

# Using Newspaper Text to Measure Geopolitical Uncertainty

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RIETI Workshop on Uncertainty, Trade and Firms

Tokyo, 18 April 2018

### Geopolitical Events around the World



### **Geopolitical-related Economic Uncertainty**

- Geopolitical-related economic uncertainty is of great concern to policy makers in Japan.
- They cannot answer critical questions on geopolitical uncertainty such as:
  - How high is geopolitical uncertainty now?
  - How does geopolitical uncertainty affect economic performance?
- Unfortunately, NO objective indicator of geopolitical uncertainty currently exists.

### **Research Objectives**

- Quantify geopolitical-related economic uncertainty in Japan based on newspaper coverage
- Examine results for geopolitical uncertainty measures
- Investigate the link between geopolitical uncertainty and economic performance by using those measures

### **Key Findings**

- Newspaper based index of geopolitical uncertainty in Japan jumped around the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003.
- It also rose sharply in reaction to the United States presidential election in 2016, the French presidential election, the US airstrikes in Syria, and rising tensions between the US and North Korea in 2017.
- Positive geopolitical uncertainty shocks foreshadow deteriorations in Japan's macroeconomic performance.

### **Today's Outline**

- 1. Measuring geopolitical uncertainty
- 2. Showing the results of constructed measures
- 3. Assessing the impact of geopolitical uncertainty

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### **Constructing Geopolitical Uncertainty Index**

- In much the same spirit as Baker, Bloom, and Davis (2016), an index of geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) in Japan is constructed with computerized searches of newspapers.
- From 4 major Japanese newspapers, the monthly number of articles containing at least one key word from each of 3 term sets were recorded.
  - 1. Economy term set (E term set): {経済 or 景気}
  - 2. Uncertainty term set (U term set): {不透明 or 不安 or 不確実 or 不確定}
  - 3. Geopolitical-related term set (GP term set)

Japanese term	English term
A. Economy terms 経済 or 景気	"economic" or "economy"
	economic of economy
B. Uncertainty terms	
不透明 or 不確実 or 不確定	"uncertain" or "uncertainty"
不安	"concern"
C. Geopolitical-related terms	
空爆	"air strike(s)"
開戦	"onset of war" or "outbreak of war" or "start of war" or
	"beginning of war"
攻撃	"attack(s)" or "strike(s)"
情勢が緊迫 or 情勢の緊迫 or	"growing tension(s)" or "increased tension(s)" or "increasing
情勢緊迫	tension(s)" or "rising tension(s)" or "heightened tension(s)"
	or "mounting tension(s)" or "situation becomes increasingly
	tense" or "situation becomes even more tense" or "escalation
	in situation"
情勢が悪化 or 情勢の悪化 or	"situation deteriorates" or "situations deteriorate" or "rapid
情勢悪化	decline in situation" or "things get worse" or "deteriorating
	situation(s)" or "deterioration of situation(s)"
核開発	"nuclear weapons development"
制裁	"sanction(s)"
大統領選 or 大統領選挙	"presidential election(s)"

English term

Iananese term

### **Constructing Geopolitical Uncertainty Index**

- Scaled the raw count for each newspaper and month by the count of all articles in the same paper and month
- Standardized each paper's scaled count (seasonally adjusted) to unit standard deviation, and then averaged the 4 newspapers by month to get the monthly index
- Adjusted for the index to a mean of 100 from 1987 to 2017

### Newspapers: Asahi, Nikkei, Mainichi, and Yomiuri





### **GP Term Set Construction**

 Read more than 600 randomly selected newspaper articles containing at least one key word from each of the E and U term sets and the following terms ("geopolitical risk(s)" as English terms):

地政学リスク, 地政学的リスク, 地政学的なリスク, 地政学上のリスク

- Coded an article as GPU=1 if it discussed economic uncertainty in connection to geopolitical-related matters and then recorded words that it used to refer to those matters
- Coded an article as GPU=0 if it did not show any link

### **GP Term Set Construction**

- Identified the following 15 terms that frequently appeared in newspaper discussions of GPU as candidates of GP terms
  - ▶ テロ ("terrorist attack(s)"), 戦争 ("war"), 開戦 ("onset of war"), ミサイル ("missile(s)"), 紛争 ("conflict"), 過激派 ("militant(s)"), 核実験 ("nuclear weapons test"), 空爆 ("air strike(s)"), 攻撃 ("attack(s)"), 情勢の緊迫 ("growing tension(s)"), 情勢の悪化 ("deterioration of situation(s)"), 核開発 ("nuclear weapons development"), 制裁 ("sanction(s)"), 大統領選 ("presidential election"), 政情不安 ("political unrest")

### **GP Term Set Construction**

- Considered approximately 32,000 possible term sets made by combining multiple candidate terms
- Calculated false positive and negative error rates of the classification from the computer side relative to the human classification for each term set
- Chose the GP term set that minimized the sum of false positive and negative error rates

