

MAINSTREAMING OF THE RIGHT AND A NEW RIGHT-WING MOVEMENT IN JAPAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

SOCIOLOGY

AUGUST 2015

By

Yuki Asahina

Thesis Committee:

Patricia Steinhoff, Chairperson

Hagen Koo

Sun-Ki Chai

Keywords: Social Movements, Conservatism, Right-Wing, Social Change, Japan and East Asia

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I am thankful for the right-wing activists who kindly helped me to study their movement, and the Japanese sociologist Higuchi Naoto who made his data public for use. I would like to thank my advisers, Dr. Patricia Steinhoff, Dr. Hagen Koo, and Dr. Sun-Ki Chai. I am fortunate and privileged that I have been able to learn from them for the last two years. I am also thankful for my graduate mentor Hiroki Igarashi and the participants in the Asia group in the Department of Sociology. I thank Kristyn Martin for her assistance in editing. I would not have been able to complete my study without the financial supports from the East-West Center, the Center for Japanese Studies, the Department of Sociology, and, the Graduate Student Organization. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to my family, Asahina Teiyu, Shoko, and Teiryō as well as Horizoe Rio for their personal supports. All the errors in this thesis belong to me.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a study of social change in contemporary Japan, which uses the success of a right-wing social movement as a case. My analysis focuses on the “Activist-Conservative” movement that had emerged in the late 2000’s and developed rapidly. Drawing on the analysis of original and secondary interview data with 46 right-wing activists, qualitative content analysis of right-wing magazines, and the review of various existing resources, I explore reasons people are motivated to take part in such activities and the reasons the movement was able to achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japanese society. The thesis argues that Japan’s new right-wing mobilization should be understood as a reaction to Japan’s economic, political, and symbolic power decline in East Asia. It was the macro-level economic and political changes in East Asia that enabled the success of the new right-wing movement.

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## **CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: MAINSTREAMING OF THE RIGHT IN JAPAN**

On the night of December 15, 2012, Akihabara, a mecca of anime culture in Eastern Tokyo, was filled with a crowd of nationalists holding Japanese flags. People had gathered there to show their support for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)'s president Abe Shinzo on the last day of the 46th national general election campaign. Abe and another influential nationalist politician, Aso Taro, appeared at the rally. The following day, Abe's LDP achieved a landslide victory and returned to power after spending three years as an opposition party. Two years later, in December 13, 2014, Abe and Aso filled Akihabara with nationalists again by making their last speeches there for the 47th national general election. This time they gained 291 out of 480 seats. As Abe's popularity among his right-oriented supporters shows, recently there has been increasing presence of right-wing and nationalist political factions in Japan. The political scientist Richard J. Samuels termed this phenomenon nicely as "mainstreaming of the right" (2010). I am interested in this apparent "mainstreaming of the right" phenomenon, which I believe to be a sociologically relevant subject. While some scholars look at "mainstreaming of the right" as changes in Japanese collective consciousness (Kayama 2002; Takahara 2006), because they discuss these changes in mass consciousness without a specific focus, their arguments remain vague and are not very helpful to understand the phenomenon. To observe the phenomenon more concretely, I consider there to be two different manifestations of the mainstreaming of the right, one in the arena of institutionalized politics, and the other in terms of more militant and xenophobic right-wing activism. Compared with the institutional politics, social movement activities are at the extreme edge of the mainstreaming of the right phenomenon. Studying an extreme case to gain broader comprehension of a phenomenon is an

analytical strategy in social sciences, which I will follow in this study. A good example is Émile Durkheim's (2001 [1912]) study of Australian totemism, in which he focused on the most primitive religion to discuss the role of religions in the making of collective consciousness in society. Social movement activity, that is the extreme manifestation of the mainstream of the right, is a useful analytical focal point to study the phenomenon sociologically, rather than to study collective consciousness without a focus or to restrict analysis to institutional politics. Thus, this thesis is an empirical study of social change in contemporary Japan, which uses the success of a right-wing social movement as a lens to observe the social change. Specifically, my analysis focuses on what will be called the "Activist-Conservative" movement, and explores the reasons people are motivated to take part in such activities and the reasons the movement was able to achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japanese society.

Three months prior to Abe's speech in Akihabara, a group of nationalists gathered in Ikebukuro, a major commercial district that hosts the largest Chinatown in Tokyo. They were there to join in an event they called "the biggest anti-China demonstration ever" hosted by Activist-Conservative organizations. They marched around Chinatown claiming to do "ethnic cleansing" by kicking the Chinese out of Ikebukuro. They finally arrived in front of a Chinese grocery store called Sunshine Castle, which had been known as the landmark of Ikebukuro Chinatown, but which some nationalists believed to be the headquarter of the Chinese mafia syndicate in Japan. Dozens of nationalists, most of them members of an organization called Zaitokukai, filled the streets surrounding that grocery store while making loud and offensive speeches. In addition to the insulting speeches, they also occupied the street, disrupting the business of Chinese-owned stores. This demonstration was a reaction to a series of anti-Japan demonstrations that took place in major cities in China earlier that month. While nationalists



demonstrated against Chinese in Ikebukuro, they also held similar demonstrations against Koreans in the Okubo area, which hosts the largest Korean town in Tokyo. Why did such activism achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japan? What motivates people to take part in such activities? These are the questions this study explores. The key to answering these questions is that the aforementioned protest was a reaction to the similar activism in China. I will argue that Japan's historical and contemporary relationship with the other East Asian societies play a crucial role in explaining today's nationalist activism.

A few decades ago, people including social scientists believed that globalization simply promoted the cosmopolitanization of society and would make nation-states less important, and racial divides less salient. This process of cosmopolitanization was actualized in some areas more than others, such as globalization of education and knowledge. However, there has been a resurgence of nationalism, racial antagonism, and right-wing movements all over the world, from Hindu nationalism in Southeast Asia to the far-right in Europe. We see too much racial and ethnic antipathy today, despite being in the midst of globalization, which once was assumed to make the world more open to diversity. In addition, the coalescence of conservatism with neoliberalism, which sees market competition itself as a kind of ethic, has become the dominant ideology of the day and influences people's lives in every corner of the world. Thus, it is no wonder that the resurgence of conservatism and right-wing activism in the contemporary world is of interest to many social scientists across the continents. There have been emerging efforts by scholars to understand the topic, which is evident in the special journal issues and book series devoted to the topic such as Routledge's *Extremism and Democracy*. Some academic institutions have established centers and workshops dedicated to the topic, such as the University of California at Berkeley's Center for Right-Wing Studies. Despite these scholars' efforts, many

interesting cases are yet to be studied. This is particularly true in the context of East Asia, where we have observed intense international conflicts and the rise of nationalistic movements but very few scholarly efforts to understand the situation.

Social movement studies also need to pay more attention to studying conservative politics. As social movements scholar James Jasper pointed out, “(m)ost scholars of social movements are left-leaning in their own politics, and most study movements they admire” (2014a: 71). The result is, first, there are fewer studies of the right and conservative social movements than that of the left, and second, right-wing movements tend to be seen as pathological, while such a view is considered obsolete in the case of political activities of the left. I agree with Jasper that we need more studies of the right, especially ones that take a “less pejorative” view of them. Thus, this thesis is my effort to contribute to such disciplinary fields as the sociological studies of conservatism and social movement approach to the right, by using a case from East Asia that is quite different from both the Western European and the American cases, on which most of the existing studies concentrate.

