰³ Turnbull 1977, 172-17.

⁶⁰⁴ Asao 1991, 46-47; Totman 1983, 49-50.

under Hideyoshi, but how could they know what form unification would take? It is possible that they felt a safety in numbers, as Berry argues.⁶⁰⁶

By the end of 1584, Hideyoshi had completely transferred ruling authority in the former Oda domains to himself. He invested fiefs in thirty-six individuals, including Oda Nobukatsu and twelve former peers in the Oda military organization. Assuming the right of enfeoffment leaves no doubt that Hideyoshi had taken Nobunaga's mantle for himself and made himself lord over others.⁶⁰⁷ In all, Hideyoshi controlled 25 provinces by the end of 1584. Berry lists Hideyoshi's sphere as including 37 provinces at this time, but she includes the provinces controlled by the Mori, Ieyasu and the Uesugi clan, simply by way of these clans' truces with Hideyoshi.⁶⁰⁸ It should be made clear however that Hideyoshi did not at this point have the power to transfer or invest fiefs in the provinces of these undefeated warlords, so these provinces should not be included. The twenty-five territories include those controlled by Oda and Toyotomi vassals as well as minor warlords and defeated warlords. No matter the count, Hideyoshi was clearly the predominant warlord in the Japan, he was in control of Kyoto and central Japan, and he was the clear domination seeking threat to the warlords.

Additionally, in the summer of 1585, he was promoted to the high rank of *kampaku*, or Imperial regent, by the Emperor. He capped off this achievement by calling for a system-wide ban on fighting between warlords.⁶⁰⁹ Asao Naohiro writes that Hideyoshi's slogan for unification became "peace" and he was determined to end their

⁶⁰⁵ Berry 1982, 79.

⁶⁰⁶ Berry 1982, 80.

⁶⁰⁷ Hall 1981, 200-202; Berry 1982, 81; Susser 1985, 133.

⁶⁰⁸ Berry 1982, 81, 257-258.

⁶⁰⁹ Owada 2006, 189.

expansionist fighting.⁶¹⁰ To this end, he instituted a policy of setting borders in territories he controlled to head off possible disputes. Any dispute of a border would be a dispute of Hideyoshi's authority, which would lead to the removal of the offending parties.⁶¹¹

Expanding Beyond Nobunaga's Realm to Shikoku and Kyushu

After the truce with Ieyasu, in 1582 Hideyoshi turned his attention to the island of Shikoku, where the Chōsogabe clan held local hegemonic power. Nobunaga had prepared to invade Shikoku in 1582 but the imminent invasion was put off by his assassination. The Chōsogabe clan, in 1582 merely dominant in Shikoku, had united the island under their control in the three years since then. Their leader, Chōsogabe Motochika, also briefly flirted with the idea of joining Ieyasu in his challenge.⁶¹² Now, after settling issues with his former Oda peers, Hideyoshi planned to return to Nobunaga's unfinished business of bringing the remaining independent warlords under his control – this would be the first expansion outside of the territories that Oda had conquered. After first subduing Buddhist warriors in Kii and Izumi Provinces in the early months of 1585, Hideyoshi readied an invasion force that relied heavily on his alliances with the Mōri and Ukita clans of western Honshu, directly across the Inland Sea from Shikoku.⁶¹³ The Mōri sailed with 30,000 troops under the leadership of the Hideyoshi confidant, Kobayakawa Takakage, while Ukita Hideie commanded 23,000 troops assembled from his clan and smaller clans from western Honshu. Hideyoshi sent 60,000 of his own troops under the command of his half-brother Hidenaga and nephew Hidetsugu.

⁶¹⁰ Asao 1991, 71.

⁶¹¹ Susser 1985, 134.

⁶¹² Yamamoto 1960, 103-105.

This massive invasion force sailed for Shikoku in the summer of 1585. The Chōsogabe army was large enough to conquer all of Shikoku – an impressive feat by itself – but this army had never been tested by troops from Honshu where the largest and most intense battles of the Sengoku Period were fought. Moreover, there was no way in which they could compete with the greater number of men arrayed against them. When Hideyoshi's forces landed, the Chōsogabe offered little effective resistance and sued for peace within a month.

With the chance to decapitate the leadership of a resisting clan and take the entire island for himself and his vassals in a manner of Nobunaga, Hideyoshi instead reduced the Chōsogabe clan's holdings to their traditional province of Tosa, the largest of the four Shikoku provinces. The other three provinces he split among his generals and allies, with the bulk going to Kobayakawa Takakage and the Mōri negotiator Ekei. It should be recalled that both of these men negotiated the Mōri truce with Hideyoshi in 1582 and are credited by Berry with keeping that truce in place during Hideyoshi's subsequent challenges. This can be seen then as a reward for that support from Hideyoshi.

That Hideyoshi left the Chōsogabe clan in power in their traditional base was an astounding precedent. He naturally had to leave Ieyasu in power because he had not actually defeated him, and he had accepted the surrenders and left in power the Oda sons Nobutaka and Nobukatsu at different points because he had nothing to fear from them. But leaving a (relatively) strong warlord that he had just defeated in power signified a new policy in the Nobunaga-Hideyoshi unification process. It is natural to presume that Nobunaga would not have done this. His normal behavior was to destroy all who opposed

⁶¹³ These were the only battles between Hideyoshi and the militant Buddhists who had long plagued Nobunaga. The citadels that Hideyoshi captured in Kii and Izumi on this occasion represent the last

him and even eradicate their households. Berry argues that Hideyoshi anticipated needing Chōsogabe troops in the future; in addition, he wanted firm, experienced, traditional governance in the region and he trusted the Chōsogabe for this.⁶¹⁴

Still, leaving a defeated foe in power was a dangerous game, and Hideyoshi recognized this, plus he had to reward followers and alliance partners, hence the awarding of land to Takakage and Ekei. Their location on the Inland Sea side of Shikoku provided assurance of keeping the Chōsogabe in check. It should be noted that Hideyoshi rewarded these alliance partners at the expense of rewarding his own vassals and family members, who received little reward.⁶¹⁵ Hideyoshi saw the cooperation of independent warlords as necessary in order to unite Japan.

After Shikoku, Hideyoshi marched an army in 1585 into Etchū Province in the Hokuriku region. An old Oda general and former confederate of Shibata Katsuie, Sassa Narimasa, had remained loose and was trying to take control of the Hokuriku. Maeda Toshiie and Uesugi Kagekatsu in Echigo Province to the north had Sassa contained but were unable to subdue him. The arrival of Hideyoshi's army brought Sassa to surrender promptly. As he did in Shikoku, Hideyoshi spared Sassa's life and merely reduced his holdings. Etchū Province was handed over to Maeda, who already owned the provinces of Kaga and Noto and thus became a very powerful warlord in his own right.⁶¹⁶

Following the actions in Shikoku and Etchū, the western island of Kyushu loomed next in the unification efforts. The happenings on Kyushu had been of little concern to those living in Honshu, and vice versa. Only the Mōri clan in the late Sengoku Period had

bastions of armed Buddhist resistance in the Warring States Period, Berry 1982, 85-87.

⁶¹⁴ Berry 1982, 83-84.

⁶¹⁵ Berry 1982, 84.

⁶¹⁶ Berry 1982, 84-85.

much interaction with Kyushu, through their rivalry and territorial battles with the Ōtomo clan. The Ōtomo, lead by a Christianized warlord, Ōtomo Sōrin, had been the dominant clan on the island but their dominance was supplanted by 1578 by the Shimazu clan of Satsuma Province. In December 1578, a large Shimazu army surprised and routed a similarly large Ōtomo army in the Battle of Mimikawa in Hyūga Province, slaughtering an estimated 20,000 soldiers in the process.⁶¹⁷ The Ōtomo began their decline. The third great Kyushu clan, the Ryūzōji clan, also moved into the vacuum to try to compete with the Shimazu, but the Shimazu met and destroyed a large Ryūzōji army in 1584, killing their clan head.⁶¹⁸ The Shimazu were then dominant on Kyushu. In 1584, Ōtomo Sōrin appealed to Hideyoshi for help with the Shimazu, but Hideyoshi did not fulfill this request. Finally, after his promotion by the Court to *kampaku* in 1585, Hideyoshi asked the Shimazu to come to peace with their neighbors. The request was scorned by the Shimazu leader, Yoshihisa, who mocked Hideyoshi's peasant background.⁶¹⁹ Sōrin then traveled to Osaka in spring 1586 to make a second appeal to Hideyoshi to do something about the Shimazu. Hideyoshi again made a simple request that Yoshihisa come to peace with his neighbors, which Yoshihisa again rejected. Hideyoshi then began making plans for a massive invasion of Kyushu to begin in late 1586. Meanwhile, Yoshihisa planned his own invasion of the Ōtomo province of Bungo, also to begin in late 1586.⁶²⁰

Hideyoshi sent two expeditionary forces led by Kobayakawa Takakage and the reformed warlord Chōsogabe Motochika in late 1586, just as the Shimazu invasion of Bungo was under way. The main Toyotomi armies left afterward. The forces started

⁶¹⁷ Elisonas 1991b, 340.

⁶¹⁸ Elisonas 1991b, 342-344.

⁶¹⁹ Elisonas 1991b, 346.

⁶²⁰ Elisonas 1991b, 345.

making their way toward Satsuma Province from two directions. The total of the personnel involved on Hideyoshi's side is estimated to be around 250-300,000, with several smaller Kyushu warlords, opponents of the Shimazu, contributing additional forces.⁶²¹ The old enemies, the Ōtomo and Mōri clans, now fought on the same side. The first meeting between Hideyoshi's forces and the Shimazu occurred when Chōsogabe forces met and were routed by the simultaneously invading Shimazu forces in Bungo Province. This victory for the Shimazu mattered little however – as soon as they had overrun Bungo they were beset by the main body of Hideyoshi's massive invasion force.⁶²²

The Shimazu armies retreated back to their strongholds, the provinces of Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga, while the Toyotomi army made its way across the island toward the Shimazu-held territories from two directions. Resistance continued for several months as Hideyoshi's army advanced slowly but diligently against the skilled but vastly outnumbered Shimazu forces, until Hideyoshi's army came to bear down on the Shimazu capital of Kagoshima. Hideyoshi's brother Hidenaga laid the final blow, dealing a devastating defeat to a Shimazu army coming to relieve a besieged castle. Hidenaga's victory was due to his usage of arquebusiers in the style of Nobunaga as much as it was due to his superior numbers. On June 13, 1587, Shimazu Yoshihisa appeared before Hideyoshi to capitulate.⁶²³ The pacification of Kyushu took about six months.

Once again, Hideyoshi chose to allow Shimazu Yoshihisa to live and stay in power. The Shimazu were confirmed in not only Satsuma Province, but also Ōsumi Province and the southern portion of Hyūga. This was an extremely generous allotment

⁶²¹ Fujiki 1975, 202; Elisonas 1991b, 353, 357.

⁶²² Elisonas 1991b, 355-356.

that represented the Shimazu empire at an advanced stage rather than simply their traditional, old domain. The Ōtomo and other clans that had allied with Hideyoshi were confirmed in their traditional domains. Other territories were given to his allies and generals. Kobayakawa Takakage again was handsomely rewarded; he was transferred from his holdings on Shikoku to the Province of Chikuzen and parts of Chikugo and Hizen. Sassa Narimasa, despite rebelling just two years before, was given the large province of Higo, situated on the northern border of Satsuma.⁶²⁴

Berry raises the question of why Hideyoshi awarded greater fiefs to outside warlords (*tozama* daimyo) than to his own vassals (*fudai* daimyo). The reason, she argues, is that he trusted the governing skills of the *tozama*, who had been daimyo longer than his own vassals.⁶²⁵ Hideyoshi's vassals and indeed Hideyoshi himself were new on the scene, many of them from backgrounds that varied from weak daimyo to farmers or country samurai. He wanted strong daimyo to govern and hold onto the territories that he conquered to keep the status quo. The Shimazu as well as other Kyushu clans had been in power for a very long time, some since the Kamakura period (1183-1333). Taking them out of power would have created a vacuum that would have led to a continuation of the warfare of the Sengoku Period. Leaving them in power on the other hand confirms a sense that Hideyoshi knew he could not govern Japan with one strong, centralized state, but only with a federation of warlords as junior partners.⁶²⁶

⁶²³ Elisonas 1991b, 357.

⁶²⁴ Berry 1982, 90-91.

⁶²⁵ Berry 1982, 90-91.

⁶²⁶ Susser 1985, 130, 148.

The Last Campaign and Unification

Hideyoshi had now conquered or allied with most of Japan's great warlord houses, with the only exception being the Hōjō in the Kantō plains area. The Date clan and numerous smaller clans north of the Kantō still remained but they were relatively weak by comparison. The Hōjō clan however held seven provinces and portions of two others. They were seemingly content with the vastness of their possessions and thus probably posed no direct threat to Hideyoshi, but they refused repeated requests to submit to or ally with him either, which Hideyoshi felt would have signaled weakness on his part to other warlords. The clan leader Hōjō Ujimasa had submitted to Nobunaga upon concluding an alliance with Tokugawa Ieyasu in the late 1570s, but he then attacked Oda troops to take land in Kōzuke Province upon Nobunaga's death in 1582. Upon returning from Kyushu, Hideyoshi on two occasions requested Ujimasa come to Kyoto to submit in return for confirmation of the Hōjō holdings, but Ujimasa declined. He did so despite the now overwhelming evidence of Hideyoshi's prior accommodating dealings with the other warlords, including those that he defeated. Ujimasa did send his brother to Kyoto to offer salutations, but Hideyoshi thought this insufficient.⁶²⁷

Though he had not played a role in Ieyasu's conflict with Hideyoshi in 1584, Ujimasa was still allied with Ieyasu, who had married a daughter to Ujimasa's son and heir, Ujinao. Ieyasu at this point tried to persuade Ujimasa that it would be better to submit to Hideyoshi, but to no avail – Ujimasa could not be persuaded. So in December 1589, Hideyoshi decided to gather yet another large army together to subdue the Hōjō.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁷ Berry 1982, 93.

⁶²⁸ Sansom 1961, 324-325.

Ieyasu had not been involved in the Kyushu invasion because he had successfully argued that the distance was too far for him and would create too much of a burden. So for this campaign, Hideyoshi decided that the nearby Tokugawa clan would carry much of the burden.⁶²⁹ In this, Hideyoshi displayed a reckless trust that a possibly reluctant Ieyasu would not join forces with his Hōjō allies and turn on him.⁶³⁰ Other nearby vassals and warlords such as Maeda Toshiie and Uesugi Kagekatsu provided the rest of the massive Toyotomi force, which numbered over 200,000 and would face a Hōjō side that could only muster 50,000. Chōsogabe Motochika also participated. Ieyasu received orders and left first to hold the strategic Tokaidō road and Hakone Pass, which led to the Hōjō capital of Odawara.⁶³¹ Ieyasu kept his word to Hideyoshi and proceeded with the campaign in the spring of 1590.

Hōjō Ujimasa planned on a defensive strategy to withstand a siege. He would rely on the natural defensive mountain range protecting his domains and a series of forts along the approach to Odawara as well as the strong fortress in the capital. But this strategy did not hold up as each castle went down like dominoes to the advancing forces and soon the siege of Odawara was in place. Hideyoshi conceived of a grand plan for the siege – he would be patient, avoid bloodshed as much as possible, and leave the siege in place as long as necessary. To this end, as soon as his forces swept up the countryside and settled around Odawara, he set up a virtual town to keep his great army encircling Odawara supplied and entertained.⁶³² The siege lasted four months, and was finally lifted in August of 1590 when Ujimasa was persuaded by his brother and advisors to surrender.