	Japanese term	English term	
	A. Economy terms 経済 or 景気	"economic" or "economy"	
	B. Uncertainty terms 不透明 or 不確実 or 不確定 不安	"uncertain" or "uncertainty" "concern"	
C. Geopolitical-related terms			
	空爆 開戦	"air strike(s)" "onset of war" or "outbreak of war" or "start of war" or	
	攻撃 情勢が緊迫 or 情勢の緊迫 or 情勢緊迫	"beginning of war"  "attack(s)" or "strike(s)"  "growing tension(s)" or "increased tension(s)" or "increasing tension(s)" or "rising tension(s)" or "heightened tension(s)" or "mounting tension(s)" or "situation becomes increasingly tense" or "situation becomes even more tense" or "escalation is situation"	
	情勢が悪化 or 情勢の悪化 or 情勢悪化	in situation"  "situation deteriorates" or "situations deteriorate" or "rapid decline in situation" or "things get worse" or "deteriorating situation(s)" or "deterioration of situation(s)"	
	核開発 制裁 	"nuclear weapons development" "sanction(s)"	
1	大統領選 or 大統領選挙	"presidential election(s)"	

### **Country and Category specific Indices**

- Constructed country and category specific indexes in the same manner by specifying additional criteria
- Counted articles containing the original term sets and also included 北朝鮮 ("North Korea") and 朝鮮半島 ("the Korean Peninsula") to produce an index of North Korea related uncertainty
- Counted articles containing the original term sets and one or more words from a new term list to construct political and military related indices

Japanese term	English term
大統領選 or 大統領選挙	"presidential election"
議会選挙	"parliamentary election" or "congressional election"
総選挙	"general election"
国政選挙	"national election"
政争	"political strife" or "political squabble" or "political conflict" or
	"political disputes"
弾劾	"impeachment"
暗殺	"assassination"
政情不安 or 政治不安	"political instability" or "unstable political situation" or
	"political unrest"
国民投票	"referendum" or "national referendum"
住民投票	"local referendum" or "referendum conducted by local governments"

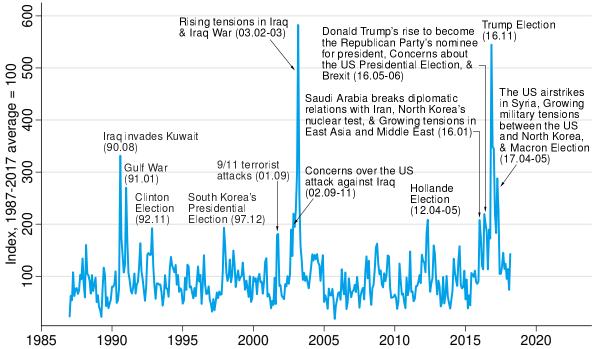
#### B. Military-related

Japanese term	English term
 戦争	"war"
武力行使	"the use of force" or "the use of military force"
開戦	"onset of war" or "outbreak of war" or "start of war" or
	"beginning of war"
ミサイル	"missile(s)"
核ミサイル	"nuclear missile(s)"
軍隊	"military forces" or "armed forces" or "the military"
攻撃	"attack(s)" or "strike(s)"
空爆	"air strike(s)"
テロ	"terrorism" or "terrorist attack(s)"
紛争	"conflict"
軍事介入	"military intervention(s)"
侵攻	"invasion" or "incursion" or "attack country"
軍事行動	"military action(s)"
武力衝突 or 軍事衝突	"military conflict(s)" or "armed conflict(s)" or "military
	confrontation"
軍事力	"military force" or "military power"
政変	"political upheaval" or "change in power"
クーデター	"coup(s)" or "military coup(s)"
ゲリラ	"guerrilla force(s)"

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### **Newspaper Based Index of Geopolitical Uncertainty**

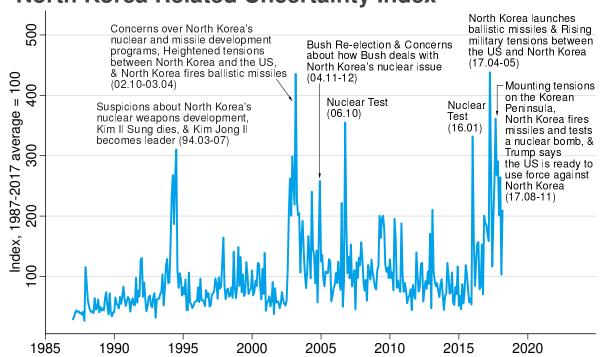


#### Military Related Uncertainty Index Iraq War (03.03) 800 100 700 \_\_ 900 Index, 1987-2017 average Concerns over the US -Iraq invades Concerns about how Trump deals -500 attack against Iraq Kuwait (90.08) Gulf War The US airstrikes with the problem of North Korea's (02.09-11)(91.01) in Syria & Rising nuclear development program military tensions (16.11-17.01)between the US 9/11 terrorist 400 and North Korea attacks (01.09) Saudi Arabia breaks diplomatic (17.04)relations with Iran, North Korea's 300 nuclear test, & Growing tensions in East Asia and Middle East (16.01)200 100 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