My analysis will make use of two primary sources of data coupled with a review of various existing resources. The first is original and secondary interview data from 46 right-wing activists. My initial interest in this topic evolved when I and two other students in my college did interviews with seven conservative college students in Tokyo as a part of a qualitative research methods course. That experience gave me insight to study the organizations on which this study focuses. The following year, I collected 15 interviews with activists in the new right-wing movement organizations and attended a dozen of their events. In the course of that research, I learned that sociologist Higuchi Naoto was studying the same group, and he later made his interview data public (33 interviews). This study heavily relies on these two sources of data. In

my studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, I came to know that there are limitations inherent in interview data. One is that interview data cannot capture collective political discourse. Each activist's perception of social problems does not exist in a vacuum, but is shaped through the media. Thus, it is important to look at the right-wing media discourse. For that purpose, I collected right-wing magazine articles that show the collective discourse of right-wingers. This is the second source of data I will use in this study. If the interview data is helpful to capture activists' perception of social problems from their individual points of view, magazine data helps to look at how problems are framed at the collective level.

The rest of this chapter introduces the background of this study and identifies research questions. It then explains the theoretical perspective, the data, and the methods on which this study relies. In this thesis, Japanese names are rendered family name first, as custom dictates in Japan unless the author writes in English.

### Mainstreaming of the Right in Japan

This chapter introduces the “mainstreaming of the right” phenomenon as the background of this research. The trend is observable in the domains of parliamentary politics, public discourse, and social movement activities. Scholars and journalists have reported that nationalistic sentiments have been on the rise in each East Asian society (Gries 2004, 2005; Kang 2013; Kim 2011; Rose 2000); this is also true in Japan. Journalists and scholars interpret the mainstreaming of nationalism in Japan as due to the popularity of right-oriented politicians (Matsutani et al. 2006; Hangstrom and Hanssen 2014; Wakamiya 2006: ch1). In post-war Japan, while the leading Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has been moderately conservative, explicitly militarist right-wing groups and ideologies were excluded from mainstream politics (French

2001). However, this seems to be changing. The popularity of nationalist politicians such as Ishihara Shintaro and Abe Shinzo are typical examples. Ishihara is the former governor of Tokyo and was a Diet member until very recently. He has been known for his extremely nationalistic orientation and also as the author of the national best seller, “Japan that Can Say No.” Ishihara’s book ironically inspired Chinese nationalists to produce the book “China that Can Say No” which became the Chinese nationalist bible. Ishihara is also notorious for his racially biased remarks such as the use of pejorative terms to refer to citizens of other East Asian states including the term “Third Nationals” (sangokujin). He was also involved in the notorious “black sticker incident.” In the Japanese general election in 1983, someone put black stickers noting “this guy was naturalized to Japan from North Korea in 1966” on the election campaign posters of Ishihara’s rival candidate Arai Shokei. Given the persisting racial prejudice in Japanese society, it is not difficult to infer that the stickers had a negative impact on Arai’s campaign. Ishihara defeated Arai in that election. Soon after, Ishihara’s secretary was arrested because of the suspicion that he had violated the election law by putting stickers on Arai’s campaign posters. Despite countless problematic remarks and actions including the black sticker incident, Ishihara has remained puzzlingly popular. The analysis of survey data by Matsutani et al. (2006) showed that nationalism and xenophobia have a strong explanatory power with regards to Ishihara’s popularity; Matsutani et al. thereby defined Ishihara as the Japanese version of far-right.

Another remarkably popular right-wing politician is the current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who is known as an enthusiastic advocate of the revisionist view of history and has been making efforts to revise Article 9 of Japan’s Constitution, which prohibits Japan from maintaining offensive military forces and taking part in wars (See Abe 2013; Abe and Momota

2013 for details about his ideas)<sup>1</sup>. What makes him a distinguished conservative politician is his symbolic power derived from the fact that he is a grandson of former Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, one of the signatories of the 1941 declaration of war on the US. Therefore, Abe, who is thought to have inherited the nationalist ideology from his grandfather, has been considered the legitimate successor of right-wing tradition. While his revisionist view of history is viewed with caution nationally and internationally (e.g., US Congressional Research Report, February 20, 2014), Abe has been working hard to actualize nationalist policies such as the revision of the constitution. Although he could not achieve success in his first term from 2006 to 2007, he pushed through a bill setting up the procedures for implementing a constitutional amendment, which created fear among liberal citizens and prompted a huge countermovement of Article 9 supporters. In his second term since 2012, he has been pushing this bill even harder. With the landslide victory of Abe's LDP in the past national election, the revision of the Article 9 arose as a realistic possibility. The popularity of Ishihara and Abe, who are considered to be "Japan's far-right" and the successor of mainstream conservative ideology, respectively, suggests that the general public is favorable to such right-wing political figures and their hawkish nationalist thoughts today.

Indeed, while it is difficult to observe the rise and fall of nationalism objectively, a national panel survey that has been conducted by the research institute of NHK, Japan's equivalent to BBC, provides a clue (NHK Houshou Bunka Kenkyujo 2013). The survey has several questions to measure nationalism among Japanese citizens. As one such measure, they asked if a respondent agreed with the statement "Japanese have more talents compared with

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<sup>1</sup> Article 9 issue is important to the extent that some scholars see it as the most crucial divide between the political left and right; "in Japan, the political 'Right' and 'Left' have traditionally been differentiated on the basis of their attitudes towards rearmament and Article 9 of the Constitution" (Suzuki 2014:99).

people in other countries.” The percentage of the respondents who answered “yes” increased by 13% in the last decade from 51% to 68%, which is interpreted as meaning more people are proud to be Japanese today than ten years ago. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement that “Japan is a first-class country” increased by nearly 20% in the last decade, while the actual presence of Japan in the global economy and politics declined significantly during the same decade because of the prolonged recession and the rise of the other global powers such as China. The survey also found that Japanese came to show more positive feelings about the emperor in the last decade. People who have “favorable sentiment” about the emperor increased from 22% in 1988 to 35% of the respondents in 2013, and those who have a “sense of respect” toward the emperor increased from 28% in 1988 to 34% in 2013. This is interesting because attitudes toward the emperor have symbolically separated the opinions of the right and the left in Japan due to controversy over the role the Showa emperor played in making the decision to invade Asia before and during World War II.

In parallel with the right-leaning trend, there has been a “hate-books” fad. Hate books refer to publications that beautify Japan while fiercely denigrating other East Asian states and their citizens. *Hating Korean-Wave: A Comic* (Manga Ken-Kanryu) became the first bestseller of its kind when it came out in 2005. The story of this xenophobic comic was quite simple: the leading character leads the college study group called “Far East Asia Investigation Committee” to debate with other “pro-Korean” groups over specific historical issues, and they always refute their opponents. Despite the fact that the comic was written by a lesser-known author and published by a small publisher, it suddenly became a national best seller and the series sold more than a million copies. Following the success of *Hating Korean-Wave*, many publishers rushed into this market. As these “hate books” became too successful in their sales, some people started

considering it as a social problem. Ultimately, publishers produce these books simply because they sell well. Hence, the popularity of hate-books also seems to suggest a right-leaning trend among the public.