⁶²⁹ Turnbull 1977, 192.

⁶³⁰ Berry 1982, 91.

⁶³¹ Sansom 1961, 325-326.

⁶³² Boscara 1975, 36-37.

Unlike the results of the previous campaigns, Hideyoshi this time did not allow the Hōjō to keep their lives and territories. Ujimasa was forced to commit suicide and the entire domain was confiscated. The Hōjō brother who had traveled to Kyoto and then entered Odawara to persuade Ujimasa to surrender was the only one to be enfeoffed, in the province of Kawachi. Ujimasa's heir (Ieyasu's son-in-law) Ujinao was also spared but was exiled to a mountain monastery in another province. Most of the Hōjō domain was then granted to Ieyasu, who was forced to give up his clan's territories in return. Ieyasu took this and set up his capital in the small town of Edo (present-day Tokyo). As the Kantō plains are the largest fertile plains in Japan, Ieyasu soon became the wealthiest warlord in the country, richer even than Hideyoshi.⁶³³

Hideyoshi however commanded all of Japan's warlords as the supreme military overlord. A few northern warlords, including Date Masamune, one of the rising powers in the north, had visited Hideyoshi's camp during the Siege of Odawara to offer their submission and the use of their troops.⁶³⁴ Though there still remained some minor campaigns in the far north over the next year and a half, the unification of Japan was by and large complete with the conquest of the Hōjō clan.⁶³⁵ Table 7.1 summarizes Hideyoshi's major military campaigns in his eight year long road to unification.

⁶³³ Berry 1982, 95-96.

⁶³⁴ Kobayashi 1959, 59-61; Asao 1991, 49.

⁶³⁵ The campaigns in the far north involved Ieyasu and Date Masamune and lasted until 1591, Asao 1991, 49; Elisonas 1991a, 267-268; Totman 2005, 212.

Table 7.1 – Hideyoshi's Major Military Campaigns for Unification, 1582-1590

The campaign vs. Shibata Katsuie,[†] Oda Nobutaka, and Takigawa Kazumasa, 1583
 vs. Tokugawa Ieyasu[†] and Oda Nobukatsu, 1584-85
 vs. the Buddhists temple fortresses of Negoro and Saiga, 1585
 vs. Chōsogabe Motochika,[†] 1585
 vs. Shimazu Yoshihisa,[†] 1586-1587
 vs. HōjōUjimasa,[†] 1590

[†] denotes great power status.

With no major opponent left in Japan and hundreds of thousands of armed, experienced samurai, after unification Hideyoshi turned toward a project he had first pondered while on campaign in Kyushu – the conquest of China through Korea.⁶³⁶ Hideyoshi probably had little conception of how vast the world was outside of Japan. From 1592 to 1598, Hideyoshi twice invaded Korea. This first invasion force in 1592, made up of 200,000 men drawn from multiple western warlords saw Japanese troops briefly enter Manchuria before being sent back by counterattacking Chinese troops of the Ming Empire. Fighting settled down into a draw until a ceasefire was negotiated and the troops brought back in 1593. Then, in 1596, while Japanese troops were occupying portions of southeastern Korea, Hideyoshi relaunched a second offensive, one that would become equally bogged down. The Japanese troops would only fully exit Korea after Hideyoshi's death of natural causes in 1598.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ Elisonas 1991a, 265-267; Boscara 1975, 30-31. Elisonas and Boscara have noted that Nobunaga first had the idea of conquering China shortly before his death in 1582; Elisonas 1991a, 266; Boscara 1972, 43.

⁶³⁷ Elisonas 1991a, 271-290.

Outside of the actual unification, Hideyoshi's most lasting legacy came from his governance. Unlike Nobunaga's centralized form of governance, Hideyoshi created a weak, decentralized government akin to a federation of the daimyo warlords. He gave local autonomy to the warlords in return for control over foreign policy and inter-daimyo relations. He held ultimate say over any disputes which might arise and the warlords had to contribute military forces and men and money for construction and rebuilding efforts, but they had generally held sole decision making power over affairs within their own domains.⁶³⁸ The main exceptions to this were Hideyoshi's three main domestic policy initiatives: The de-armament program known as the sword hunt, the freezing of the class structure, and the comprehensive land survey.⁶³⁹ Since these laws also supported the warlords, they accepted them.

The first of these initiatives, the land survey (*taikō kenchi*), was actually carried over from Nobunaga's policy. Accurate land surveys facilitated the assessment of taxes and the enrichment of daimyo coffers. They also allowed for a more accurate measure of the population and the number of men available for military service. Hideyoshi was a major proponent of land surveys, having conducted them for Nobunaga since the 1560s.⁶⁴⁰ Land surveys were not originated by Nobunaga however; they are on record as being conducted at least since the 1520s within the Imagawa and Hōjō domains. From those domains, they spread to the other major warlord houses, such as the Mōri, Takeda, Ōtomo, and Uesugi.⁶⁴¹ The surveys conducted by Hideyoshi were the first national

⁶³⁸ Susser 1985, 135-139.

⁶³⁹ A fourth domestic initiative that is often mentioned, the persecution of the Christians and foreigners, was begun under Hideyoshi, but it was not greatly enforced. The true implementation of this program was under the Tokugawa shogunate in the mid 1600s, Totman 2005, 212, 218, 222-223.

⁶⁴⁰ Hall 1981, 212-218; Berry 1982, 53; Susser 1985, 139-140.

⁶⁴¹ Berry 1982, 34.

surveys and were as such as monumental undertaking. The first round of surveys was still ongoing at the time of Hideyoshi's death.⁶⁴²

The second initiative, the sword hunt (*katana gari*), was enacted in 1588, the year after the Kyushu campaign. With this policy, Hideyoshi sought to disarm the peasant class as well as the Buddhists to prevent insurrections.⁶⁴³ Nobunaga had implemented this on a limited scale when he took weapons away peasants in areas where *Ikkō ikki* activity was strong (those he did not kill, that is). Shibata Katsuie also conducted wide weapons confiscations in Echizen after he took control of that province, since *Ikkō ikki* irregulars were abundant there.⁶⁴⁴ Hideyoshi however implemented this in all of the territories under his and his allies' control. He issued orders to each warlord to send agents to cover their respective domains and collect from farmers all "long swords, short swords, bows, spears, muskets, or any other form of weapon."⁶⁴⁵ The proposed purpose for all the collected weapons was to melt down all of the metals for the purpose of the construction of a Great Buddha. Stiff penalties were enacted for farmers still in possession of weapons. As for the warlords themselves, Hideyoshi continued the late Nobunaga era policy of castle busting, a policy with the purpose of curtailing rebellion by the warlords. It is possible that these two policies had an effect on the decision of the Hōjō clan to resist Hideyoshi to the end. The policy of destroying the castles and fortifications of minor warlords and vassals (*shirowari*), begun under Nobunaga, served a similar purpose of decreasing the possibility of armed revolt against Hideyoshi's daimyo.

⁶⁴² Berry 1982, 114.

⁶⁴³ Hall 1981, 218-219; Susser 1985, 141-145.

⁶⁴⁴ Berry 1982, 54; Susser 1985, 141.

⁶⁴⁵ Berry 1982, 102.

The third initiative Hideyoshi implemented, and perhaps the most controversial, was the freezing of the class structure (*heinō-bunri*) in 1591. This policy, facilitated by the sword hunt, fixed the peasant and samurai classes and prohibited class mobility between them. This is peculiar due to the fact that Hideyoshi himself came from the peasant class. This severely limited the ability of samurai and farmers to migrate within Japan. Samurai were generally not permitted to change lords, and farmers were not permitted to abandon their fields to change vocations.⁶⁴⁶

This had a profound effect on a society in which lower ranked warriors had often switched back to farming during peacetime. With this edict, backdated to 1590, anyone in the military had to remain, even farmers who had been drafted into the ranks to serve in the Hōjō campaign, though Berry reports that the edict was probably implemented gradually and with variance across the domains.⁶⁴⁷ Still, military men were to be confined to barracks and were to be solely dependent upon their lords for their living. Land rewards could no longer be made for military service. The samurai class was denied the ability to make an independent living off the land; farming communities were commanded to turn in any among them who were new to the area.

The freezing of the class structure along with the sword hunt had the effect of strengthening the warlords. The status quo became locked. Not only could there be no movement between warrior and peasant class, but there would be no unauthorized mobility into the upper echelons of power. There would be no new daimyo unless a new daimyo was promoted with Hideyoshi's assent from the rank generals. *Gekokujō* – that process of the weak overthrowing the strong that was characteristic of the Sengoku

⁶⁴⁶ Hall 1981, 207-210; Berry 1982, 106-107. Townspeople belonging to the artisans and merchant classes were generally ignored by this policy.

Period - was effectively ended. The next ten years, dominated by the aberrational Korean Invasion, mark a decade of transition until the beginning of the stable Tokugawa shogunate and the corresponding Edo Period.

Analysis of the Hypotheses

Balance of Power Theory's Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability.*

Hypothesis 2: *Balancing is likely to occur if the leading power's or leading alliance's land-based military power holds a high disproportion of the system's military capability and the great power or alliance displays a clear intent to dominate.*

Hypothesis 3: *Hegemonic orders will not form or endure in anarchic systems due to the balancing mechanism.*

⁶⁴⁷ Berry 1982, 108.

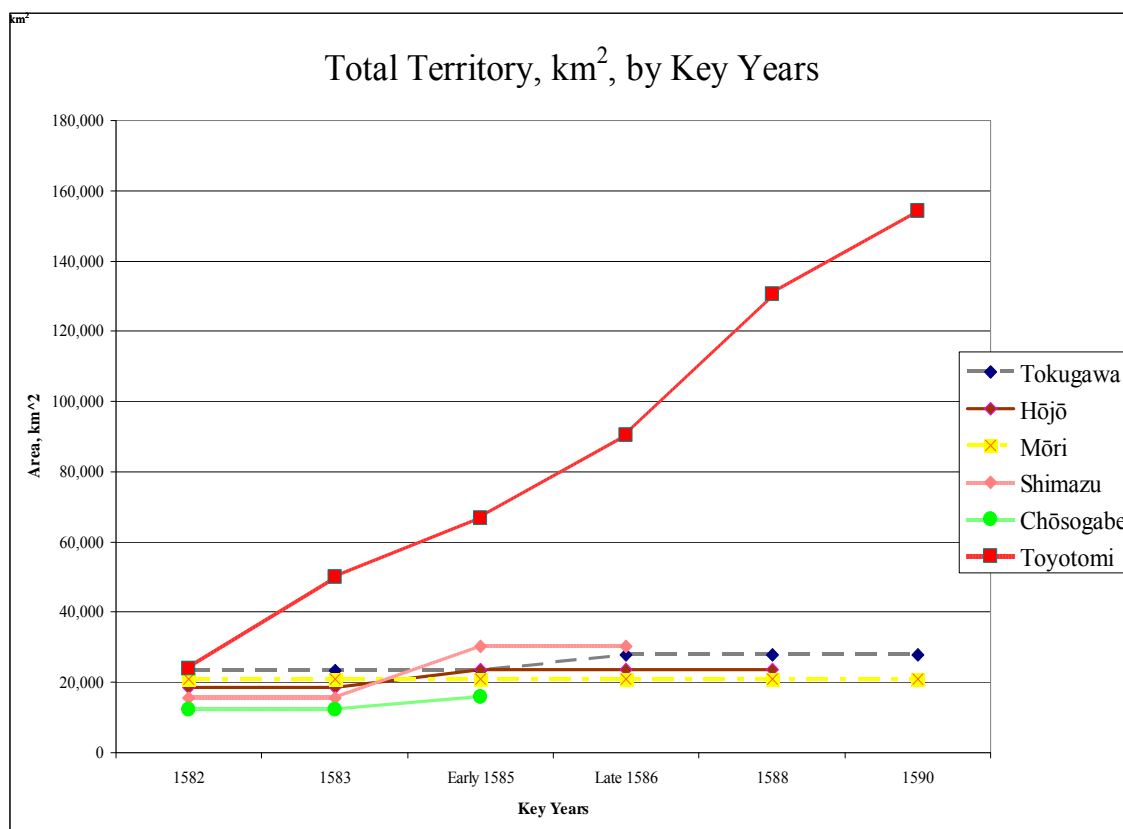
The period of Hideyoshi's unification is peculiarly distinct from Nobunaga's in that there was almost no balancing. There were no coalitions of balancers outside of the first ill-conceived effort by two former Oda generals and an Oda son. The only balancing outside of their efforts was that of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who balanced briefly in 1584-85 and tried to no avail to draw others into a balancing coalition. There was one great power bandwagoner over the whole period, the Mōri clan, and they were later joined by Chōsogabe and Ieyasu as bandwagoners after both submitted. Meanwhile, the Shimazu, Chōsogabe, and Hōjō all resisted Hideyoshi by themselves and were individually invaded and defeated. For this, we must keep in mind that self-defense is not balancing. All had passed up opportunities to balance earlier against Hideyoshi; the Chōsogabe and Hōjō clans in particular since they had an alliance with Ieyasu and considered forming an alliance with Ieyasu during Ieyasu's months-long stand-off with Hideyoshi, when there was ample time for either of these two clans to attack Hideyoshi's forces in conjunction with Ieyasu. If they eventually resisted invasion, why didn't they do so at an earlier time along with Shibata or Ieyasu? The fact that no balancing coalitions began even though Shimazu, Chōsogabe, and Hōjō went on to resist Hideyoshi reveals a myopic disregard for the maintenance of the systemic balance and for their own autonomy.

So Hideyoshi overcame each great power warlord individually and within eight years unified Japan under his hegemony. This clearly counters the system-level prediction of balance of power (Hypotheses 3) that an anarchic system will remain so.

After Hideyoshi, the great powers were Shibata, Ieyasu, Mōri, Chōsogabe, Shimazu, and Hōjō. Ieyasu moved to great power status by taking a good portion of the former Takeda domain after Nobunaga's death. The Shimazu and Chōsogabe clans

became dominant on the islands of Kyushu and Shikoku respectively during the late Nobunaga period and should be considered great powers here. Meanwhile, one clan that was a great power in the Nobunaga period, the Uesugi clan, dropped out of great power status after having most of their territory outside of their home province conquered by Oda forces. Shibata Katsuie became a great power after Nobunaga's death by having conquered most of the Uesugi territory south of Echigo. Figure 7.2 summarizes the distribution of power among the great powers.

Figure 7.2 – The Distribution of Power, 1582-1590



Unlike the Nobunaga period, in which there was the possibility of ambiguity over who to balance, there should have been no doubt by 1583 that Hideyoshi was the dominant power; he controlled the majority of Central Japan. In general, the unit-level balance of power theory prediction is supported only in Shibata and Ieyasu's cases. Did they require that Hideyoshi hold a high disproportion of the system's military capability before balancing? Using the same qualification for this that was discussed in the last chapter – a warlord needs to acquire 33% of “relevant Honshu” to trigger balancing – we can see that Hideyoshi reasonably approached the figure of 54,000 km² in 1583 when he gained control on Shibata and Oda Nobutaka's territories. This left him with about 50,000 km², which is close enough to represent a high disproportion of the relevant portion of Honshu. Ieyasu began balancing Hideyoshi within a year; therefore the high disproportion of 33% is supported in the case of Ieyasu's balancing.