#### **Comparison with Geopolitical Risk Index** Military Related Uncertainty Index Correlation: 800 **0.771** in monthly data average = 100 500 600 700 **0.826** in quarterly data Caldara and lacoviello's Geopolitical Risk Index Index, 1987-2017 200 300 400 100 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

#### **Political Related Uncertainty Index** 800 Trump Election (16.11)700 1987-2017 average = 100 300 400 500 600 7 Donald Trump's rise to become the Republican Party's nominee for president, Concerns about the US Presidential Election, & -Brexit (16.05-06) Macron Election Obama Re-election Yeltsin Election (17.04-05)(12.11)(96.06-07)Concerns about Hollande Election Kim Election Bush's re-election (12.04-05)(97.12)Clinton (92.01)Obama Election Bush Bush Index, Election (92.11)Re-election Election (08.11)200 (04.11)(00.11)100 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

**North Korea Related Uncertainty Index** 



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### **Time Series Analysis**

• Included an index of geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) in 6-variable monthly Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model:

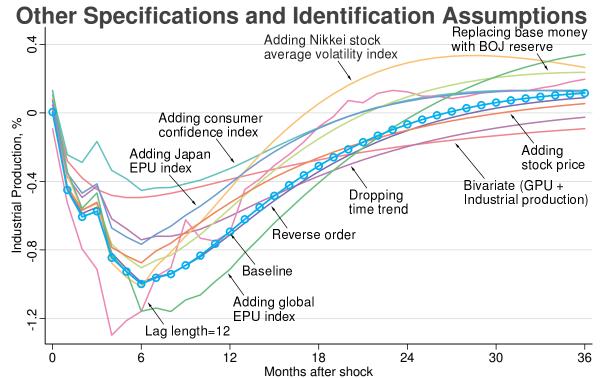
```
call rate
log(monetary base)
log(consumer price index)
log(employment)
log(industrial production)
```

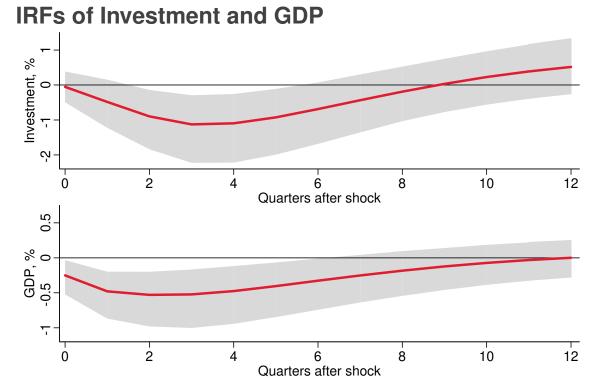
 Replaced industrial production with non-residential investment by private sectors and GDP for quarterly data (7-variable VAR model)

### **Time Series Analysis**

- Identified GPU shocks by Cholesky decomposition
- Estimated the monthly and quarterly VAR models with 4 and 2 lags respectively based on Akaike information criteria
- Samples cover from 1987M1 to 2017M12 for monthly data and from 1987Q1 to 2017Q4 for quarterly data
- Ploted Impulse Response Functions (IRFs) to a GPU innovation equal to 100, which roughly corresponds to the rise in the GPU index from its 2014-15 average value to its 2016-17 average value

#### IRFs of Industrial Production and Employment % Industrial Production, -0.5 Months after shock Employment, % Months after shock

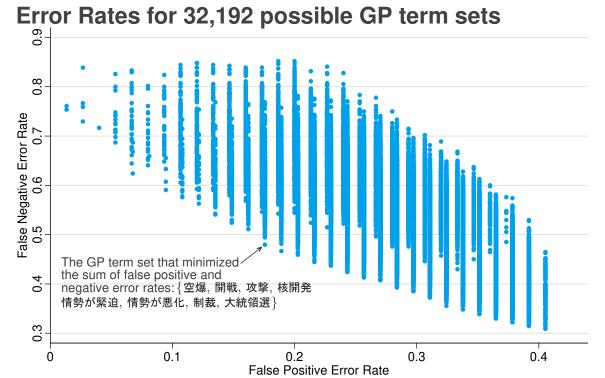




### **Conclusion**

- Newspaper based index of geopolitical uncertainty (GPU) in Japan jumped around the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003.
- It also rose sharply in reaction to the US presidential election in 2016, the French presidential election, the US airstrikes in Syria, and rising tensions between the US and North Korea in 2017.
- Positive GPU innovations foreshadow deteriorations in Japan's macroeconomic performance.

## Back-up



### **Comparison with BBD Index (National Security)**