Finally, but most importantly, there has been the proliferation of right-wing activism. As I will explain more in the following chapters, right-wing activism have been considered something in which “ordinary people” should not be involved in Japanese society. But this is no longer the case. There has been increasing presence of voluntary protests by concerned conservative citizens. One such example is the series of demonstrations against Fuji Television, one of the major TV broadcasting networks. In 2011 and 2012, some thousands of citizens protested against the station because they felt the station had broadcast too much South Korean entertainment content, known as Korean-Wave. Within this proliferation of “new” conservative activism, there are radical movements that call themselves Activist-Conservatives, from which this study draws most of its data. The group Zaitokukai is considered a representative organization among these Activist-Conservative movements, as it is “the largest of its kind among conservative and right-wing organizations” in Japan (Yasuda 2012; 20). The organization was founded in 2007 with about 500 members and grew rapidly by exploiting Internet technologies as a powerful mobilizing scheme. Today, the movement claims to have more than 15,000 members and 35 branches throughout Japan (Zaitokukai 2014).

#### A Puzzle: Why Are People Motivated To Take Part in Right-Wing Activities?

Certainly, all of the above factors seem to suggest that what Samuels (2010) calls “mainstreaming of the right” has been taking place in Japanese society. This presents something of a sociological curiosity. Why are a significant number of people today inclined to believe in

the nationalist perspective? Why are many people motivated to take part in right-wing activities? These are interesting questions considering the context of contemporary Japanese society.

First, militant right-wing activism contradicts the post-war Japanese self-identity as a pacifist and homogeneous nation. There is no doubt that Japan was an ultranationalist country before and during the World War II. Oguma Eiji (2002) lucidly illustrated that Japanese elites used to consider Japan as a multiethnic nation to justify Japan's invasion of Asia. They claimed that Chinese, Koreans and other Asian nations belonged to the same ethnic group with Japan. In this logic, Japan's invasion was justified as an act of justice to liberate ethnic allies from the West's domination. After the war ended, however, Japanese politicians started claiming that Japan was a pacifist nation, which "has been occupied by a single homogeneous nation, and was a peaceful, agricultural state with no experience of conflict with alien nations" (322). Therefore, "historically it has been peaceful, and remains so today" (322). In the official discourse, the war was portrayed as "the fault of a small clique of military leaders and their followers" (Berger 2012: 155). Certainly, the left who wished to "promote the ideal of Japan as a 'peace nation', a country that had suffered the most terrible ravages of modern warfare" (Berger 2012: 155) challenged such a view by underscoring the tragedy Japanese and Asian allies had gone through. Nevertheless, the mass public who were tired of violence welcomed the myth of the pacifist nation. The institutions created by the grand attempt of social engineering by the Allied powers to make Japan a pacifist country also supported it, a good example of which can be seen in Article 9 of the constitution, which prevents Japan from taking part in any wars. This myth has become a popular self-image of Japanese. However, such a self-image contradicts the proliferation of right-wing activism in contemporary Japan. If people consider themselves a pacifist nation, how can they simultaneously call for further militarization to confront China,



South Korea, and North Korea? Seventy years after the end of World War II, have many Japanese stopped seeing themselves as pacifists?

The second factor that makes the rise of right-wing activism puzzling is globalization. Why today, despite the prediction that globalization will make nationalism less salient, are we observing the “mainstreaming of the right”? Globalization increased the economic, cultural and political interactions between states and citizens of East Asia, which is likely to lead to mutual understanding of each other and thus to less conflict. Indeed, while Hiro Saito (2014) details its limited capacities, there were emerging cosmopolitan efforts such as the Japan–South Korea Joint History Research Project to produce a shared history textbook. In addition, globalization altered the global cultural climate and made it less conducive to right-wing mobilization. Starting in 1948 with the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and especially from the 1970s onward, the human rights norm has been spreading all around the world. Scholars have found that the globalization of the human rights norm positively affects the mobilization of movements acting on issues related to human rights (Lauren 1998; Tsutsui 2006; Tsutsui and Shin 2008). This would seem to imply that the effect of human rights diffusion will work against movements directly contradicting the human rights norm such as Japan’s new right, which has been cautioned to stop their activism by the United Nations’ committee on human rights and anti-discrimination convention over the years (Osaki 2014). Why, despite globalization, are many people motivated to take part in this kind of activism? Answering this question will help us to understand the “mainstreaming of the right” phenomenon, which has been attracting popular, journalistic, and academic interest.

## Existing Explanations and Theoretical Perspective

### *Existing explanations*

There are two explanations proposed to explain the rise of Japanese “new” rightist activism. The first perspective, which is popular among journalists, maintains that people join right-wing movements in search of an outlet for discontentment they feel in society (Fackler 2010; Noma 2013; Yasuda 2012). Yasuda (2012), through his extensive ethnographic observation, argues that right-wing nationalism appeals to those who have feelings of anxiety created by Japan’s economic downturn. Yasuda’s explanation is similar to the popular “demand-side factors” explanations in the literature of Western European right-wing movements and parties, including the social breakdown thesis, the relative deprivation thesis, and the modernization losers thesis (Rydgren 2007). Despite its usefulness, there are shortcomings inherent in this perspective. The most problematic is that this thesis simplistically reduces the origin of movements to individuals’ psychological distress. We know from the development of social movement theories that we cannot simply assume that there is a social movement where there is discontent. In other words, this perspective lacks explanation of the mechanism that channels grievances into collective action. In addition, as Higuchi (2014) pointed out, Yasuda and the other authors’ data do not support their claim that those who are involved in rightist activism are the ones who are socially deprived. It is consistent with social movement scholars’ findings that this sort of explanation often has little empirical support (Koopmans and Olzak 2004; McAdam 1982).

Sociologist Higuchi Naoto (2014) proposes another explanation. He follows the major approaches in social movement theories and points out that a combination of their strategic framing, the Internet as a new mobilizing resource, and openness of the discursive opportunity

structure allowed the movement to achieve a degree of mobilization success. Higuchi argues that the web recruiting system functions as a new mobilizing resource that has enabled the movement to recruit those who have not been mobilized before. Unlike the perspective that focuses solely on grievances, Higuchi sees that activists' grievances are constructed through movements' strategic framing. He also points out that the political discursive structure for right-wing movements regarding problems related to East Asia was more open after 2000 than before, which enabled the movement's mobilization. Thus, drawing on social movement theories, Higuchi makes a good argument. At the same time, in contrast to the perspective that focuses on demand-side factors, Higuchi's argument puts too little emphasis on grievances and discontentment. This perspective assumes that demands for right-wing movements have been constant for a long time, and that the favorable discursive political structure and the new resource of web recruiting then enabled the movement to channel people's discontentment into mobilization. But there are not enough reasons to believe that there have been constant demands for right-wing movements. Rather, it is more realistic to assume that availability of grievances in a society fluctuate from time to time. If we accept this assumption, new or enhanced grievances can become the crucial determinant of mobilization of social movements. Therefore, I argue that Higuchi's treatment of grievances and discontentment is unsatisfactory to explain the rise of the right-wing movement in Japan. The two existing perspectives are insightful, but each has weaknesses. At the same time, the gap that exists between these two explanations is certainly not new. The same kind of discrepancy exists between the different social movement theories.