It is almost moot to discuss the issue of balancing versus capabilities or capabilities plus intent except in their cases. For his own part, Shibata must have understood Hideyoshi's intention to succeed Nobunaga. At the Kiyosu Conference in 1582, rule of Kyoto was to be shared among the top four Oda generals, but Hideyoshi took sole control of Kyoto and never relinquished it.⁶⁴⁸ Ieyasu began balancing after Hideyoshi's defeat of Shibata and Oda Nobutaka greatly increased his holdings (and brought him closer to Ieyasu's home territory of Mikawa). Ieyasu must have understood that Hideyoshi meant to succeed Nobunaga – most of the remaining Oda vassals had become Hideyoshi's vassals after his defeat of Shibata.⁶⁴⁹ But these signs of intent became open at about the same time that Hideyoshi gained 33% of the relevant portion of

⁶⁴⁸ Berry 1982, 75.

⁶⁴⁹ Berry 1982, 79.

Honshu. It is unclear then to state whether Ieyasu required just knowing Hideyoshi's capabilities or both his capabilities and intentions.

The Project's Alternative Hypotheses

Hypothesis 4: *An anarchic system will experience a reduction in the number of units through consolidation of territory by the stronger units.*

Hypothesis 5: *Anarchic systems tend to move toward hegemonic order.*

Hypothesis 6: *The more proximate a great power is to the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will balance. The more distant a great power is, and the more great powers there are between it and the hegemonic threat, the more likely it will buckpass.*

Hypothesis 7: *A distant buckpassing great power will turn to balancing late if the hegemonic threat continues to expand in its direction.*

Hypothesis 8: *If a great power's rival is threatening hegemony, then that great power is more likely to balance.*

Hypothesis 9: *If a great power's rival balances against a hegemonic threat, then the great power is likely to buckpass or bandwagon with the hegemonic threat. The balancer is more likely to be the more proximate of the two to the hegemonic threat.*

Hypothesis 10: *If a great power engaged in a rivalry buckpasses or bandwagons a hegemonic threat and the hegemonic threat continues to expand in his direction, it will turn to balancing late and ally with its rival.*

The Hideyoshi case naturally supports Hypotheses 4 and 5 strongly. The trend toward hegemonic order under Nobunaga's domination seeking period continued unabated

during Hideyoshi's. The following series of maps show the consolidation of territory during this period.

Figure 7.3 – Japan, 1582 (after Nobunaga's death)