### *Social movement theories and criticisms*

This thesis focuses on the right-wing “movement,” and therefore a brief review of social movement theories may be necessary. Because it is impossible to review the complex theoretical development of social movement studies briefly, I include only the theories that are directly relevant to my research questions about movement mobilization and participation. Among the two existing explanations examined above, Yasuda’s perspective is akin to the classical theories of collective action such as mass society theory and relative deprivation theory, which assume that macro structural changes make individuals atomized and those stressed people engage in irrational behavior such as protests. In the 1970’s, scholars began to see these “classical theories” as problematic because of their functionalist assumptions that viewed social movements as irrational behavior (Buechler 2012; Johnston 2014). Nevertheless, the virtue of the earlier theories was that the theories tried to explain collective behavior in relation to macro-level social changes. Then, there were theoretical breakthroughs in the late 1970’s to the 1980’s. Theories that placed emphasis on strategic factors that affect movement mobilizations emerged. The first of its kind was the resource mobilization theory, which claims that the availability of various resources determine the success or failure of a movement (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McCathy and Zald 1977), followed by an approach that looked at mobilization through social networks (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). The next game changer was Doug McAdam’s political process model and the European political opportunity structure models, which emphasize the complex interplay of political conditions surrounding a movement (McAdam 1982; Kriesi 2004). Some scholars also articulated theories that addressed the strategic use of interpretive resources by social movement organizations, called the framing perspective (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford, 1988). The paradigm shift from the classical theories to these

strategic approaches succeeded in transforming the understanding of social movements in Sociology from deviant behavior to a normal part of contentious politics. Consequently, today, the three approaches of resource mobilization, political process, and framing are considered major approaches, and since the 1990s the three theories have also been viewed as an integrated approach in which political threats and opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing constitute three parts of an overall theory. Higuchi's (2014) argument mainly follows those mainstream accounts. Nevertheless, these theories have their drawbacks. In relation to my research question, I point to two criticisms of these theories.

The first is that these theories are focused solely on structural factors that affect social movements and ignore subjective discontent (with a partial exception of framing theory, although the framing perspective tends to see interpretive elements as a movement's strategic resource and thus the focus is less on subjective factors such as discontent and emotion). As McCarthy and Zald note in their influential article, "we are willing to assume (...) that there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for a movement" (1977: 1215); structuralist theories treat motivation of social movements as given. With the cultural turn of American sociology, social movement studies also saw the revival of interest in cultural approaches (e.g., Taylor and Whitter 1992; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Swidler 1995). Scholars of the cultural approach point out that the major theories neglect the motivations behind individuals who engage in social movements (Goodwin, Jasper, Polletta 2004).

Second, some scholars criticized that after the theoretical breakthroughs, social movement studies became too movement centric and too narrowly focused on mobilization (Fligstein and McAdam 2012; Walder 2009). The problem is that the theories no longer deal with the kind of questions that political sociologists are expected to engage with. Andrew Walder

laments, “students of social movements strayed far from their intellectual roots in the sociological tradition” (2009: 209). For him, the most problematic is the indifference to the question of the relationship between social structure and variations of political orientations of movements. The cultural approach did not challenge this point either. Consequently, Hetland and Goodwin (2013) argue that despite its important role in the earlier theories, the concept of capitalism, as an explanatory factor, has disappeared from the recent social movement theories. I have found a useful theoretical perspective to address these two weaknesses of the major social movement theories, as well as the shortcomings of the two existing explanations for the new Japanese right-wing movement.

#### *Right-wing movements as reactionary movements*

Scholars who study right-wing or conservative movements find some incompatibility when mainstream social movement theories are applied to mobilizations of the right. This is mostly because social movement theories have been conceptualized based on cases that are quite different from conservative mobilizations (McVeigh 2009). For example, Sydney Tarrow’s frequently cited definition of social movements as “collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities” (2011: 9) implies that social movements are challenges to dominant powers by less powerful groups of people, which is the premise widely shared among dominant perspectives in social movement theories. However, this does not necessarily apply to right-wing and conservative movements, because right-wing movements often attract relatively privileged groups in society. Recently, useful theories of right-wing mobilization that see right-wing movements as reactionary movements have emerged. Examples are Rory McVeigh’s Power Devaluation Model

(1999; 2001; 2009), which was proposed based on his research on the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, David Cunningham's Mediated Competition Model (2013) which was based on the case of the North Carolina Klan in the 1960s, and Isaac Martin's notion of Policy Threats that was theorized from the American anti-taxation movements (2013). The premise these theories have in common is that right-wing movements are a reaction by a certain group of people in society to threats that are created by social changes.

The mainstream social movement theories assume that social movements are the politics of relatively powerless people who lack resources and political opportunities. Therefore, it is resources and various opportunities that make collective action possible. The theory of reactionary mobilization reverses this assumption. They ask when people utilize their resources and political power to organize collective action. These are the times people feel threats to their collective interests. McVeigh (2009), borrowing the terminology of Weberian class analysis, distinguished three different kinds of threats: economic, political, and status threats. While in reality these threats are intertwined in complex ways and difficult to disentangle, as Weber acutely pointed out, having that kind of *ideal type* is useful for analysis. When applied to the case of Japan, however, I found that symbolic aspects of class distinction that had been extended from status concepts in Weber's theory by Pierre Bourdieu (1984; 1986) were more useful than relying on the notion of status threats. I will use this classification in Chapter 4.

As a matter of course, these theories incorporate the insights from existing approaches to social movement mobilization. To borrow Cunningham's words, which incorporated insights from various movement theories, "perceived threats translate into collective action only when they emerge within a conducive political environment, where regulative policing is minimal or absent, and alongside sufficient material, social, and cultural resources to channel group

members' discontent into sustained organization" (2013: 216-217). In particular, the framing approach is an instrumental part of this line of theories. Let me cite McVeigh's explanation in length.

Power devaluation reduces a group's capacity to maintain its advantages within established institutions, and many individuals are likely to be open to any form of collective action that is oriented toward maintaining and/or restoring their power. Power devaluation by itself does not directly stimulate right-wing activism. It does, however, alter individuals' perceptions of their circumstances and provide opportunities to construct new interpretive frames that generate support for right-wing mobilization (2009: 43).

Thus, in this perspective, the way right-wing movement organizations channel grievances into mobilization through strategic framing is the key determinant of their mobilization. Therefore, to make use of the insights proposed by these theories, I also need to rely on the framing perspective. David Snow and his colleagues derived the notion of framing from Erving Goffman's frame analysis to theorize the interpretive construction of external reality in social movements (Snow et al. 1986). Collective action frames perform such interpretive function by rendering and simplifying parts of external reality in ways that are "intended to mobilize political adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Benford and Snow 2000: 614). Following McVeigh, my analysis will rely on the basic mechanisms of framing alignment that Snow, Benford and their colleagues call core framing tasks.

This theoretical perspective is useful to bridge the gap between the two existing explanations of the Japanese right, as well as the problems of social movement theories in general. The journalistic explanation of Japan's new right-wing movement failed to examine the connection between individuals' discontent and the contexts in which discontent is generated, and Higuchi's perspective paid unsatisfactory attention to grievances and discontent. The



theoretical perspective presented here is more sophisticated than both explanations because it acknowledges the importance of both subjective level discontent and the macro-level social structure that creates individual discontent. In the mainstream social movement theories, McAdam's (1982) undeveloped concept of cognitive liberation, which refers to the collective realization that people can change the situation that oppresses them, addresses a similar point, although McAdam focuses on political opportunities and threats but not collective perceptions of multidimensional threats. It is individuals' perceptions that make them inclined to take political action and thus to cause a collective action, but at the same time it is social structural changes that shape individuals' perception. Thus, this theory also suggests an answer to the two criticisms of the mainstream social movement theories from the cultural approach and the perspective of political sociology. By seeing right-wing movements as a particular reaction to a sensed power decline, this theory has potential to shed light on the relationship between social structure and political behavior, which according to Walder (2009) is a question fundamental to political sociology.