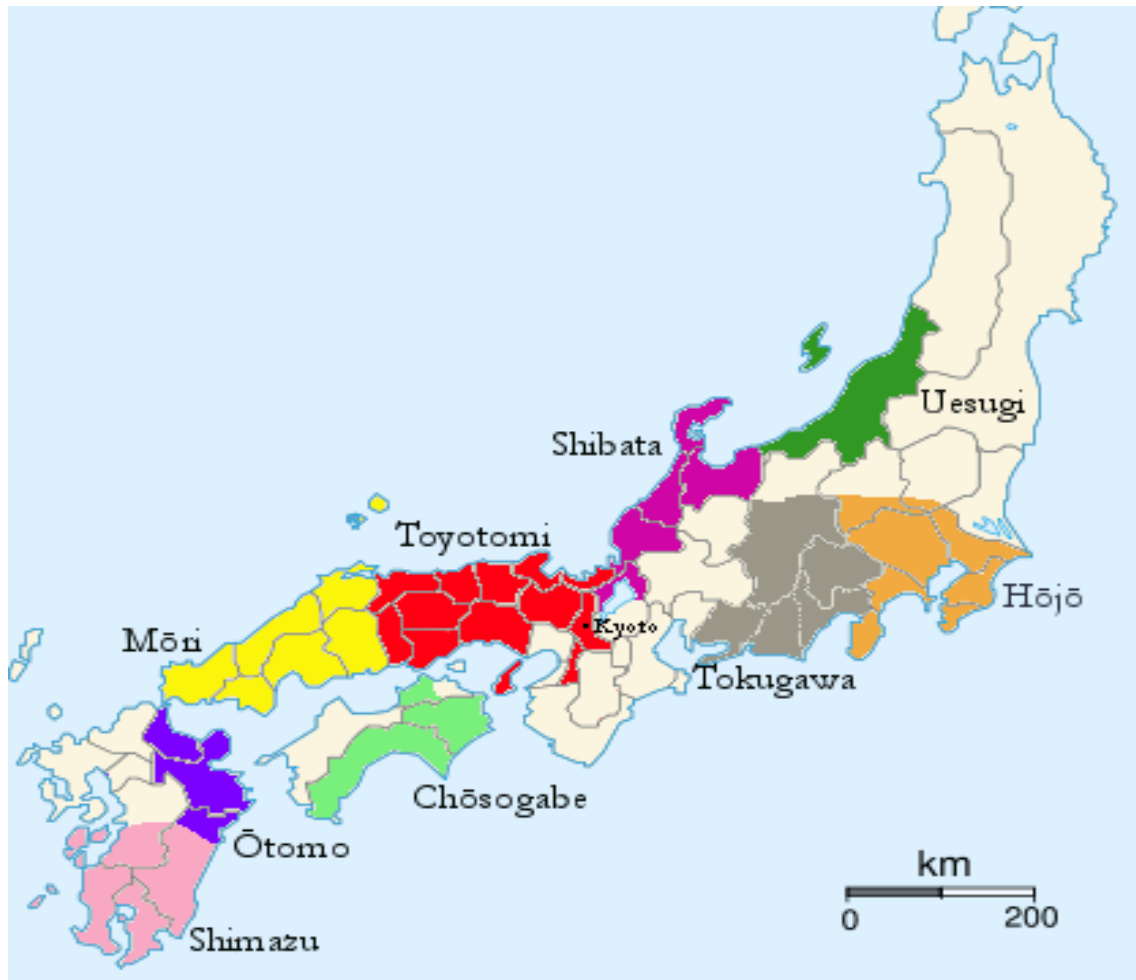


Figure 7.4 – Japan, 1583

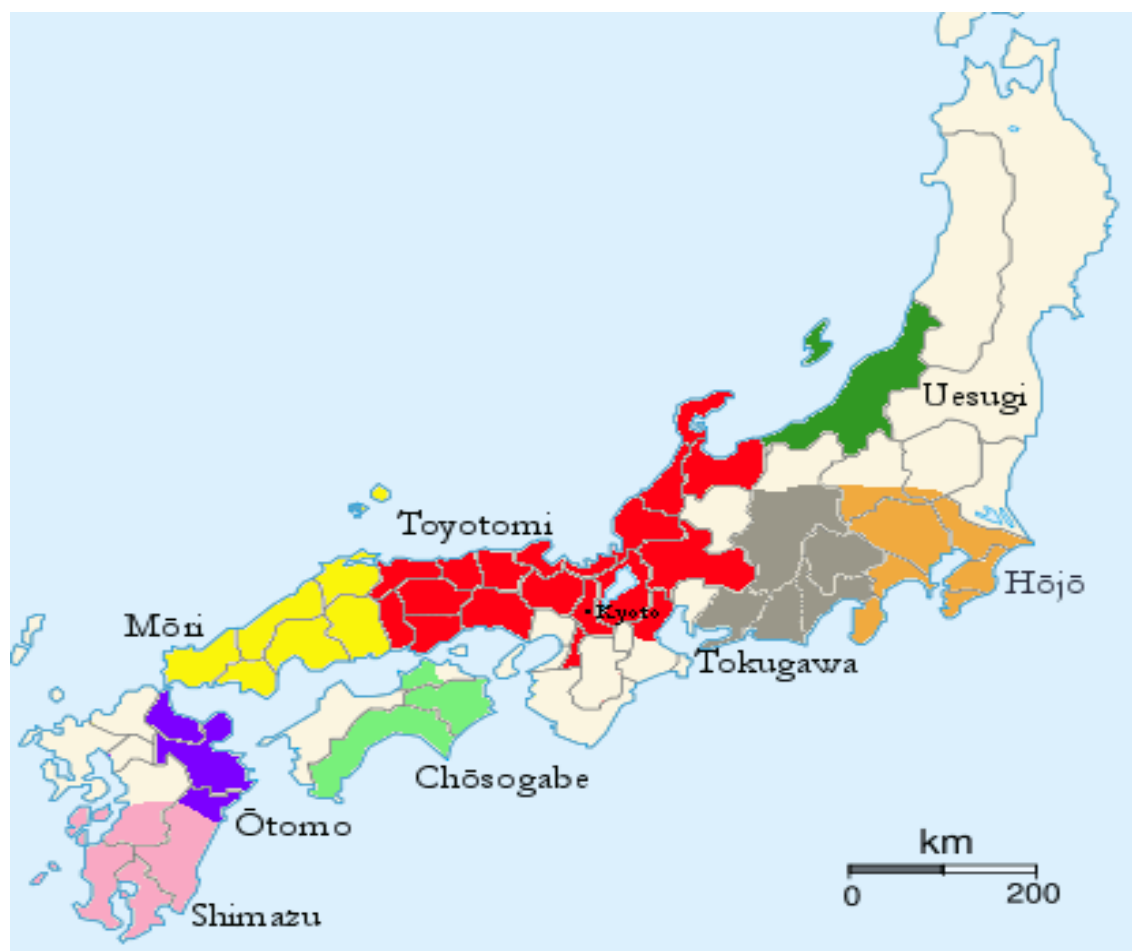


Figure 7.5 – Japan, 1586

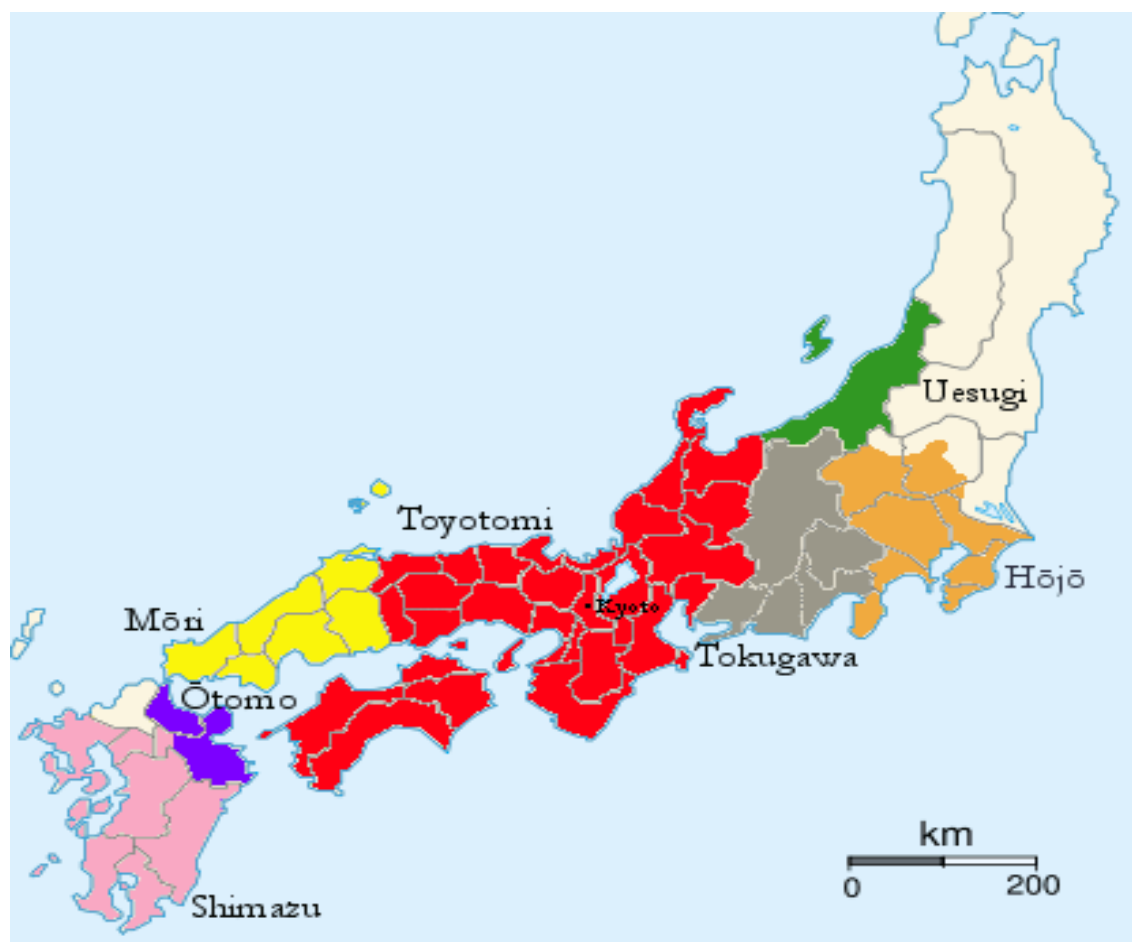


Figure 7.6 – Japan, 1588

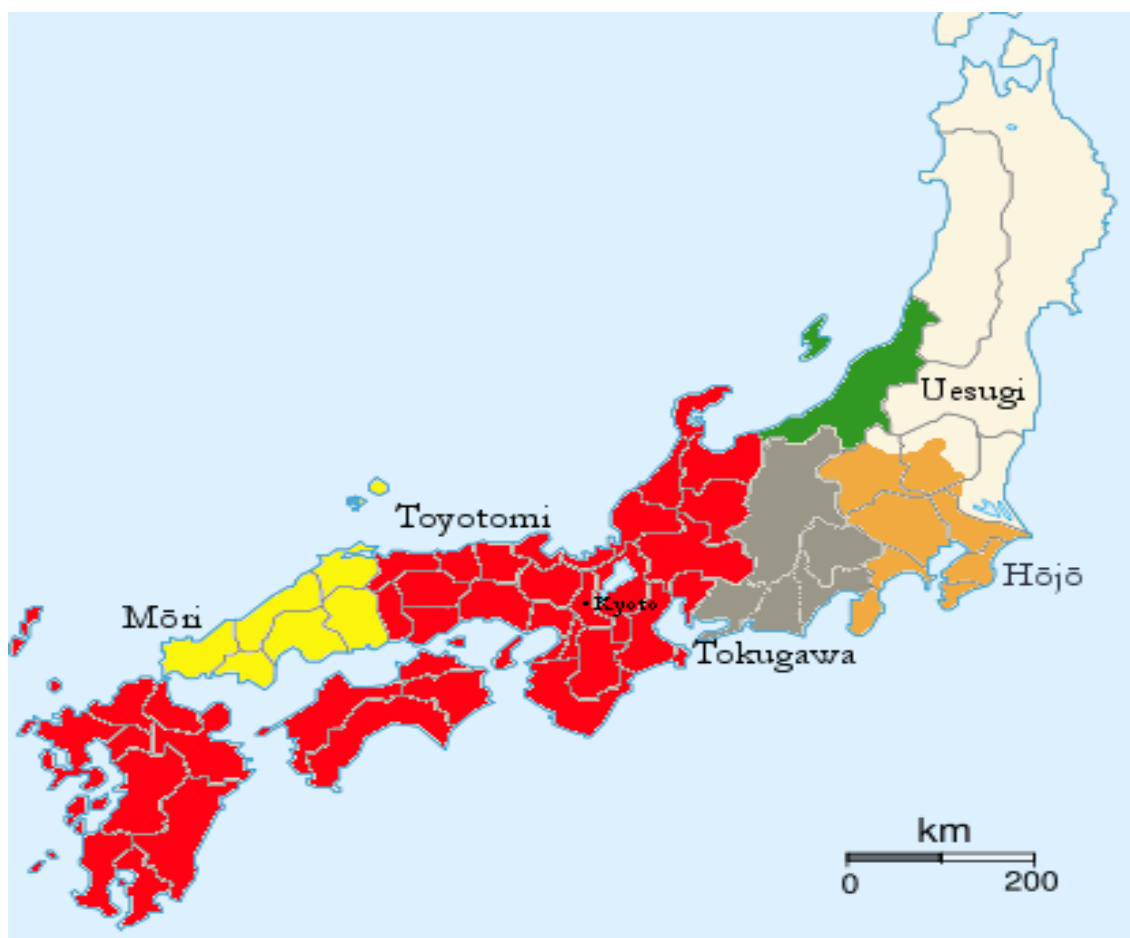
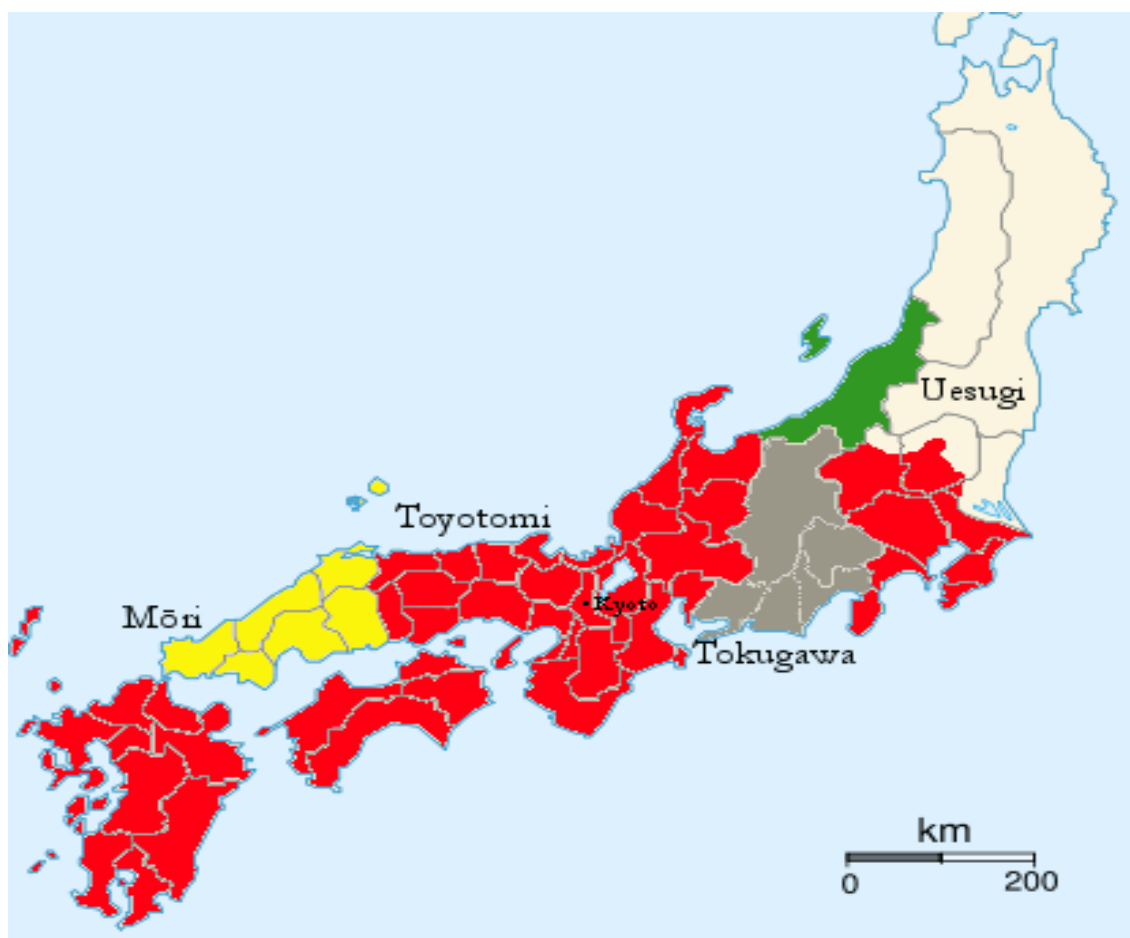


Figure 7.7 – Japan, 1590



The unit-level hypotheses will be handled with more detailed analyses of the individual great power warlord's decisions. Since no rivalries have been identified among the great power warlords in the Hideyoshi period, Hypotheses 8-10 are not supported.

The Mōri Clan – Nagato and Suō Provinces

The first warlord clan we will look at, the Mōri, represent a curious case of bandwagoning. They were a status quo power who had decided to balance Nobunaga and the last great power standing against him at his death, and then all of a sudden they became bandwagoners to his vassal turned successor. They quickly signed a truce at Takamatsu Castle in 1582 when offered by Hideyoshi, and then Hideyoshi after a brief pause left the scene to avenge Nobunaga's murder. Yet, they held to the truce throughout Hideyoshi's lifetime. According to balance of power theory, they should not have trusted Hideyoshi, and as soon as it became apparent after Hideyoshi left back to Kyoto that Nobunaga had been killed they should have begun balancing again, as they had been doing against Nobunaga. It can reasonably be thought that the truce held some promises to not only respect the rest of the Mōri-held territory but also to share power and conquered lands with them in the future hegemonic order, but this was not necessarily the case. Even if it were the case, their overall behavior counters the prediction of balance of power theory.

The biographer of Mōri Terumoto, Watanabe Yosuke, agrees that under the circumstances, a powerful warlord such as Terumoto should have dropped his agreement with Hideyoshi and resumed his eastward expansion toward Kyoto. But he writes that the

Mōri soldiers were exhausted from years of fierce fighting that the truce was looked upon as an opportunity to rest.⁶⁵⁰ It will be recalled from the last chapter that the Mōri first started marching east in 1586; and before that they experienced decades of fighting against their rivals, the Amako and Ōtomo clans. Moreover, Hideyoshi was not a direct threat at the moment, since he had returned to the Kyoto area and the Mōri could safely bet that the business of settling the Oda realm would take several months if not years.

The topic of opposing Hideyoshi arose soon though with the rivalry between Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie. Both sides jockeyed for support from Terumoto just as they did with other warlords such as Tokugawa Ieyasu. Katsuie thought he could break the Mōri away from Hideyoshi, while Hideyoshi was determined to at least keep them neutral.⁶⁵¹ In the case of the Mōri, there was an additional player from the near past that interjected himself into the debate over which side to support: the deposed last shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiaki. Alive and well and still in exile in Mōri territory, Yoshiaki came to support Katsuie's effort and he pushed Terumoto to do the same in hopes that he would finally be restored to the shogunate after a ten year absence. The Oda son whom Katsuie supported, Oda Nobutaka, also offered an alliance to Terumoto.⁶⁵² After deliberations, Terumoto's uncles and close advisors Kobayakawa Takakage and Kikkawa Motoharu held a meeting with leading vassals to decide what course to take. This occurred while Hideyoshi was battling Katsuie's ally Takigawa Kazumasa but before the showdown between Hideyoshi and Shibata at the Battle of Shizugatake. Takakage had been on friendly terms with Hideyoshi since the early days of Nobunaga's reign in Kyoto, but Motoharu came down on the side of supporting Katsuie, (he was the target of lobbying by

⁶⁵⁰ Watanabe 1982, 279.

⁶⁵¹ Watanabe 1982, 284-285.

Yoshiaki).⁶⁵³ The results of the conference are not surprising: Like most other major warlords, they decided on neutrality and informed both Katsuie and Hideyoshi. They were in fact though prepared to join either side if it appeared that side was winning; Watanabe reports that letters were prepared for just such a contingency should the tide change at the last second.⁶⁵⁴ This important fact indicates that the Mōri had given up on establishing a hegemonic order themselves and were ready to bandwagon with the top contender for hegemony.

Hideyoshi had the Mōri clan send hostages after Shizugatake to try to prevent a repeat of this.⁶⁵⁵ This did not deter relations between the Mōri and Hideyoshi from deteriorating in 1584 however. The historians Kōya and Shimoyama both state that the Mōri was among several clans (and Buddhists organizations) that were considering challenging Hideyoshi in the lead up to Ieyasu's challenge to Hideyoshi in 1584.⁶⁵⁶ Watanabe confirms that the Mōri and Hideyoshi relationship was strained in 1584.⁶⁵⁷ In 1583, Hideyoshi returned to the issue with the Mōri of the Takamatsu truce. When the Mōri chose to stay neutral in the Katsuie-Hideyoshi contest however, Hideyoshi hardened his stance against the Mōri and demanded the three provinces of Bitchū, Mimasaka, and Hōki, territories which had not been fully under his control at the time of the truce (there are more specific details regarding the ownership of castles that we need not go into).⁶⁵⁸ Hideyoshi's hard stance in these negotiations likely produced the mild opposition on the part of the Mōri in 1584, though it must be emphasized that they did not openly fight

⁶⁵² Watanabe 1982, 282, 286.

⁶⁵³ Watanabe 1982, 286; Kawai 1984, 229.

⁶⁵⁴ Watanabe 1982, 288-289.

⁶⁵⁵ Kawai 1984, 229-230.

⁶⁵⁶ Kōya 1965, 223; Shimoyama 1996, 69.

⁶⁵⁷ Watanabe 1982, 302-303. The downturn in the relationship occurred despite Hideyoshi holding two hostages from the Mōri clan; Watanabe 1982, 307-309.

against Hideyoshi or join his enemies. Hideyoshi mitigated his hard stance upon the start of hostilities with Ieyasu.⁶⁵⁹

After this, the relationship between Hideyoshi and the Mōri clan grew closer. The important step forward in this came during Hideyoshi's actions against the Chōsogabe clan on Shikoku and the militant Buddhists of nearby Saiga and Negoro temples. As we will see below in the Chōsogabe analysis, the Chōsogabe had been corresponding with Ieyasu and lending arms to Negoro and Saiga so they would join in Ieyasu's challenge. Hideyoshi needed a powerful ally with a naval force to keep the Chōsogabe distracted. Sensing an opportunity to smooth over his dispute with Terumoto in order to keep them entering his fray with Ieyasu, Hideyoshi asked for aid from Kobayakawa Takakage, the Mōri clan member with whom he had the best relationship. The Mōri had experience fighting in Shikoku in 1567,⁶⁶⁰ and Takakage willingly complied. In 1584, the Mōri clan invaded Shikoku to support local warlords who were resisting the Chōsogabe clan's attempt to unify the island. Takakage also supplied the Mōri navy to help subdue the temple fortress of Saiga.⁶⁶¹ For his help, Takakage received the entire province of Iyo on the Inland Sea side of Shikoku. This enfeoffment cemented the relationship between the Mōri clan and Hideyoshi and set the precedent for their later help in Kyushu. After the Kyushu campaign, Takakage was transferred from his fief on Shikoku to an undoubtedly more profitable one in western Kyushu (the Kyushu warlords reaped great revenues from sea-borne trade).⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁸ Watanabe 1982, 292-295, 301.

⁶⁵⁹ Watanabe 1982, 304; Kawai 1984, 230.

⁶⁶⁰ Ike 2009, 172.

⁶⁶¹ Watanabe 1982, 320-326; Yamamoto 1960, 105-109.

⁶⁶² Berry 1982, 90.

A postscript on the relationship between Hideyoshi and the Mōri clan that might help to shed light on the Mōri clan's willingness to bandwagon with Hideyoshi (or Shibata if he had been successful) comes from Peter Arnesen's book on the Ōuchi clan, the predecessors of the Mōri clan in western Honshu. Arnesen writes that the Mōri clan did not hold strong authority over the vassals that they inherited from the Ōuchi:

It is apparent that...the Mōri had made so little progress toward assuming direct control of the land that in some areas they were obliged to use old Ōuchi surveys as the basis for assessing their vassals' holdings. The first occasion upon which the Mōri were able to carry out a unified survey of the sort which would eventually allow them to displace their vassals came in 1588, when Mōri authority was backed by express command of...Hideyoshi.⁶⁶³

Along the lines of the argument put forth by Barnett and Levy,⁶⁶⁴ this internal relative weakness vis-à-vis their own vassals could provide the answer to the question of why then Mōri bandwagoned with Hideyoshi. When they could no longer expand eastward, the alliance with Hideyoshi provided the gains that helped the Mōri maintain authority and fully consolidate it.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Neither balancing hypothesis is supported by the actions of the Mōri clan, who bandwagoned with Hideyoshi from the time of Nobunaga's death until Hideyoshi's. The Mōri clan was the most proximate clan to Hideyoshi.⁶⁶⁵ What we see instead is a good description of bandwagoning behavior. The Mōri high ranking advisors Ekei and Kobayakawa had good personal relationships with Hideyoshi, who probably promised them side-payments

⁶⁶³ Arnesen 1979, 222.

⁶⁶⁴ Barnett and Levy 1991.

(their eventual enfeoffments in Shikoku and Kyushu) in exchange for continuing to keep Mōri Terumoto from rebelling. Terumoto for his part was a weak leader. Instead of his two older and wiser uncles, Terumoto took control of a large and powerful clan at too young an age from his grandfather because his father had died young and then showed little talent as a battlefield leader or strategist. Most of the top decisions were made by his uncles in committee with the top Mōri vassals. His weakness showed later in 1600 during the Battle of Sekigahara. Though Terumoto was the nominal leader of the western army, and his forces were among the most powerful contingent, Terumoto stayed behind at Osaka Castle while the Kobayakawa and Kikkawa clans, now led by his younger cousins, led the Mōri troops into battle. They ended up switching sides to support Tokugawa Ieyasu's eastern army, presumably without consulting Terumoto. Finally, there is the issue that Arnesen raises of the internal weakness of the Mōri vis-à-vis their vassals, whom they inherited from their predecessors, the Ōuchi clan. They needed Hideyoshi's authority just to be able to perform comprehensive land surveys of their territory. This allows us to draw a greater picture of a bandwagoning state as an internally weak state – weakly consolidated and weakly led.

The Shibata Clan – Echizen Province

Shibata Katsuie, the senior general in the Oda military, became the first great power warlord to challenge Hideyoshi. One could argue that they had a rivalry based on their being the heads of the two opposing sides at the Kiyosu Conference in 1582, but such a rivalry does not fit the definition of rivalries used here based on international

⁶⁶⁵ The straight line distance between Hideyoshi's westernmost territory and the Mōri castle of Koriyama was 70 km. The next closest warlord was Shibata Katsuie, whose capital in modern Fukui was 81 km away

relations scholarship. They had no history of conflict between each other in 1582. Their rivalry was based on the fact that they were two senior generals within the same military who had gone on to become independent actors. As such, Katsuie does not qualify as a rival to Hideyoshi in this study. Katsuie and his neighbor, the Uesugi clan, could qualify as rivals for the amount of fighting between these two, but the Uesugi clan ceased being great powers when Uesugi Kenshin died and the clan collapsed inward in a long succession dispute. The question to be answered here is simple. Why did Katsuie choose to balance against Hideyoshi?

The most obvious answer is that he did so because he was affronted that a less tenured general was taking the reins of power for himself, which he felt should have been reserved for himself as the most senior Oda general. Katsuie had been with Nobunaga since the 1550s and was the first Oda general to have been given his own province (Echizen) to run, complete with his own semi-autonomous military structure.⁶⁶⁶ Katsuie also was the leader of the deliberations at Kiyosu, and he had pushed for Nobunaga's third son Nobutaka to inherit his place. He was upended in this however by Hideyoshi, who was fourteen years his junior *and* born from the peasant class. In feudal Japan, where class structure and seniority were very important (seniority still is today), it is only natural to think that Katsuie viewed Hideyoshi's challenge to his authority as a grave insult that could not be let go. Berry writes that Katsuie and Hideyoshi already had an uneasy relationship and that Katsuie refused to subordinate himself to Hideyoshi.⁶⁶⁷

But Katsuie's motives also probably included duty to the Oda house and Oda Nobutaka. Nobutaka more aggressively pushed his succession of his father than the

from Hideyoshi's nearest territory.

⁶⁶⁶ Fujiki and Ellison 1981, 186-187; Lamers 2000, 116.

second son, Nobukatsu, and he continued to seek Katsuie's backing after the Kiyosu conference. He married his aunt, Nobunaga's sister Oichi, to Katsuie to create a formal alliance.⁶⁶⁸ This was the second time the couple had been married. Oichi was divorced from Katsuie and married to Azai Nagamasa in the 1560s so that Nobunaga could protect his path to Kyoto. After Azai was defeated by Nobunaga, he sent her and their daughters back to Nobunaga before he committed suicide. Now Oichi went with her daughters from Azai back to Katsuie.⁶⁶⁹

When Nobutaka made his premature move against Hideyoshi, Katsuie was compelled to back him. Not only were did Nobutaka move, but his own son as well as his ally Takigawa also made their moves. Though the timing was not good since his own troop movements were obstructed by snow, he would have little chance of successfully confronting Hideyoshi later if his allies were defeated and he could find no more. This is also the reason for the particular timing of his challenge to Hideyoshi.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Though Shibata balanced Hideyoshi, the proximity hypothesis is not supported because proximity to Hideyoshi is not the reason why Shibata decided to balance. Shibata was the first to balance Hideyoshi because he was Hideyoshi's top competitor within the Oda military structure to succeed Nobunaga. Shibata sought to establish a hegemonic order just as Hideyoshi was. As the oldest, most tenured general and the first to have gained his own separate province under Nobunaga, he thought he should inherit Nobunaga's mantle and

⁶⁶⁷ Berry 1982, 75.

⁶⁶⁸ Owada 2006a, 64; Kanda Y. 2008, 100.

⁶⁶⁹ When Katsuie was preparing to commit suicide after his defeat in the Battle of Shizugatake, he tried to send Oichi and the daughters to Hideyoshi. The daughters went, but Oichi refused to and died with her

unify Japan. Hypothesis 7 naturally is not supported since Shibata balanced Hideyoshi within several months of the contentious Kiyosu conference.

The Tokugawa Clan – Mikawa, Suruga, and Tōtōmi Provinces

Tokugawa Ieyasu had been involved in the unification wars since 1568, not as a vassal within the Oda military structure, but as Nobunaga's only major warlord ally. He lent troops to Nobunaga for his original drive into Kyoto and other campaigns thereafter. At the time of Nobunaga's death, Ieyasu was one of the most powerful warlords in Japan, as powerful as the Mōri clan that spread across most of western Honshu. He had just helped Nobunaga conquer the vast Takeda territories and had a great power ally to his east in the Hōjō clan. Yet because he was without his army in the town of Sakai when Akechi Mitsuhide killed Nobunaga, he was not positioned to avenge Nobunaga's death and take the lead in the aftermath as Hideyoshi had. Also, because he was from outside the Oda military structure, it is possible that he would have been challenged by a more complete union of Oda generals than was Hideyoshi.

That Ieyasu challenged Hideyoshi seems natural, as balance of power theory would predict. However, the question that must be answered is why Ieyasu did not take advantage of the earlier opportunity to derail Hideyoshi during Shibata Katsuie's challenge? Balance of power theory would predict the creation of a balancing coalition there, but instead Ieyasu did nothing during Shibata's challenge, and even congratulated Hideyoshi on his victory, only to challenge him the very next year in a less advantageous

husband inside the burning castle. One daughter later became Hideyoshi's favorite consort and the mother of his five year old heir, Hideyori.

circumstance. A second question that should be answered is why Ieyasu did not turn on Hideyoshi at any point after their peace agreement.

During the Kiyosu Conference and Shibata's challenge, all taking place within the first year after Nobunaga's death, Tokugawa was mostly with his army in his home province and in Kai and Shinano Provinces splitting with the Hōjō the old Takeda lands.⁶⁷⁰ The some of these lands were still held by Oda forces, the local warriors of some provinces were in the process of casting off the Oda soldiers.⁶⁷¹ Ieyasu took Kai and southern Shinano while the Hōjō took Kōzuke Province. Ieyasu probably saw the Shibata-Hideyoshi dust up as an internal power struggle among Oda generals that he should not bother involving himself in. As the biographer A. L. Sadler states, there was no point in supporting either side, as he would then have to deal sooner or later with the victor in either case.⁶⁷²

Sadler also considers the argument for why Ieyasu decided to balance Hideyoshi in 1584. Ieyasu had allied himself with Oda Nobukatsu, whose was in charge of Owari Province on Ieyasu's western edge. This provided a buffer against the other Oda generals, and Nobukatsu was weak so that he was no threat to Ieyasu's territory. Ieyasu must have thought that he would have to confront Hideyoshi sooner or later, as Hideyoshi had earlier tried to enlist his support and Ieyasu had deferred. As Nobukatsu's ally, if he did come to blows with Hideyoshi, he would not be fighting for himself but rather would be supporting a son of Nobunaga, which could possibly draw others to support him against Hideyoshi.⁶⁷³ The fighting began when three of Nobukatsu's vassals switched to

⁶⁷⁰ Totman 1983, 45-46.

⁶⁷¹ Sadler [1937] 1978, 74

⁶⁷² Sadler 1978, 77.

⁶⁷³ Sadler 1978, 76-77.

Hideyoshi's side, for which Nobukatsu had them killed and their residences attacked. Hideyoshi used this provocation as an excuse to attack Nobukatsu. But he went one step further and had troops capture a castle near to Ieyasu's position in eastern Owari Province. Ieyasu viewed these actions to be targeted toward him and moved to make an appropriate response. The proximity of Hideyoshi's force – just next door to his own hard-won provinces – could thus be seen as the reason for Ieyasu to challenge Hideyoshi. The fighting ended after several months of standoffs and defensive posturing when Hideyoshi, seeing that he would not be able to overcome Ieyasu and that every day was potentially increasing the chances of drawing in other warlords, made peace with Nobukatsu. Ieyasu saw the flip side that his potential allies were not coming, and with a peace agreement between Nobukatsu and Hideyoshi and a withdrawal of Hideyoshi's troops, he lost his reasons to continue.⁶⁷⁴

The question of why Ieyasu did not turn on Hideyoshi after Komaki-Nagakute is an interesting one. For a year after their peace agreement, Ieyasu kept his troops at a high state of preparation because he did not fully trust Hideyoshi.⁶⁷⁵ Moreover, he did nothing while Hideyoshi's large coalitions struck at the Chōsogabe and Hōjō clans. With his large army and adept skill as a commander, it may be thought that Ieyasu could have turned the tide against Hideyoshi, even in these later stages. But the truth of the matter is that Ieyasu probably recognized that Hideyoshi was stronger than he after their Komaki-Nagakute standoff.⁶⁷⁶ In 1585, Hideyoshi's quick conquest of the Chōsogabe with a massive coalition derived from his western allies showed that he had all of these western warlords, particularly the powerful Mōri clan, solidly behind him. Furthermore, his

⁶⁷⁴ Kōya 1965, 229.

⁶⁷⁵ Shimoyama 1996, 84-86.

conquest of not only the Chōsogabe, but also the Buddhist citadels of Negoro and Sakai and the northern warlord Sassa Narimasa removed most of Ieyasu's potential allies outside of the Hōjō. Hideyoshi also still had allies to the north of Ieyasu and the Hōjō to keep them on their guard. To make things worse, one of his key vassals defected to Hideyoshi, leading to the betrayal of many of his military secrets. Simply put, Ieyasu realized that he could not muster the kind of assistance needed to overcome one of Hideyoshi's overwhelming coalitions.⁶⁷⁷ Moreover, since Hideyoshi had left the Chōsogabe in charge after their defeat, and he shared conquered territories generously with his allied warlords, Ieyasu saw that he did not need to resist.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Both of these hypotheses are supported by Ieyasu's balancing behavior. Ieyasu did not balance at first and he only began to balance after Hideyoshi had defeated Shibata and extended his territory to Mino Province, which is adjacent to the traditional Tokugawa province of Mikawa. Ieyasu was also the most proximate warlord to Hideyoshi in 1584.⁶⁷⁸

The Chōsogabe Clan – Tosa Province, Shikoku

The Chōsogabe clan on Shikoku were the first of three buckpassing great powers conquered by Hideyoshi and his coalition of allied warlords from 1585-1590. Busy with their efforts to unite Shikoku under their rule, the Chōsogabe defied requests from Hideyoshi to submit and instead associated themselves with Tokugawa Ieyasu, all the

⁶⁷⁶ Totman 1983, 50.

⁶⁷⁷ Kōya 1965, 230-232; Totman 1983, 48.

⁶⁷⁸ Hideyoshi's acquisition of Mino Province from Oda Nobutaka put him about a mere 44 km from Ieyasu's capital of Okazaki in Mikawa Province.

while continuing their battles with their neighbors. The Chōsogabe finally conquered all of Shikoku in early 1585, only to have their gains swiftly taken away from them by Hideyoshi's massive army several months later. In addition to his resistance to Hideyoshi, clan leader Motochika's buckpassing in 1583 and 1584 during the Shibata and Tokugawa campaigns against Hideyoshi also need to be explained.

It should be recalled that Oda Nobunaga's forces were set to invade Shikoku at the time of Nobunaga's death in 1582. Motochika had acknowledged Nobunaga's supremacy in 1575, but in 1579 came into conflict with him.⁶⁷⁹ This stemmed from Motochika's invasion of the Miyoshi lands in Shikoku in 1579. Motochika conquered part of the Miyoshi territory, and in 1580 sent his brother to Nobunaga's Azuchi Castle to receive recognition of his gains. However, Nobunaga was by this time on friendly terms with the remaining members of the Miyoshi clan and he refused Motochika's request and ordered Motochika to return the land. In turn the Chōsogabe would then be guaranteed their home province of Tosa and the southern part of Awa. Motochika refused this and began military preparations to resist Nobunaga's invasion.⁶⁸⁰

When the invasion was put off by Nobunaga's assassination, Motochika used the grace period after Nobunaga's death to conquer the island's clans himself. Hideyoshi, meanwhile, had tentatively remade Nobunaga's plan to invade Shikoku when his fight with Shibata and Oda Nobutaka began. Motochika had opened up a line of communication with Nobutaka, perhaps to sympathize, and as a result Shibata expected that Motochika would land troops on Honshu in support of their campaign against Hideyoshi in 1583. But Motochika, like Ieyasu, saw this battle simply as infighting

⁶⁷⁹ Lamers 2000, 119.

⁶⁸⁰ Yamamoto 1960, 89-91.

between Oda generals and stayed out of it. He instead took advantage of the distraction caused by the fighting on Honshu by furthering his conquest of Shikoku. According to Motochika's biographer, Hideyoshi took his lack of involvement as a friendly gesture and halted his plans to invade Shikoku.⁶⁸¹

This respite was brief however. Hideyoshi had sent an ally, a warlord appropriately named Sengoku Hisahide, to Shikoku as a countermeasure in case Motochika decided to join the fray on Honshu. Sengoku was in place on the island of Awaji between Shikoku and Osaka on Honshu and also held on to a town in Sanuki Province on Honshu. Motochika's forces entered Sanuki and met and defeated Sengoku in battle just as Hideyoshi's final battle against Shibata was underway at Shizugatake in spring 1583. Hideyoshi then quickly renewed his plans to invade Shikoku.⁶⁸²

This invasion was put off yet again however by Ieyasu and Oda Nobukatsu's resistance to Hideyoshi in 1584. Ieyasu and Nobukatsu made sure to ask for Motochika's help and he offered support in response. Motochika also learned of Hideyoshi's invasion plan to cross into Shikoku from Osaka and he promised to send arms and troops to the last militant Buddhist holdovers in Negoro and Saiga near Osaka.⁶⁸³ Even though the neighboring citadel in Osaka, the Ishiyama Honganji, fell to Nobunaga in 1580, these forces had not yet been subdued by Nobunaga or Hideyoshi, and they still opposed the unification process.

The promised Chōsogabe aid never came though. Early in the eight months long Komaki-Nagakute campaign, Hideyoshi warily left the front to go to Osaka and prepare defenses there for a possible Chōsogabe attack. Ieyasu and Nobukatsu urged Motochika

⁶⁸¹ Yamamoto 1960, 100-101.

⁶⁸² Yamamoto 1960, 101-102.

to deploy immediately and attack Hideyoshi before he was fully prepared, but Hideyoshi was able to keep Motochika distracted when his Mōri allies invaded Iyo Province in northwestern Shikoku. This invasion threatened what Motochika savored the most: His conquest of Shikoku. Despite the promise of three provinces on Honshu from Nobukatsu and Ieyasu should he attack Hideyoshi, Motochika kept his focus on clearing out the Mōri forces in Iyo and conquering Sanuki. Hideyoshi finished his defensive preparations in Osaka and returned to his confrontation with Ieyasu, satisfied that Motochika would not be landing troops on Honshu in the near future.⁶⁸⁴

By the end of 1584, the situation became less favorable for Hideyoshi, and he brought Nobukatsu to the peace table. After an agreement was reached between the two, Ieyasu also felt it prudent to reach an agreement with Hideyoshi on good terms. Meanwhile, the tide turned against the Mōri invasion as local warlords began balancing along with Motochika against them. Around the time of negotiations between Ieyasu and Hideyoshi, Motochika felt secure enough to propose to Ieyasu to send his forces to Honshu. Ieyasu had to regretfully inform him that it was too late, that he had reached peace with Hideyoshi. He then offered sympathies that he would not be able to help him in Hideyoshi's eventual invasion of Shikoku.⁶⁸⁵

The Mōri and their allies were finally ejected from Shikoku and Motochika was able to claim all of Shikoku for his clan by spring 1585.⁶⁸⁶ He was only able to enjoy his conquest through to the beginning of summer however. Hideyoshi created a massive army out of his forces and those of several western warlords including the Mōri.

⁶⁸³ Yamamoto 1960, 103-105.

⁶⁸⁴ Yamamoto 1960, 105-109.

⁶⁸⁵ Yamamoto 1960, 110.

⁶⁸⁶ Yamamoto 1960, 111-112, 116-117.

Motochika offered to give up Iyo to head off the invasion but Hideyoshi refused.⁶⁸⁷ After his offer was rejected, the only thing left for the Chōsogabe was to prepare for the invasion. The Hideyoshi invasion quickly overwhelmed the Chōsogabe, who sued for peace within a month of the start.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6): This is supported because Chōsogabe was separated by the Inland Sea from Hideyoshi's forces as well as by other warlords on the island of Shikoku (he was located on the southern half of the island) and felt protected by this, which led him to buckpass.

Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): This is not supported. Chōsogabe Motochika came close to balancing by nominally allying with Ieyasu and offering support in his challenge to Hideyoshi, but when the need arose for these, he did not hold to his promises. Motochika was too concerned with first unifying the island of Shikoku, to the detriment of his long-term autonomy.

⁶⁸⁷ Yamamoto 1960, 120.

The Shimazu Clan – Satsuma and Ōsumi Provinces, Kyushu

Like the Ōtomo clan, the Shimazu were also among the long-serving governor clans of Kyushu that were largely independent of the Ashikaga shogunate before the Ōnin War. Also similar to the Ōtomo, the fact that the Shimazu did not involve themselves in Central Japan's politics makes it reasonable to disqualify them from great power status. But since the Ōtomo were included because of their dominant position in Kyushu, the Shimazu will be included since they replaced the Ōtomo in the late 1570s as the dominant power; in fact, they were on the verge of completely destroying the Ōtomo when Hideyoshi invaded.