At the same time, because these theories were conceptualized with American cases in mind, they do not fit perfectly with the Japanese case. The most significant difference is that while the theories see various threats emerge from inter-racial or inter-class competition over resources, they do not apply to the case of Japan where the population is ethnically far more heterogeneous than the US and thus the inter-racial competition within the domestic market is virtually absent. Nevertheless, I consider the basic tenets of the theories presented here, for example their premise that right-wing movements are reactionary movements, useful to look at the Japanese case. I also find the analytical concepts they introduce, such as economic, political, and status threats (although I will replace status threats with symbolic threats) helpful in guiding

my analysis. Therefore, I will apply the core tenets of this theoretical perspective to my empirical case in Chapter 4. Based on a case that is quite different from the American and the European right-wing movements, I will call for the extension of the theoretical perspective presented here.

## Data and Methods

The present analysis mainly draws on two sources of data: interview data and magazine articles. As it is clear from the theoretical perspective presented above, I consider it crucial that we take both the individual grievances and the context in which individual motivation is shaped into account to explore the answers to the puzzle of right-wing success in contemporary Japan. Therefore, the mixed use of two kinds of data and methods –interpretive analysis of interviews and qualitative content analysis of right-wing magazine articles– coupled with the review of various existing resources, is the methodological approach suited for this study.

### *Analysis of interviews*

First, this study heavily relies on original and secondary interview data with 46 right-wing activists. As I explained in the preceding section, mainstream social movement theories tend to ignore the importance of subjective factors such as grievance and motivation to social movement mobilizations. One of the two existing explanations of Japan's new right shares this tendency. Because this study aims to overcome the shortcomings of the existing explanations, as well as those of movement theories in general, it is important to give a fair amount of attention to grievances and motivations. Therefore, an analysis of interview data is a good analytical strategy. This will come partly from my own interview data with 15 Zaitokukai and Activist-Conservative activists that I collected as an undergraduate student at International Christian University in

Tokyo. Those interviews were conducted between July and November 2012. I recruited the interviewees at events that the Activist-Conservative organizations hosted such as demonstrations or signature collecting campaigns. In order to make the study comparative with other countries' cases, the interview format followed the large-scale life-course interviews conducted in the western European countries (see details in Klandermans and Meyer eds. 2007 and Goodwin 2011). Generally, interviews lasted one hour and were held in places the interviewees chose. All the interviews were recorded with additional notes being taken during and following each interview. The data were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa as the use of existing data, as I had followed standard U.S. methodologies to obtain informed consent of the interviewees. I will also analyze the interviews with 33 Zaitokukai and Activist-Conservative activists that the sociologist Higuchi Naoto of the University of Tokushima made public for the purpose of secondary analysis. Higuchi's interview method is also a life-history interview that basically follows the same structure as my data, ensuring the compatibility of the data (2014: 213-216). Because I interviewed two of the same individuals as Higuchi, the number of interviews totals 46.

I analyzed the data interpretively and systematically with close reading of interviews and qualitative content analysis. Microsoft Access made it easier for me to manage this data set. I went carefully through all 46 interviews, in which respondents talked about the issues that concerned them. I identified 1,078 quotations in which they discussed one or more issues that concerned them, and because some quotes contained more than one issue, I coded 1,295 responses to a set of 24 issues. This resulted in a mean of 23.4 quotes per interview, and 28.2 issues per interview. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of those 1,295 responses coded with each of the 24 issues. I also coded the context in which activists' remarks took place with

six context categories. For example, when an activist talked about his or her socialization experience in childhood, I classified their remark into the “socialization before participation” category. There are the other context categories such as “initial motivation” and “motivation after participation.” This analysis revealed the general trend of the data. Then, based on close reading of the data, I selected some exemplary quotes that represented the trend that I found in the analysis, and translated them into English. I have replaced the names of all 46 activists with unique ID numbers to maintain their privacy and to make it easier to organize the data. The quotes I selected from the data that Higuchi made public will appear with citations. Otherwise, the quotes that appear are selected from my original data.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Responses

South Korea	204	15.75%		
Comfort Women	57	4.40%		
Forced Migration	17	1.31%		
Other History Issues	19	1.47%		
Korean Wave	9	0.69%		
Territory Issues	34	2.63%		
Other Issues	68	5.25%		
North Korea	79	6.10%		
Kidnapping Problem	56	4.32%		
Other Issues	23	1.78%		
China	191	14.75%		
Population Threats	79	6.10%		
Military Threats	8	0.62%		
Tibet Problems	26	2.01%		
Other History Issues	14	1.08%		
Territory Issues	23	1.78%		
Other Issues	41	3.17%		
Zainichi Problems	192	14.83%		
Zainichi Problems	192	14.83%		
Foreigner Problems	134	10.35%		
Foreigner Problems	78	6.02%		
Suffrage for Foreigners	56	4.32%		
History Revisionism/ Nationalism	125	9.65%		
Nationalism	56	4.32%		
History	69	5.33%		
Other Issues	370	28.57%		
Anti Old Right-Wing	32	2.47%		
Anti Left-Wing	33	2.55%		
Anti Other	23	1.78%		
No Political Interests Before Participation	46	3.55%		
Other Issues	236	18.22%		
Total	1295	100%	1295	100.00%

### *Content analysis of magazine articles*

Second, this study also looks at the collective level right-wing discourse through the analysis of right-wing magazine articles. Each activist's motivations for participation do not exist in a vacuum. Hence, we cannot treat people's motivation to take part in right-wing activities

apart from the public discourse of the right. As Koopmans and Olzak (2004) lucidly pointed out, it is the media that shape an activist's perception of social problems. Today, it is more through mass communication that "movement activists communicate messages to fellow activists and potential adherents, and they thereby gain crucial information about the actions and reactions of authorities, political opponents, allies, and sympathizers" than through direct and physical interactions (Koopmans and Olzak 2004: 199; also see Koopmans 2004). Moreover, scholars argue that semantic dynamics of public discourse shape even the course of social movements itself (Alimi and Johnston 2014; Koopmans and Olzak 2004). Therefore, I consider it crucial to look at the right-wing discourse at the collective level. To my knowledge, there are not many scholarly works that look at the public discourse of contemporary Japanese society, especially that of the right, which is an additional reason to pursue this approach (except for Jomaru 2012; Takekawa 2008). While studies of public discourse in social movements tend to use national newspapers as the data source to explore the ways in which public discourse influences social movement mobilizations, my interest is less concerned with the relationship between public discourse and movement mobilizations than with the ways in which the public discourse of right-wing writers and individuals' motivations relate to each other. Therefore, I look at two established and widely read conservative magazines, *Shokun!* and *Seiron*. *Shokun!* was published by Bungei Shunju, a conservative publishing company, from 1969 to 2009, after which it ceased publication. The average circulation of the magazine until 2008 was 65,000 copies (Asahi Shimbun, March 3, 2009). *Seiron*, the other major conservative magazine, has been published by the conservative newspaper company Sankei Shimbun from 1973 to present. With the disappearance of the rival magazine *Shokun!* it once reached circulation of over 100 thousand, but then decreased to a little over 80 thousand because of the increasing popularity of the more