The origins of Hideyoshi's invasion of Kyushu begin with Ōtomo Sōrin's mission to Osaka in 1586 to request Hideyoshi's help in fighting the Shimazu.⁶⁸⁸ Hideyoshi called on Shimazu Yoshihisa multiple times to cease all hostile activities and for all Kyushu warlords to agree to a general ceasefire in 1586. Hideyoshi's promotion to the high court post of *kampaku* (Imperial Regent) and his system-wide call for all warlords to cease fighting only added a measure of legitimate authority to his words, probably more so since he had succeeded in subduing most warlords in central and western Honshu.⁶⁸⁹ The Shimazu clan however, on the verge of finally defeating their Ōtomo rivals, decided to dismiss the request and resist Hideyoshi should he decide to invade.⁶⁹⁰ Hideyoshi amassed his coalition and launched his two-pronged invasion in 1586. Yoshihisa could do nothing but wait to meet the Hideyoshi's forces in battle.

There is no evidence then that the Shimazu clan head Yoshihisa considered balancing Hideyoshi. Their resistance upon the invasion of Kyushu is self-defense, not

⁶⁸⁸ Toyama 1975, 264-266; Owada 2006a, 188-189; Uehara 2009, 43.

⁶⁸⁹ Fukushima 1988, 44-45; Owada 2006a, 189.

balancing. Like Chōsogabe Motochika, Yoshihisa was occupied establishing regional hegemony on his island. He also probably thought Hideyoshi was bluffing and that his clan would be protected by the distance and the body of water separating Kyushu from Honshu. The traditional isolation of Kyushu from central authority on the main island was also a probable factor. Not in the last two hundred years had the Kyushu clans experienced this type of interference from authorities or would-be hegemonies in Central Japan. Would-be hegemonies in Kyoto came and went or were killed, as we have seen over the last two chapters, so Yoshihisa probably thought it quite reasonable to not submit to another in a long line of such figures, a man who was calling for his submission through letters. The tide was changing in Central Japan, and the unification process was nearing an end, but the distant Shimazu clan could probably not be blamed for thinking it would pass.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6) & Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): Neither is supported since the Shimazu did not balance. Rather, the Shimazu felt safe because they were at the southwestern tip of Kyushu, about one of the most distant corners in Japan. Though Shimazu Yoshihisa did not have the golden opportunity to join a balancing coalition with Ieyasu like Chōsogabe Motochika did, he had the benefit of having more time to consider Hideyoshi's warnings than Chōsogabe as well as the benefit of having seen what Hideyoshi had been able to do to the Chōsogabe. Hideyoshi amassed a great army with the troops of Mōri and other western warlords that toppled Motochika within a month.

⁶⁹⁰ Yoshinaga 1986, 75.

Since the Mōri troops had experience in Kyushu and their location at the western end of Honshu made them a lot closer than Central Japan, Yoshihisa could have shown more serious consideration of Hideyoshi's threats. Instead, he thought Hideyoshi was bluffing and carried on in his campaign to establish a local hegemonic order in Kyushu.

The Hōjō Clan – Sagami and Musashi Provinces

The last major clan to be subdued was the Hōjō clan. Their surrender in 1590 marks the unification of Japan under Hideyoshi (though some minor warlords in the far north were yet to submit until 1592). While the decisions of the two island clans may be dismissed as a belief that Hideyoshi was bluffing, clan leader Hōjō Ujimasa and his son Ujinao had no excuse for thinking that. They had seen the conquest of a more distant clan across a body of water, the Shimazu, by a massive coalition of forces yet he still believed that he could defend himself from Hideyoshi. Why did they not submit to Hideyoshi, despite their ally Ieyasu's advice to do so? What factors – their alliance with Ieyasu, their defensive position – led them to choose to resist? And why did they buckpass during Ieyasu's challenge to Hideyoshi in 1584?

The Hōjō clan had a reputation as a powerful, expansionist clan under their second generational leader, Hōjō Ujitsuna. The clan during Ujitsuna spread quickly enough across the Kantō region to draw the Takeda and Uesugi clans into an alliance in the 1520's. The third generation leader, Ujiyasu, continued his father's successes at first – his successes sparked another Takeda-Uesugi alliance in the 1540s – but as he grew older, Hōjō expansion slowed and the clan became relatively weaker to their neighbor, Takeda Shingen, who was an ally off and on in the 1550s and '60s. Around the time of

Ujiyasu's death in 1571, Shingen had invaded the Hōjō lands and cowed them back into an alliance in order to protect his rear while he prepared to meet Nobunaga on the field.

Thereafter, the Hōjō clan created a reputation for themselves as opportunistic bandwagoners. The fourth generation leader, Ujimasa, who ruled along with his son, Ujinao, did not contribute greatly to the Takeda efforts against Nobunaga, sending only 2,000 troops to serve with the Takeda and sending forces into Kōzuke Province in the Takeda rear to harass Uesugi Kenshin. He abandoned the Takeda alliance in 1578 after they had been weakened to join in alliance with Ieyasu (and Nobunaga) in picking them apart. When Nobunaga was killed in 1582, Ujimasa turned on and defeated Oda forces led by Takigawa Kazumasa operating in the area.⁶⁹¹ In the chaos over the next year, he split with Ieyasu the former Takeda lands which had been conquered by Nobunaga just weeks before his death, totally ejecting from the area Takigawa, who had been named by Nobunaga to a post akin to a watchman over the Kantō area.

This was the position the Hōjō held at the beginning of Hideyoshi's eight-year long campaign for unification in 1582. They held much of the Kantō region and were positioned in a strategically defensive position that was guarded from Central Japan by a mountain range and the vast territory of their ally, Ieyasu. There is no doubt they felt a certain degree of safety in their position. Ujinao married one of Ieyasu's daughters to cement their alliance in 1582.⁶⁹² The clan stayed out of the fighting during Shibata Katsuie's unsuccessful challenge to Hideyoshi in 1583. As mentioned above, Ujimasa even sent a congratulatory note to Hideyoshi. Like Ieyasu and most of the other warlords, they simply saw no point in involving themselves in what was seen as internal power

⁶⁹¹ Lamers 2000, 193.

⁶⁹² Totman 1983, 46.

struggle among Oda generals and probably could not have foretold at this early point that Hideyoshi would emerge from this battle with the ability to threaten their territory. Moreover, their foe from the previous year, Takigawa Kazumasa, was Shibata's top ally so there was little chance that they would have allied with Shibata.

Ieyasu's challenge to Hideyoshi beginning in 1584 presented a more likely opportunity for the Hōjō to involve themselves in the fighting. But despite their strong alliance and the fact that they were safely entrenched behind the Hakone Mountains while Ieyasu was on the front line against Hideyoshi, Ujimasa did not send troops to directly help Ieyasu's cause.⁶⁹³ Instead, they fell into a familiar role of watching Ieyasu's back, a role which it will be recalled they fulfilled as allies of the Takeda in the early 1570s.

Prior to the fighting with Ieyasu, Hideyoshi began forming alliances with warlords in the northern Kantō region, clans such as the Uesugi, Satake, and Utsunomiya that were opposed to the Hōjō.⁶⁹⁴ These forces came in handy for keeping the Hōjō distracted in Kōzuke Province.⁶⁹⁵ This was a favorite tactic of warlords during the Sengoku Period, and showed their proclivity to form alliances with the enemies of their enemies. The same had occurred with Uesugi Kenshin during the First Anti-Nobunaga coalition, when the Honganji temple kept Kenshin occupied so that he could not attack Takeda Shingen. So the Hōjō actually did become involved in fighting, but not where they were needed by Ieyasu.

Moreover, it is not clear that they could spare troops to help Ieyasu during the few months of Ieyasu and Hideyoshi's standoff. Toward the end of the campaign, Ujimasa's

⁶⁹³ Shimoyama 1996, 72-73.

⁶⁹⁴ Shimoyama 1996, 68.

son and co-ruler Ujinao finally ordered Hōjō troops to assist Ieyasu, and he sent a letter to informing him of this. But much like in the case of the belated Chōsogabe assistance, Ieyasu had to inform Ujinao and Ujimasa that their help was no longer needed as he had just arrived at a peace agreement with Hideyoshi.⁶⁹⁶

The Hōjō clan now was left feeling isolated and vulnerable.⁶⁹⁷ Hideyoshi was now clearly the predominant warlord and hegemonic threat, and he proved this in 1585 by easily subduing the Chōsogabe on Shikoku. They tried to curry favor with Ieyasu and Date clan in the north to bolster these alliances.⁶⁹⁸ And because he did not fully trust Hideyoshi, Ieyasu maintained his military in case conflict arose again. This helped to assuage the Hōjō fears. But in 1586, Ieyasu traveled to Osaka to fully submit to Hideyoshi; a marriage alliance between Ieyasu and Hideyoshi's sister was also arranged.⁶⁹⁹

This turn of events once again had the effect of making the Hōjō the odd men out. After the conclusion of the Kyushu campaign, Hideyoshi in 1588 sent a summons to Ujimasa and Ujinao to travel to Kyoto to submit. Now enjoying a good relationship with Hideyoshi, Ieyasu advised them to do so, adding that they would presumably be investitured in their territories if they did. At this point, the Hōjō started to become suspicious of Ieyasu's motives.⁷⁰⁰ Trying to win something out of was beginning to look like a hopeless situation, Ujimasa sent his brother, an old friend of Ieyasu's, to negotiate. The Hōjō terms included regaining lost territory from their neighbors.⁷⁰¹ These

⁶⁹⁵ Shimoyama 1996, 72-73.

⁶⁹⁶ Shimoyama 1996, 73.

⁶⁹⁷ Shimoyama 1996, 75.

⁶⁹⁸ Totman 1983, 49; Shimoyama 1996, 75.

⁶⁹⁹ Totman 1983, 49-50.

⁷⁰⁰ Shimoyama 1996, 115.

⁷⁰¹ Shimoyama 1996, 118-120.

negotiations dragged on into 1589 with Ujimasa and Ujinao telling Hideyoshi they would come but repeatedly putting it off. Meanwhile, they started a concentrated effort to expand their borders in Kōzuke and Shimousa provinces, perhaps in a bid to gain a heightened posture before submission. The historian Shimoyama posits that the Hōjō perhaps thought that Hideyoshi would ultimately not come, but this is hard to believe, seeing how Hideyoshi had just conquered the distant Kyushu for the same reason.⁷⁰²

So, Ujimasa continued to tell Hideyoshi he would come to Kyoto at the end of 1589, all the while continuing his expansion in the Kantō. The Hōjō's neighbors began to find it difficult to contain them, and in the second half the Hōjō finally overran all of Kōzuke Province.⁷⁰³ Hideyoshi finally began to feel that the Hōjō's intransigence was a direct challenge to his authority and that their actions would lead to the undoing of the general peace he had worked so hard to build elsewhere, so he made one last demand that all fighting cease and the Ujimasa and Ujinao proceed with haste to Kyoto. With Ujimasa's planned visit still on schedule for the end of 1589 however, a Hōjō vassal in newly won territory broke the ban on fighting by taking a neighboring castle. This was done probably without sanction from above, since Ujinao claimed to have been surprised by the action. He sent representatives to Kyoto to mollify Hideyoshi, but this had no effect – particularly since Ujinao and his father once again did not present themselves in person. The provocation gave Hideyoshi the excuse to declare war on the Hōjō.⁷⁰⁴ And unlike the Shimazu and Chōsogabe clans, Hideyoshi did not leave the Hōjō in control of their own provinces when he finished with them. The Hōjō were almost totally obliterated as a clan, with only a few remaining members to carry on the Hōjō name.

⁷⁰² Shimoyama 1996, 125.

⁷⁰³ Shimoyama 1996, 127-129.

Proximity Balancing (Hypothesis 6): The distance-buckpassing hypothesis is supported by the Hōjō's lack of action. They obviously felt protected by their distance, the mountain range in guarding the approach to their lands, and the presence of their Tokugawa ally in between them and Hideyoshi.

Late Balancing (Hypothesis 7): This is not supported. If the Shimazu should have known better, then the Hōjō definitely should have. They had the benefit of seeing two clans conquered after ignoring Hideyoshi, including one that was much more distant than themselves. But once again, we see a clan that was more concentrated on making regional gains than in protecting themselves in the long term, except their goals were nowhere near as great in magnitude as those of the Shimazu and Chōsogabe clans. More tragically, the Hōjō had seen that Hideyoshi had left the Shimazu and Chōsogabe clans in power in reduced holdings after conquering them. The Hōjō were being offered the chance to hold onto all of their holdings, like Ieyasu, if they submitted to Hideyoshi. Yet, they refused and suffered by become the one clan that Hideyoshi did not reconfirm as daimyo.

⁷⁰⁴ Shimoyama 1996, 130-132.

Conclusion

The hypotheses of argument of this project are not greatly supported by the actions of the warlords during Hideyoshi's domination seeking, but ironically the logic of the argument is still supported. The great power warlords were still focused on their immediate regions – on consolidating power, conquering neighbors, and establishing local hegemonic orders – they just did not balance ultimately as occurred in the Nobunaga case and they did not have other great power rivals, just their weaker neighboring rivals. In this sense, the lack of support for the hypotheses is a result of the weakness of the way in which I framed the hypotheses rather than an indictment of the logic of the argument that warlords are mostly concerned with their immediate regions. This ultimately is the reason for the failure of the balance of power in Japan. The insecurity and the free-for-all land grabbing that were products of the extreme Hobbesian-“ness” of this newly anarchic system actually led to the demise system of autonomous warlords. Warlords did not trust each other, they did not have established norms of aiding each other, and the temptation to grab land from the weak outweighed the need to guard against distant but powerful hegemonic threats. Hideyoshi was a unique figure, a genius at strategy and diplomacy, but the ultimate cause of the unification of Japan lies in the failure of the warlords to put aside the short-term interests and join together.

This supports the argument of the English School that a fortuitous balance of power is fragile. A balance of power does not automatically reconstitute itself but rather it requires much diplomatic effort to sustain. To see this, all one must do is compare the actions of the warlords of Warring States Japan to the leaders of the European states after

they became aware of the balance of power. In Europe, alliance-making for the sake of the balance became a regularity. The rapaciousness of the Warring States period never let the warlords catch the breath in order to consider what was good for themselves in the long-term: True mutual recognition of sovereignty and permanent diplomatic exchanges.

Chapter 8 – Epilogue and Conclusion

Epilogue

Hideyoshi ruled a unified Japan for eight years until his death in 1598. The unification process is sometimes referred to as the “pacification of the Japan” but these years were ironically filled with yet more war due to the two Japanese invasions of Korea, an attempt by Hideyoshi to expand his empire to China. Despite the great numbers of samurai dedicated to the invasions, Japanese troops only briefly entered Chinese territory before being driven back.