radical right-wing magazine *WILL* (Asahi Shimbun August 22, 2007). Although there are other major conservative magazines in Japan such as *VOICE*, the present study focuses on *Shokun!* and *Seiron* for two reasons. First, both *Shokun!* and *Seiron* cover general topics that nationalists are interested in, in contrast to other magazines with specific focuses such as *VOICE*, which puts more emphasis on economy and policy-related issues because of its nature as a magazine produced by a conservative think-tank. Secondly, the two more established conservative magazines have relatively longer histories and thus can be considered to represent the mainstream opinions of conservative authors. For example, while *WILL* is another popular conservative magazine, it has only about ten years of history and is produced by a small publisher. In contrast, *Shokun!* and *Seiron* have been considered the leading magazines in the field since their foundation in 1969 and 1977. Bungei Shunju, the publisher of *Shokun!* is one of the ten major publishers in Japan and the 51st largest publisher in the world in terms of its sales (Publishers Weekly 2014). Similarly, Sankei Shinbun, the newspaper company that publishes *Seiron*, is a part of a large media conglomerate in Japan known as the Fuji-Sankei Group. Because of institutional constraints, the two magazines are unlikely to publish articles with extreme opinions, as *WILL* and other less popular conservative magazines do. For example, *WILL*, in their special issue about the Fukushima disaster that hit Japan in March 2011, blamed Kan Naoto, the then Prime Minister of Japan, as a “god of plague” who brought the disaster to Japan, and even goes as far as to raise a conspiracy theory that the disaster occurred because the Gods were angered by the rule of the party then in power, the Democratic Party of Japan (*Will* May 2011). Although such extreme opinions may have some resonance among conservative readers, it is difficult to consider them as popular ideas. Because this study aims to examine the ideal-typical representation of Japanese right-wing discourse rather than outliers, both *Shokun!*

and *Seiron* fit this purpose better than any other magazines. In addition, Inoue (2014) pointed out that the current Prime Minister Abe Shinzo has been a committed reader of *Shokun!* In his autobiographical book, Abe himself talked about the influence of these conservative magazines in shaping his ideology (Abe 2013). From here, we can infer the impact these magazines have in Japan's nationalist politics.

Using Nichigai Associates' online database Magazine Plus, I acquired the bibliographic information such as titles (special issue title, main title, subtitle), authors, date published, page numbers, keywords, etc. of all 10,843 articles that appeared in *Shokun!* from 1977 to 2009 and all 13,597 articles that appeared in *Seiron* from 1981 to 2014. I used Microsoft Access to organize this dataset as well. I coded the data by countries and regions (such as Europe and US) and specific issues (such as territorial disputes) that an article dealt with. In addition, to explore the rhetoric and logics that are used to frame each East Asia problem in the magazine, I analyzed the content of the magazine articles of *Shokun!* Because of the limited time frame allowed for this research, I decided to focus only on *Shokun!* and only on the articles that appeared in the period from 2000 to 2009. The reason I choose *Shokun!* stems from the same reason I preferred the two magazines over the others; *Shokun!* seems to be more established than *Seiron*. *Shokun!* had a longer history and was considered the leading magazine in the field. Furthermore, from a preliminary analysis of the table of contents data that I described above, I knew that articles related to East Asia had increased significantly after 2000, which is why I decided to focus on the period from 2000 to 2009. I thus collected all of the East Asian related articles in *Shokun!* from January 2000 to September 2009 (N=645). This is also the period in which the Activist-Conservative movement was founded and grew rapidly. Because each article was relatively long (about 5 to 6 pages long, which usually took me about 20 minutes to read, with some exceptions



of articles a page or more than a dozen pages long), I still needed to reduce the number of articles to do the qualitative analysis. At this stage, I had finished the analysis of the interview data, and from that had found that each East Asian country mattered to activists for different reasons. As one of the main purposes of the content analysis was to explore continuities and discontinuities between the right-wing discourse and the narratives of individual participants in the new right-wing movement, I needed to choose articles that were comparable to the interview data that I had analyzed. I decided to focus on specific issues concerning East Asia, which made the two sets of data comparable. Specifically, I knew that North Korea mattered for right-wing activists because of the abduction of Japanese citizens by the North Korean government in the 1970s and 1980s. So, I selected all the articles related to North Korea's abduction problem that appeared in *Shokun!* from 2000 to 2009 (N=58). I considered an article to be related to the abduction if the term abduction (*rachi*) was included in a special issue title, main title or subtitle of an article. Similarly, as I knew that South Korea mattered for activists mostly because of history problems between Japan and South Korea, I selected articles related to South Korea if the term history (*rekishi*) was included in the special, main or subtitle of an article (N=40).

China's case was a little bit more complicated, as China mattered for activists because of an ambiguous sense of threat instead of discontent based on specific issues. The sense of threat seemed not to stem from any particular issue, but from a combination of multiple issues that corresponded with China's rise as an economic and political power in the world. Because I could not identify a particular term to select articles, I first did a preliminary selection. Among the 278 articles related to China that appeared in *Shokun!* from January 2000 to June 2009, I chose all the articles that appeared relevant to China's threats to Japan and Japanese based on my interpretation of titles of articles. Since the point of this preliminary selection was to exclude

articles that were obviously irrelevant, I set my definition of “threats” very broadly and kept the article when I was unsure if it was related or not. After the initial screening, I skimmed all of those articles to figure out what was in them (N=82). At this point, based on my analysis of the interview data and the skimming of magazine articles, I had a basic idea of what terms and concepts appeared to be important, and I found several words that were often used to signify China “threats.” Those terms included: Hegemony (*haken*); Empire (*teikoku*); Crime (*hanzai*); Client State (*zokkoku*); Armaments Expansion (*gunkaku*); Ambition (*yabou*); Anti-Japan (*han-Nichi*); Money Worshipper (*haikin*); Economy (*keizai*); Business (*bijinesu*); Invasion (*shinryaku*); Stolen (*nusumareru*). I decided to analyze articles that included one or more of the above words in its special title, main title or subtitle. I identified 60 articles that met the criteria. In this study, I used unique numbers up to five digits to classify magazine articles.

With the data and methodology described above, the following chapters explore answers to the research questions set out at the beginning of this paper, which I will reiterate here before proceeding to the analysis: Why did new right-wing activism achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japan? What motivates people to take part in right-wing activities? To seek the answers to these questions, first, Chapter 2 examines the characteristics of the “new” right-wing movement in Japan in comparison with Japan’s traditional rightist activism and similar activism in Western Europe and the United States. My analysis suggests that unlike the old rightist activism and its foreign counterparts, a preoccupation with what I call East Asia problems characterizes the new right-wing movement in Japan. Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the motivations of activists that brought them to become activists. Because we know from Chapter 2 that East Asia problems have crucial importance, the discussion that will be presented in this chapter focuses on exploring the reasons activists are so concerned with these problems. In

Chapter 4, by incorporating the empirical findings with the theoretical discussion, I explore reasons why the new right-wing has managed a degree of mobilization in contemporary Japan. Chapter 5 concludes the discussion by noting implications for the future of the mainstreaming of the right phenomenon in Japan based on the current study's analysis.

## **CHAPTER 2. WHAT IS NEW ABOUT THE “NEW” RIGHT-WING MOVEMENT?**

Scholars and journalists are interested in the “new” development of right-wing activism firstly because it appears to be a new development in the history of social movements in Japan. Secondly, interest has arisen because “new” right-wing activism resembles the rightist activism that has flourished in the last two decades in Europe and to a lesser extent in America. However, scholars have yet to specify what exactly is new about “new” right-wing movements. Is it really something different from older movements? What characterizes the new right-wing movement in relation to foreign counterparts? I consider these questions important because the novelty of the phenomenon defines the value of the present study to some extent. If this movement presents nothing unique, other scholars might know the answers to the questions that I will pursue in this study. To address this rather ambiguous query, I first introduce a brief history of rightist activism in post-war Japan to contextualize the movement. Then, with the data, I ask the three familiar questions about movement participation -who, how, and why- to explore the differences between “new” and “old” right-wing activism. The analysis suggests that the “new” right-wing movement is new in all three dimensions. Finally, I will introduce the difference between Japan’s new right-wing movement and European/American conservatism. Before the analysis, it must be noted that the purpose of this chapter is not to claim that new right-wing activism in Japan is entirely different from other cases, but rather to explore its unique characteristics.

### History of Right-Wing Activism

Historically, right-wing movements have not been very successful social movements in post-war Japan. However, the emergence of new right-wing social movements signals a change. A brief explanation of right-wing social movements in post-war Japan is necessary to make this

point clear. Although an extensive investigation of the history of right-wing movements goes beyond the scope of this paper, below I will review the history of Japanese right-wing movements briefly, relying on the existing literature (Ino ed. 1991; Ino 2005; Hori 1991, 1993; Takagi 1989; Smith 2011).

### *Pre-war framings*

While it is impossible to show a comprehensive illustration of pre-war Japanese nationalism and statism in this limited space, not to mention beyond my current ability, because of its historical continuity, we need basic knowledge about the way Japan's aggression in Asia was framed in the pre-1945 period to understand post-war right-wing activism. The origin of Japanese right-wing movements can be traced back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, at the eve of the Meiji restoration. They first appeared as a reactionary movement against Japan's "Europeanization" with the end of national isolation policy, which had excluded foreign citizens and culture from Japan under the rule of the Tokugawa shogunate. We can observe some continuity in the ideology of the pioneering right-wing organizations with those of today. For example, Takagi (1989) noted that the party platform of the first right-wing organization Genyōsha (established in 1881) included goals such as fealty toward the Emperor and extreme statism that are also the core tenets of pre and post-war right-wing groups. Furthermore, more importantly, their movement goal stated that they "aim to be the leader of the rise of Asian nations," which clearly shows a resemblance to Pan-Asianism, the idea that drew Japan into the invasion of Asia.

Japan's invasion into Asia took place over a considerable period of time under several different governments in varying international circumstances (Berger 2012). From 1895 to 1945,

through fighting five major wars (the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, the second Sino-Japanese war, and the Pacific War), Japan created a vast empire in Asia including Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, virtually all of South East Asia, most of coastal China, and most islands of the Western Pacific. What justified this colonial expansion was the Pan-Asianism mentioned above that emphasized the unity of Asian nations under Japan's leadership, with the Japanese emperor as the father of this great family of Asians, to confront European imperialism. From the 1930s, this ideology was replaced by a call for the construction of a "new order in Asia," which was called the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. As a result, the political scientist Thomas Berger explains,

(m)any Japanese, including Japanese leftists and intellectuals who were otherwise critical of the conservative elites who dominated Japanese politics before 1945, thought of Japan's imperial expansion not as a war of aggression, but rather as one of liberation, aimed at freeing the rest of Asia from the shackles imposed by corrupt local power brokers and the white, racist, imperial powers. Furthermore, it was widely believed in Japan that were it not for the creation of its empire, Japan itself might have become a target of Western imperialism" (2012: 129-130).

Thus, colonial expansion was seen as having both the grand mission of the liberation of Asia from Western domination, and a defensive strategy against Western imperialism. As even some "leftist and intellectuals" were uncritical of this justification of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, it goes without saying that right-wingers were as well. Thus, it is easily understandable how bitter the surrender to the allied forces in World War II was to Japanese nationalists. In addition to the loss of the vast empire, their ambitious vision of building a unified Asian coalition with their leadership was destroyed. This background is crucial to understand why so many nationalists, even contemporary ones such as the interviewees of this study and

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, are unhappy with the post-war arrangements planned under the Occupation of the Allied forces.

### *Post-war right-wing activism*

Japan's surrender to the Allied powers impacted different people in various ways. For right-wingers, it was a disaster. First, this was because they were obliged to face the reality that Japan, with which they identified themselves strongly, had surrendered to the US. Second, the emperor system, which provided the basis of right-wing ideologies, virtually collapsed. While the emperor system as an institution remained, the emperor lost his authority and divine status, and became a mere "symbol" of the Japanese nation.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Allied forces were harsh against right-wing groups that had supported the Japanese wartime regime. Because most of the groups that did not support Japan's wartime regime before and during the war were repressed and forced to disband, most groups that existed at the end of war were those supportive of the regime. In January 1946, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) ordered a purge from public service of individuals who supported the wartime regime and a dissolution of right-wing organizations. As a result, about 49,000 individuals involved in right-wing activism were purged, and among approximately 350 right-wing organizations that existed at the end of the war, 233 groups were disbanded by 1951. Many leaders of right-wing movements, including Kodama Yoshio, Okawa Shumei, and Sasagawa Ryoichi, were prosecuted as war criminals.

Fourth, due to SCAP's efforts to disband Zaibatsu conglomerate business networks, right-wingers lost their major financial resource. Thus, by the end of the Occupation by the

Allied forces, Japanese right-wing movements' organizations, resources, and ideologies were devastated.

Authors point out that some new right-wing groups emerged after the end of the war that emphasized anti-communism as their ideological core instead of the emperor system. However, it was not until 1951, when many right-wing individuals were de-purged and freed that many right-wing organizations returned. Some started the movement again while some ran for national election. In 1957, Kishi Nobusuke became Prime Minister. Kishi was an extreme statist, and one of the signatories of Japan's participation in the Pacific war, but luckily avoided conviction as a war criminal and was de-purged. Kishi had the militaristic opinion that Japan should rearm by revising the pacifist constitution created under the Occupation. Thus, he was sympathetic to right-wing ideas. After Kishi's inauguration as Prime Minister, an association emerged among politicians, organized crime groups and right-wing groups.

For right-wingers who lacked economic resources, alignment with Yakuza organized crime groups, many of which shared their embrace of the emperor system and Shintoism, was a practical way to continue their activities. For organized crime groups, presenting themselves as right-wing "political" groups enabled them to approach politicians and to accrue financial resources from them. At the same time, many of the most notorious attacks by right-wing movements took place in this period. Especially violent ones happened in the period from 1960 to 1963, such as the attack on the Mainichi newspaper, the stabbing of Socialist party politician Kawakami, and an attempted coup called the Sanmu Incident, to name a few.

The most shocking incidents that occurred were the assassination of Asanuma Inejirou and the Shimanaka Incident. In the former incident, a 17-year-old right-wing activist stabbed Asanuma, the leader of the Japanese Socialist Party, to death with a Japanese sword during



Asanuma's public speech at the Hibiya Public Hall in Tokyo (see picture 1, which brought the Pulitzer Prize of Photography to Nagao Yasuyoshi of the Mainichi Newspaper in 1961). The latter incident was a reaction to the novel *Furyu Mutan*, which right-wingers considered to be lacking respect to the imperial family because the novel contained such scenes as the beheading of the prince and princess. An outraged 17-year-old right-winger (different from the person who carried out the Asanuma incident) attacked the home of the president of the company that had published the novel, seriously injured the president's wife, and killed a housekeeper. Thus, extreme forms of violence and dirty connections with organized crime groups characterized right-wing social movements of the 1960s, which has had enduring effects on the stigmatization of the right in Japanese society. The popular image of right-wing movements in Japan -violent groups strongly tied to gangsters- developed during this period.