Just before his death, Hideyoshi created a council of five regents to keep the realm unified until his five-year-old heir Hideyori came of age.⁷⁰⁵ These regents were five of the most powerful warlords of the time, Mōri Terumoto, Uesugi Kagekatsu, Maeda Toshiie, Ukita Hideie, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. The warlords cooperated long enough to pull the last troops out of Korea, but soon thereafter, Maeda Toshiie died. Toshiie was a long-time Oda general who served Shibata Katsuie but joined Hideyoshi after Shibata’s death and subsequently became a very powerful member of Hideyoshi’s circle. His passing severely upset the balance of the regency council in favor of Ieyasu, by far the most powerful daimyo, who began acting the part of the new hegemon. This in turn led to balancing led by Ishida Mitsunari, one of Hideyoshi’s closest advisors and a top administrator in the government. Two sides formed between the daimyo who backed Ieyasu and those who backed the Toyotomi Hideyori and Ishida Mitsunari. Mōri

⁷⁰⁵ Hideyoshi was not particularly fecund. A previous son died young, after which he adopted his nephew Hidetsugu. Soon after Hideyori was born, his feelings for Hidetsugu soured and in 1595 he had him and his entire family put to death in a very brutal fashion and their bodies put on public display. Experts point to

Terumoto, the next most powerful daimyo after Ieyasu, revealed the true weakness of his character by playing only a minor role. He was named the head of the Toyotomi forces, but Ishida and the others kept him in Osaka Castle where he was placed in charge of Hideyori. Few warlords remained neutral, and a few of Hideyoshi's former generals joined Ieyasu due to the scheming of Ishida, whom they considered an interloper in military affairs. The posturing by each side eventually led to military campaigning by Ishida's and Ieyasu's armies, culminating in the Battle of Sekigahara in October 1600.

Sekigahara was won by Ieyasu's wits and diplomacy more than his substantial military prowess. Using techniques that Hideyoshi himself had honed, Ieyasu won pledges from several pro-Toyotomi daimyo to switch sides in return for territory. The heads of the Kobayakawa and Kikkawa clans, no longer led by Terumoto's uncles, agreed to switch sides. The Kikkawa clan head, Terumoto's younger cousin, informed Terumoto, but Terumoto's response is unclear. It is thought that he agreed but decided to be inactive to hedge his bets. He stayed at Osaka Castle and awaited the results. The defections of the Kikkawa and Kobayakawa clans won the Battle of Sekigahara for Ieyasu. True to his word, Ieyasu granted territory from the defeated to Kobayakawa and Kikkawa, but he punished Terumoto for his inaction by reducing his holdings to the two western-most provinces on Honshu.

Three years later, Ieyasu was proclaimed shogun, a feat that neither Nobunaga nor Hideyoshi had ever managed. His Tokugawa shogunate went on to rule Japan until the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Sekigahara then could be considered the last hegemonic war of the Warring States Period. But by this time, after eight years of unification, the

this and other summary executions as sure signs of mental illness in the formerly good-mannered Hideyoshi, Sansom 1962, 363-370.

comparison to the international system was lost. All daimyo knew that the Warring States Period of independent warlord-states was over, and that the winner of the Sekigahara campaign would resume governance of a unified Japan. By that point, many of the daimyo had gained that title as a result of the unification process; as generals who had performed well for Hideyoshi many of them held smaller territories than the great powers had in the 1560s-80s. A return to the all-against-all fighting of the Warring States Period would put their possessions at the mercy of the greater house that still existed. With the Sekigahara campaign, all these daimyo had to do was to pick the correct side and they would be able to keep their possessions and maybe even enlarge them at the expense of those who chose wrongly. Some daimyo houses even hedged their bets by splitting their choice, as Maeda Toshiie's sons did.

The Tokugawa shogunate carried over many elements from Hideyoshi's government. The foundation of the government remained federalist in nature. The daimyo maintained autonomous rule of their domains, while the Tokugawa shoguns as heads of the military class held authority over military matters and inter-daimyo relations. The shogunate had the ability to transfer daimyo and reduce their holdings where necessary. They also kept control of Japan's foreign relations. Ieyasu began to favor trade with the English and Dutch over the Portuguese and Spanish because they did not bring missionaries with them. Succeeding shoguns implemented the ban on Christianity which lasted until the Meiji Restoration.

To control the daimyo, all were mandated to live in the new capital of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) in alternating years. Additionally, they had to keep their families there as hostages. Daimyo were also made to contribute to building projects which kept

their men and finances occupied. Ieyasu continued Hideyoshi's social policies of strict class separation between the samurai and the peasantry and the ban on peasants keeping arms. Samurai became totally dependent on their daimyo lords. Ieyasu completed the Tokugawa consolidation of power with the Siege of Osaka Castle, 1614-15, by destroying Hideyoshi's heir Hideyori and an army of masterless samurai at the Battle of Osaka. But outside of this, the samurai became estranged from the experience of war. They became an army of bureaucrats in the provincial and local governments of their daimyo lords. A generation later after the Siege of Osaka, there was one last internal war, the Shimabara Rebellion in Kyushu in 1637-38, which was a rebellion in Kyushu of Christian peasants and masterless samurai against religious persecution and high taxation. The fighting there exposed the dissipated fighting skills of the samurai.

Conclusions

For the final discussion, we have several conclusions from the analyses of the three preceding chapters. Naturally, we must discuss the performance of the unit-level hypotheses and the argument about the effects of regional focuses, distance, and rivalries on balancing decisions. Perhaps the biggest mystery to ponder is that of the disappearance of the regional balancing behavior when those actors were confronted by domination seekers from outside their regions. Why is it that the regional powers in the east and the west that balanced each other so timely and efficiently failed so miserably when Nobunaga and Hideyoshi came knocking?

At the system level, we should discuss the argument regarding the degrees of anarchy and hierarchy and Watson's swinging pendulum hypothesis, that is, the argument

that there is a tendency in systems that are too anarchic to swing toward hierarchy. Is balancing behavior affected by a system in which there is more war and less security than an anarchic system where war is less endemic?

An issue related to the degree of anarchy that was found to have an effect on behavior is that of multiple domination seekers. How does the existence of multiple domination seekers complicate balancing decisions and enable the creation of hegemonic orders? What is the effect on balancing behavior if one of the domination seekers is a rival but not the other(s)?

Finally, what light does this project shed on bandwagoning behavior? The existence of bandwagoners continues to mystify IR theorists. Can we draw upon any conclusions that contribute to our knowledge of why some states bandwagon? We will address these questions in the following sections, and then end with a summarized explanation for the failure of the balance of power in Warring States Japan.

The Performance of the Unit-level Argument

Although the unit-level prediction of balance of power theory performed well in explaining great power warlord behavior in the Kantō region and in Western Japan in the period before 1568, the alternative unit-level argument of balancing and nonbalancing performed better in the Nobunaga period. The proximity hypothesis that actors are more likely to balance the more proximate they are to the domination seeker is supported by the behavior of the great power warlords during the Nobunaga period with the exception of the Hōjō clan, whose behavior generally stymied all of the hypotheses. Late balancing was performed by two clans, the Mōri and Uesugi, while a third, the Takeda, took two

years after the start of the first Anti-Nobunaga League to begin balancing. Support for the rivalry hypotheses is more mixed. There was support for the hypothesis that actors are more likely to balance rivals by Uesugi and Mōri. Takeda meanwhile showed that he was also concerned enough with his rival Uesugi to put off balancing Nobunaga for two years. Hypotheses 9 and 10 are less successful. There is support for the “buckpassing or bandwagoning when a rival balances” hypothesis from the actions of the Hōjō and Uesugi if we consider Nobunaga to be the primary domination seeker between 1570 and 1575, but it is not clear that these two clans saw it this way; they may have believed that Takeda Shingen was the greater domination seeking threat. The Ōtomo buckpassed while the Mōri balanced but they generally ignored all of the affairs on Honshu, so their buckpassing may not have occurred for the relevant reasons. The late balancing and alliance with a rival hypothesis is only supported by the Uesugi/Takeda alliance after the Battle of Nagashino.

Beyond a simple counting of which hypotheses were supported, the advantage of the qualitative study is that we can see an affirmation of the argument that the warlords were primarily concerned with their regional rivals. Uesugi Kenshin viewed Nobunaga (and Ieyasu) as new additions on the frontiers of the Kantō region that could help him overcome Takeda Shingen. Since the Imagawa clan had been allied with Takeda, their replacement by the Tokugawa clan was an opportunity to gain a new ally against Shingen. And gaining the more powerful Nobunaga as an ally would lead to an encirclement of Shingen, Kenshin’s focus was entirely on his adjacent rival Shingen, at the expense of keeping watch on Nobunaga, who was in charge of Kyoto and expanding at a rapid rate. Similarly, Mōri Terumoto and his uncles did not view Nobunaga as a

threat initially but instead as someone who could lend them a helping hand in dealing with their neighbors. Kyoto was distant in their minds – they had more pressing matters to attend to close to home. This is why these warlords balanced so efficiently with their rivals but did not with the nonregional actor Nobunaga. The extreme anarchy of the Warring States Period, the frequent warfare against adjacent actors, the heightened possibility of actor death, the feeling of insecurity and lack of trust, all combined to make actors focus on their immediate security needs. These were met with a focus on regional matters at the expense of paying attention to systemic affairs. This focus in turn led to intense rivalries between regional actors who fought each other repeatedly over territory and regional dominance. Nobunaga was not the top security threat as long as these great powers had other actors to deal with in between them and Nobunaga. When these actors were dealt with and Nobunaga moved closer, then he became the top threat.

Neither the hypotheses of the alternative argument nor balance of power theory were well supported in the Hideyoshi period. The two proximity balancing hypotheses are only supported by Ieyasu's balancing effort. Outside of Ieyasu, only Shibata Katusie balanced but that was due to his and Hideyoshi's personal competition over leadership within the Oda military rather than proximity. No great power rivalries are identified during the Hideyoshi period, so the rivalries hypotheses are not tested. But still we can see that the great powers were more concerned with their local rivals – it is just that these rivals were not great powers at the time.

The fact that there was less balancing against Hideyoshi than against Nobunaga is the biggest mystery. The great power warlords behaved counterintuitively when orthodox balancing behavior was most needed; the last three great power opponents of Hideyoshi,

the Chōsogabe, Shimazu, and Hōjō clans, all sat out of early balancing challenges and waited for Hideyoshi to attack them. Why is it that as Japan moved closer to the possibility of a hierarchic order, the warlords grew less and less likely to balance? The regional focus of the alternative argument loomed large in actor behavior. When the most likely balancers – the proximate Mōri clan and Ieyasu – allied with Hideyoshi, only the Shimazu, Chōsogabe, and the perpetual Hōjō clans were left. Both the Chōsogabe and the Shimazu were separated by bodies of water, and both tried to complete unification of their respective islands before Hideyoshi's attack. It is probable that these clans, both of which had no experience fighting Honshu clans, thought that unification of their islands would give them a greater defensive position against Hideyoshi. This is why they did not balance. The Hōjō clan's behavior with regards to Hideyoshi's demand that they submit remains baffling.

The Performance of the System-level Argument

At the system level, balance of power theory was not supported since the multistate system was transformed into a hegemonic order. The alternative system-level arguments that the system will tend toward consolidation by a few great powers and eventually by a single hegemon is supported, particularly from the mid 16th century onward, when the great powers expanded the most. The argument of Watson's swinging pendulum hypothesis is represented well by the entire period. Diffusion of territory occurred in the early part of the Warring State Period as the large, nonadjacent holdings of the *shugo* governors broke up and the number of independent warlords increased. This was a movement of the pendulum from hierarchy to anarchy. But most of the numerous

warlords were weak. At mid-century then, when the great powers began to expand more, they did so at the expense of these numerous weak warlords. This occurred in the way that Watson, as well as Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little describe: Inequalities in capabilities arose between the warlords and those with power too advantage by conquering and taking more power.⁷⁰⁶ Hierarchic patterns emerged, first regionally and then systemically during the unification process.

Balancing arose regionally to counter great power expansion, as we saw in the regional cases. This balancing slowed expansion at the regional level, but the warlords had difficulty in translating balancing to the system level for the reasons discussed above. The extreme anarchy of the Warring States system – almost all units of the system were engaged in warfare – led to rivalries, multiple domination seeking threats, and a lack of trust for cooperation. This made external balancing more difficult. Warlords buckpassed in order to let their neighbors be weakened by balancing alone. The insecurity actors felt from the ever-present threat of invasion led them to focus on proximate threats, and their ability to reach out to more distant great powers for the purpose of coordinated balancing suffered. The extreme anarchy of the period thus enabled the demise of the balance of power.

The Existence of Multiple Domination Seekers

The issue of whether states balance against capabilities or capabilities plus intent to dominate was not settled. Perhaps this is the difficulty of finding evidence of such intent, made even more difficult by the age of the Warring States Period, or perhaps it is

⁷⁰⁶ Watson 2009, 123-125; Wohlforth, Kaufman, and Little 2007, 13.

because of the measure of power, which possibly could have led to a conflation of intent and capabilities.

There was mixed support for the operational qualification that a high disproportion of 33% of the system's capability was required in order to trigger balancing. Takeda, Uesugi, Hōjō, Mōri, Nobunaga, and Hideyoshi were the great powers who triggered balancing, whether regionally or at the system-level. With the Ōuchi/Mōri, Uesugi (after 1560), and Hideyoshi (against Ieyasu only) cases, the 33% threshold was surpassed. With the Nobunaga, Takeda, or the Hōjō, it was not.

In general, it appears that much of the balancing was performed against rising powers, those who most endangered the status quo, which were often but not always the most dominant power. The Hōjō and Takeda clans were not the most powerful clans however when they drew balancing against themselves – they and the rest of these domination seekers were expanding at the time. This leads to support for arguments that rising powers, those seeking to change the status quo, trigger balancing.

This leads us to the issue of existence of multiple domination seekers. With so many weak warlords in between them, the great powers were generally able to expand through these weaker warlords' lands, whether quickly or slowly, until they ran into each other. The existence of multiple rising powers was thus a result of the anarchy of the period and a representation of the pendulum swinging back in the direction of anarchy. Though not included as a hypothesis, the existence of multiple domination seekers appears to have had an effect in enabling the establishment of hegemony. When Takeda Shingen began expanding in the nascent years of Nobunaga's domination seeking, Uesugi Kenshin chose to focus on Shingen instead of Nobunaga, thus it must be

emphasized that beyond forming a nominal alliance with Nobunaga he generally buckpassed in the years 1570-75. Still the focus of his security efforts vis-à-vis the other great powers remained Shingen. This came at the expense of balancing against the expansion of Oda troops into his sphere of influence. In this case, the issue of multiple domination seekers is conflated with the issue of balancing a rival.

This issue becomes clearer if we consider the Shibata-Hideyoshi duel of 1583 as an example of multiple domination seekers. Since both actors had just emerged from the Oda military structure, they were not rivals with any of the warlords. So how did the other warlords react to their mutual domination seeking? Ieyasu, Mōri Terumoto, and the others stayed put and let Hideyoshi and Shibata waste their efforts on each other. Only Uesugi Kagekatsu, a weakened warlord, contributed to Hideyoshi.

The existence of multiple domination seekers probably does not doom a system to transform into a hegemonic order, but it is apparent both logically and here empirically that it can lead to untimely and inefficient balancing. It could be the case that the existence of multiple domination seekers holds more causal power than rivalries in determining buckpassing and untimely, inefficient balancing behavior. The existence of a rivalry may inform an actor which of the multiple domination seekers against whom to prioritize balancing. But as soon as the rival's power is depleted or he is effectively balanced, the balancing actor may then ally with his rival and balance the other domination seeker, as occurred with Uesugi Kenshin.

Bandwagoning Behavior

Finally, what light does this project shed on bandwagoning behavior? Among others, the bandwagoning of the Hōjō and Mōri clans sticks out. The Hōjō bandwagoned between the years 1572-1582, confronting the issue of multiple domination seekers by bandwagoning with both; they first bandwagoned with the Takeda clan, and then after the Takeda and Uesugi clans allied and after Uesugi Kagekatsu killed his rival for succession – a Hōjō son – they decided to bandwagon with Nobunaga. The Hōjō bandwagoning is mystifying. They held consolidated power, no domestic challenges, and had a well-ruled domain. They had previously been a target of balancing in the Kantō, they still held onto a great expanse of territory, and at the Siege of Odawara in 1590, they were able to gather 50,000 troops, so they had sufficient military capabilities.

The factors that changed that could explain their transformation from an expanding powerful foe to a bandwagoning opportunist may possibly be due to an extreme power imbalance vis-à-vis a more powerful foe and a lack of actors to balance with. The Hōjō clan leader Ujiyasu died at the end of 1571 and upon dying he advised his son Ujimasa to abandon their alliance with Uesugi, who proved to be an ineffective ally, and to ally instead with Takeda Shingen, who had been subjecting the Hōjō to fierce attacks. That Shingen was more powerful than the Hōjō is clear. Ujimasa may have felt that he had nowhere else to turn since Uesugi had failed his clan; Shingen might have also informed him that he wanted no Hōjō territory and was only pressuring them into an alliance so he could attack Nobunaga.

If this argument seems valid, then it may also explain the later decision to bandwagon with Ieyasu and Nobunaga. The Hōjō were at peace with both the Takeda and

Uesugi clan in 1576-77, but they became enemies of the Uesugi clan when Ujimasa's brother, who had been adopted by Kenshin, was killed by Uesugi Kagekatsu in a succession battle. They then abandoned their Takeda alliance when that clan refused to aid the Hōjō in fighting Kagekatsu. An alliance with the new powers Ieyasu and Nobunaga may have appeared as their only way to defeat both of their Kantō rivals. They made this alliance, and committed to fighting the Takeda, upon whom they inflicted a defeat in the Battle of Omosu in 1580.

While this argument that the Hōjō had no viable allies with which to balance may have some validity, it ignores that others performed balancing under the same situations. Uesugi Kenshin balanced along with Mōri Terumoto on the other end of Honshu. Ujimasa could have done the same. They could have balanced alone as Terumoto found himself doing in 1580-1582. Their decisions to turn on the Takeda in their post-Nagashino weakness as well as to turn on Oda troops in 1582 confirms our image of bandwagoners as opportunistic gains-seekers, but the reason for why actors turn to such behavior is still unknown.

The Mōri clan balanced Nobunaga and was generally successful until they became stalemated with Hideyoshi in the late 1570s. In 1582, without knowing about Nobunaga's death, they signed a peace agreement that was abruptly drawn up by Hideyoshi, who did know of Nobunaga's death and wanted to rush back to Kyoto. The Mōri clan subsequently held to their peace agreement with Hideyoshi even after they were told the news of Nobunaga's death. Whereas the Hōjō clan immediately turned on Oda forces operating in the Kantō in after hearing of Nobunaga's death, the Mōri

effectively acted as if the peace treaty they signed with the Oda general Hideyoshi, vassal of Nobunaga, was a personal treaty with Hideyoshi, independent warlord.

Mōri Terumoto's inactions during Hideyoshi's domination seeking could be explained by the friendship of his uncle Kobayakawa Takakage with Hideyoshi. But this is a weak explanation – Takakage benefited greatly from Hideyoshi's domination seeking but Terumoto by comparison gained little. He was allowed to keep much of his possessions gained by his clan's eastward expansion during their balancing against Nobunaga in the late 1570s, but he gained little after that from his alliance with Hideyoshi. As one of the most powerful men in the 1580s-90s, if he wanted more territory he probably could have taken it. The two most likely explanations for his behavior are that he was more concerned with overexpansion of his territory and the consolidation of his present territory, and second that he was personally a weak leader who was dependent on the advice of others and avoided war when possible.

The evidence for the first reason is that the Mōri might have had difficulties in consolidating authority over the vassals within their own territory, as discussed in the last chapter. As Arnesen states, the association with the new hegemon Hideyoshi brought them additional authority; they were finally able to perform land surveys after their alliance.⁷⁰⁷ If the Mōri lands were not consolidated, then they might have been concerned with overexpansion should they try to take more territory. Motonari gave advice along these lines to Terumoto and his uncles before he died: That they should be satisfied with the current extent of their boundaries and work on improving what they held.⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁷ Arnesen 1979, 222.

⁷⁰⁸ Watanabe 1982, 47.

The second reason derives from the individual level of analysis. It posits that Terumoto was personally a weak leader who avoided war and was overly dependent on his uncle's clans. It must be remembered that Terumoto came to power at the young age. While other warlords came to rule their clans at young ages as well and went on to be great military figures, Terumoto's case was different in that he was guided and perhaps dominated by his powerful uncles, the Kikkawa and Kobayakawa clan heads. This dependence on their advice carried over into the campaigning leading up to Sekigahara in 1600, as shown by Terumoto's decision to remain out of the fighting at Sekigahara. Few of the other powerful warlords would have behaved so weakly, and Ieyasu let him know that by reducing his territories while increasing those of the Kikkawa and Kobayakawa clans.

In addition to the Hōjō and Mōri clans, the eventual hegemon Tokugawa Ieyasu also performed bandwagoning in both the Nobunaga and Hideyoshi periods. He was not classified here as a "great power" in the Nobunaga period, but he was remained allied with and militarily assisted Nobunaga from the early 1560s until the year of his death. And though he was one of the few powers to balance Hideyoshi, after his submission he militarily aided and played a role in the government of the man who unified Japan. His eventual ascent to hegemony may have an influence on Japanese thinking at the international level of politics even to this day. The history of Japanese foreign policy since the Meiji Restoration has been dominated by the tendency to bandwagon with the international system's dominant power. Could it be that the Japanese have a political cultural bent toward supporting hierarchic orders in the international arena? This presents an interesting research topic to pursue in the future.

Concluding Remarks

The main conclusion of the project is this: Individual internal balancing efforts can be defeated singly by a powerful domination seeker who is individually more powerful than each of his opponents, so effective balancing requires external balancing, that is, balancing coalitions. But such coalitions require coordination and cooperation to be effective. Cooperation and coordination is difficult in a system where war is as endemic as it was in the Warring States Period because all actors face the threat of land invasion from neighbors. Actors in such a newly anarchic system focus their security efforts toward their neighbors and proximate rivals in their own regions to the neglect of system-level hegemonic threats rising in other regions.

The European system has been so central to the development and testing of balance of power theory that any non-European study of the balance of power at least implicitly involves a comparison with Europe. It is true that Europe during its balance of power era experienced great, destructive wars, but each unit was not constantly at war or under a credible threat of invasion as in Europe. England had the benefit of being an island nation; it was particularly more secure after its union with Scotland in 1707, which removed its only adjacent military threat and a frequent ally for those who opposed England. This precipitated the era of greater balancing in the 18th century known as the Golden Age of the Balance of Power, in which Britain was freer to act militarily on the continent and overseas.

If we count the number of independent actors that were active participants in warfare, and the frequency of their wars, then Warring States Japan experienced more

war than Europe during its balance of power era. The Japanese system had islands, but these were split between several warlords as well, decreasing the possibility of offshore balancers such as England.

Additionally, the balance of power existed in Europe because systemic balancing norms developed between the European great powers, as was discussed in detail in the literature review. Growing out of a fortuitous balance in the 16th century, the European balance began to take hold when the idea of the balance of power from Renaissance Italy was diffused across Europe.

The anarchic order in Warring States Japan was only a fortuitous balance, a balance that existed primarily as a result of a vacuum of power and a lack of domination seekers. We should not lose sight of the fact that the first domination seeker to enter Kyoto with the aim of uniting the system was well on his way to doing so before his premature death. But Nobunaga and Hideyoshi after him were not just lucky that they were the first (and second) warlords to try to overthrow the balance (they actually were not – remember that Imagawa Yoshimoto tried to in 1560 but was stopped by Nobunaga). It is unlikely that the other powerful warlords such as Uesugi Kenshin or Takeda Shingen could have achieved the same results because of the balancing against them by their regional rivals. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi after him benefited from their geographic proximity to Kyoto and a lack of great power rivals. If they had been balanced effectively, then a systemic balancing norm might have taken root that could have resulted in a sustainable balance of power.

Appendix

The Pre-Meiji Provinces, Figures for Province Total Area⁷⁰⁹

English Name – Japanese Name – Total Land Area (km²)

Aki 安芸 4324.50	Awa (Honshu) 安房 576.89	Awa (Shikoku) 阿波 4146.55
Awaji 淡路 595.89	Bingo 備後 4154.55	Bitchū 備中 2732.04
Bizen 備前 1630.96	Bungo 豊後 5409.27	Buzen 豊前 2143.76
Chikugo 筑後 1293.62	Chikuzen 筑前 2469.86	Dewa 出羽 18839.79
Echigo 越後 11728.21	Echizen 越前 3341.34	Etchū 越中 4247.55
Harima 播磨 3760.09	Hida 飛騨 4177.59	Higo 肥後 7405.80
Hitachi 常陸 5197.52	Hizen 肥前 5696.72	Hōki 伯耆 1988.59
Hyūga 日向 7734.80	Iga 伊賀 687.93	Inaba 因幡 1518.67
Ise 伊勢 3809.83	Iwami 石見 3579.37	Iyo 伊予 5677.73
Izu 伊豆 1356.29	Izumi 和泉 478.83	Izumo 出雲 2782.28
Kaga 加賀 2207.82	Kai 甲斐 4460.67	Kawachi 河内 715.92
Kazusa 上総 2287.35	Kii 紀伊 5718.03	Kōzuke 上野 6363.16
Mikawa 三河 3476.47	Mimasaka 美作 2743.08	Mino 美濃 6443.58
Musashi 武蔵 6460.39	Mutsu 陸奥 48048.13	Nagato 長門 3075.33
Noto 能登 1977.72	Oki Island 隠岐 346.21	Ōmi 近江 4017.36
Ōsumi 大隅 4211.15	Owari 尾張 1686.96	Sado Island 佐渡 855.27
Sagami 相模 1930.74	Sanuki 讃岐 1876.51	Satsuma 薩摩 3737.12

⁷⁰⁹ The website, *Kyuukokumei-ranbako* (<http://f16.aaa.livedoor.jp/~rimse/kuni.html>), served as an independent verification and correction of this data (last accessed on February 1, 2010).

Settsu 摂津 1738.57	Shima 志摩 287.69	Shimotsuke 下野 6408.28
Shimousa 下総 2987.60	Shinano 信濃 13562.23	Suō 周防 3038.48
Suruga 駿河 3317.90	Tajima 但馬 2133.50	Tanba 丹波 2914.85
Tango 丹後 1182.35	Tosa 土佐 7105.13	Tōtōmi 遠江 3041.17
Wakasa 若狭 848.20	Yamashiro 山城 1381.89	Yamato 大和 3691.09

Prefecture to Province Breakdown

(Italics indicate a partial figure)

Prefecture	Name	Area (km sq)	Province	Name	Partial Area (km sq)
青森県	Aomori	9606.26	陸奥	<i>Mutsu (most)</i>	<i>45952.36</i>
岩手県	Iwate	15278.4			
宮城県	Miyagi	7285.16			
福島県	Fukushima	13782.54			
秋田県	Akita	11612.22	出羽	Dewa	18839.79
山形県	Yamagata	9323.34	陸奥	<i>Mutsu (small part)</i>	<i>2095.77</i>
群馬県	Gunma	6363.16	上野	Kōzuke	6363.16
栃木県	Tochigi	6408.28	下野	Shimotsuke	6408.28
茨城県	Ibaraki	5893.21	常陸	Hitachi	5197.52
			下総	<i>Shimousa (approx 1/4)</i>	<i>695.69</i>
千葉県	Chiba	5156.15	安房	Awa	576.89
			上総	Kazusa	2287.35
			下総	<i>Shimousa (approx 3/4)</i>	<i>2291.91</i>
新潟県	Niigata	12583.48	越後	Echigo	11728.21
			佐渡島	Sado Island	855.27
富山県	Toyama	4247.55	越中	Etchū	4247.55
石川県	Ishikawa	4185.54	加賀	Kaga	2207.82
			能登	Noto	1977.72
福井県	Fukui	4189.54	若狭	Wakasa	848.2
			越前	Echizen	3341.34
埼玉県	Saitama	3797	武蔵	<i>Musashi (approx 12/13)</i>	<i>5975.71</i>
東京都	Tokyo	2187.08			

神奈川県	Kanagawa	2415.42	相模 武蔵	Sagami <i>Musashi (approx 1/13)</i>	1930.74 484.68
長野県	Nagano	13562.23	信濃	Shinano	13562.23
山梨県	Yamanashi	4460.67	甲斐	Kai	4460.67
静岡県	Shizuoka	7715.36	遠江	Tōtōmi	3041.17
			駿河	Suruga	3317.9
			伊豆	Izu	1356.29
岐阜県	Gifu	10621.17	美濃	Mino	6443.58
			飛騨	Hida	4177.59
愛知県	Aichi	5163.43	尾張	Owari	1686.96
			三河	Mikawa	3476.47
三重県	Mie	5776.56	伊賀	Iga	687.93
			志摩	Shima	287.69
			伊勢	Ise	3809.83
			紀伊	<i>Kii (approx 1/5)</i>	991.11
和歌山県	Wakayama	4726.92	紀伊	<i>Kii (approx 4/5)</i>	4726.92
滋賀県	Shiga	4017.36	近江	Ōmi	4017.36
奈良県	Nara	3691.09	大和	Yamato	3691.09
京都府	Kyoto	4612.71	山城	Yamashiro	1381.89
			丹波	<i>Tanba (approx 2/3)</i>	2048.47
			丹後	Tango	1182.35
大阪府	Osaka	1892.86	摂津	<i>Settsu (approx half)</i>	698.11
			河内	Kawachi	715.92
			和泉	Izumi	478.83
兵庫県	Hyōgo	8396.32	但馬	Tajima	2133.5
			淡路	Awaji	595.89
			丹波	<i>Tanba (approx 1/3)</i>	866.38
			摂津	<i>Settsu (approx half)</i>	1040.46
			播磨	Harima	3760.09
鳥取県	Tottori	3507.26	因幡	Inaba	1518.67
			伯耆	Hōki	1988.59
島根県	Shimane	6707.96	出雲	Izumo	2782.28
			石見	Iwami	3579.37
			隠岐島	Oki Island	346.21
岡山県	Okayama	7106.08	美作	Mimasaka	2743.08
			備前	Bizen	1630.96
			備中	Bitchū	2732.04
広島県	Hiroshima	8479.05	備後	Bingo	4154.55
			安芸	Aki	4324.5

			周防	Suō	3038.48
山口県	Yamaguchi	6113.81	長門	Nagato	3075.33
香川県	Kagawa	1876.51	讃岐	Sanuki	1876.51
徳島県	Tokushima	4146.55	阿波	Awa	4146.55
愛媛県	Ehime	5677.73	伊予	Iyo	5677.73
子知見	Kōchi	7105.13	土佐	Tosa	7105.13
大分県	Ōita	6338.82	豊後	Bungo	5409.27
			豊前	Buzen (approx 1/2)	929.55
			筑前	Chikuzen	2469.86
福岡県	Fukuoka	4977.69	筑後	Chikugo	1293.62
			豊前	Buzen (approx 1/2)	1214.21
佐賀県	Saga	2439.58	肥前	Hizen (approx 2/5)	2439.58
			肥前	Hizen (approx 3/5)	3257.14
長崎県	Nagasaki	4104.29	対馬	Tsushima I.	708.7
			壱岐島	Iki I.	138.45
熊本県	Kumamoto	7405.8	肥後	Higo	7405.8
宮崎県	Miyazaki	6684.67	日向	Hyūga (approx 7/8)	6684.67
鹿児島県	Kagoshima	8998.4	薩摩	Satsuma	3737.12
			大隅	Ōsumi	4211.15
			日向	Hyūga (approx 1/8)	1050.13

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