Picture 1. Assassination of the Leader of the Socialist Party



The 1960s and 70s were the age of social movements in Japan, marked by the 1960 Anpo struggle, the largest social movement in post-war Japan. The Anpo struggle was a citizens' protest against the revision of the US-Japan security treaty, known as the Anpo treaty, which allows the US's military forces to stay in Japan. The new Anpo treaty was problematic in part because it was considered to open up a pathway for the US to involve Japan in its wars. Left-wing groups such as the Communist and the Socialist Party, the student league *Zengakuren*, and the union confederation *Sohyo*, among others, opposed the amendment by mobilizing the mass public onto the streets (Saruya 2012; Steinhoff 2012, 2013). The Anpo treaty must also have been problematic for the Japanese right, which wanted Japan to be an independent political force in international society, because the treaty meant the virtual renewal of the US military occupation and thus Japan's continued subordination to American power. However, most right-wing groups supported it based on partisan opposition to the left-liberal coalition. Right-wing social movements were mobilized by Kishi's government and helped them pass the treaty by countering the Anpo protest. This is an exemplary episode to illustrate Nathaniel Smith's observation that the core ideological character of right-wing groups in post-war Japan was "self-definition by opposition- political programs oriented around 'anti-' stances" (2011: 4) such as anti-communism or anti-left wingers.

Opposing these right-wing groups that had ended up taking a pro-American stance, and also opposing the left-wing student activism of the time, some right-wing student groups emerged in the latter 1960s. Emphasizing continuity with pre-war right-wing thoughts, they built a new ideological tenet, which set its goal to break what they called the Yalta-Potsdam regime (or simply YP regime by its acronym). The Yalta regime refers to the world order after the Yalta conference in 1945, in which the two hegemonies of the US and the Soviet Union ruled the

world. The Potsdam regime refers to the particular actualization of the Yalta regime in the context of Japan after the Potsdam declaration, which outlined the terms of Japan's surrender in World War II, allowing the US military forces to stay in the country. The denial of the Yalta-Potsdam regime was a grand theory by definition, as it was the denial of most of the systems and institutions made by the Occupation forces after 1945 and maintained by the Japanese government ever since. With this new theory, new student groups calling themselves Minzokuha or ethno-nationalists emerged. Among them, the representative organization was Suzuki Kunio's Issui-kai. In the end, however, this "new right" activism declined slowly when left-wing movements lost their momentum around 1970. Again, as Smith's analogy of "anti-" stance suggests, the *raison d'etre* of the new right was in many ways defined by their opposition to left-wing movements. Therefore, the decline of left-wing student movements was deleterious to the right as well. However, new-right ideologies that emphasized continuity with those of the pre-war right, rather than with the pro-American stance characteristic of the post-war right, remained influential through the 1980s. On this point, it is worth noting the resemblance between the goal of breaking the Yalta-Potsdam regime and current Prime Minister Abe's goal to break what he calls the "post-war regime." Both share the rejection of the political systems created after World War II, and the current constitution in particular, at their core.

In the 1980s and 1990s, while there were still some violent and traditional right-wing activities, major development of right-wing social movements could not be observed, so specialist in right-wing politics Hori Yukio (1993) calls this period the "low-growth period." Changes in domestic and international politics in the 1980s such as the end of the Cold War and the decline of left-wing social movements made many of the right's claims less compelling. In short, right-wingers lost the enemy needed to maintain their identity, which revolved around the

“anti” stance in the 1980s. What was new in this period was lobbying activities by moderate conservative organizations such as the religious conservative group The Truth of Life Movement (Seicho no Ie) and the largest conservative organization now called Japan Conference (Nippon Kaigi). These moderate groups diverged from the other right-wing “social movements.” Rather than engaging in social movement activities, these organizations exerted their influence directly in parliamentary politics by forming a caucus in the national assembly.

By reviewing the development of right-wing movements in post-war Japan, what I want to underscore here is the fact that Japanese right-wing groups have failed at mass mobilization.

Hori notes:

Post-war right-wing movements have hardly gained support from Japanese citizens. Their activities were too anachronistic. Essentially, right-wing movements were supposed to have a critical view of current society at the core of their ideology. But the post-war movements were critical to the post-war democracy, which Japanese citizens consider the sacred value (1993: 136)

As Hori explains, right-wing social movements were too anachronistic and acted on issues that were not likely to win support from the mass public. In addition, their connections with organized crime groups and violent acts such as assassinations stigmatized them and made it even more difficult to recruit from the mass public. A Japan analyst at the New York Times rightly observes: “for decades after Japan's defeat in the war, the most visible sign of the survival of hard-core nationalists here was just as powerful a reminder of their fringe group status: the black sound trucks, mostly regarded as public nuisances, that blasted imperial hymns and xenophobic speeches on crowded streets” (French 2001). Furthermore, some of the interviewees in my data mentioned that the traditional right-wing activities are monotonous, customary and,

boring. Traditional right-wing groups have routine events. The most famous of these are the annual Yasukuni demonstration in August and the counter-protest against the annual convention of the Japan Teachers' Union. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, the anniversary of the end of World War II, various social movement organizations march around Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo, where the war dead including A-class war criminals are enshrined. While the right groups are there for the commemoration of the Japanese war-bereaved, the left also demonstrate for causes such as anti-emperor protest, as left-wingers think the Showa emperor was responsible for Japan's colonial acts during World War II. Similarly, since the teachers' union is considered a left-oriented organization, right-wingers gather from all over Japan to the venue of the teachers' union annual convention to protest. It seems that these routine events make their activism less appealing for some because it gives the impression that the right-wingers just follow their customs without serious intentions to change society. In short, in terms of mobilization, right-wing social movements have been far from successful in post-war Japan. Rather, social marginality itself has been the distinctive character of their activism. Smith pointed out "Japanese rightist activists are motivated to action against mainstream society and the state by their socially and politically marginal status within it" (2011:6). Being marginal and opposing the mainstream has thus been the core of the collective identity of the Japanese right. However, this seems to be changing recently, and that is the primal focal point of this thesis.

### *Rise of the "new" right-wing movement*

Scholars and journalists have found new development of right-wing politics by citizens in the late 1990s. There emerged a conservative citizens' group called Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (JSHTR or Atarashii Rekishi Kyoukasho wo Tsukuru Kai), which aimed at

promoting a nationalist view of history glorifying Japan's conduct during World War II. This was surprising given the context of Japanese society in which civic participation in politics by those on the right was not very common.

Certainly, there were right-wing civic associations before JSHTTR such as the Association of Shinto Shrines and the Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families. These organizations acted based on the Yasukuni problem, which historian Franziska Seraphim called one of the two “specific issues at the center of struggles over war memory throughout the postwar decades” (2006: 227) alongside the state screening of history textbooks. The Yasukuni problem refers to the controversy over the public memory of the war dead, including the aforementioned class-A war criminals, and Yasukuni Shrine is an important point of contention because it gives “physical expression to the public values associated with the cult of the war dead” (2006: 230). These right-wing groups' sustained efforts along with other conservative factions indeed put the Yasukuni problem on the political agenda. Ritualization of Yasukuni as the place of contention between the right and the left, as the aforementioned annual demonstration event suggests, was one of the outcomes of these movements. Nevertheless, the two civic organizations never received as much public attention as did JSHTTR, and are little known among the Japanese public.

JSTHR was characterized as an intellectual movement, since the group's most important activity was to produce a new history textbook edited by right-leaning scholars and politicians who were core members of the group, such as Fujioka Nobukatsu of the University of Tokyo. But at the same time, Oguma and Ueno's (2003) research on a branch of JSTHR revealed that the movement attracted a diverse population of citizens from university students to elders who had experienced World War II. The first textbooks the group produced in 2001 had significant commercial success and became national best-sellers. However, virtually no schools selected

these textbooks as their official textbooks. Only 0.039% of junior high schools in Japan did so. Because they failed to attain a share in the market, and because of in-group conflicts, JSTHR lost its momentum after 2001 and declined slowly. While JSTHR failed in achieving their goal, however, one of the outcomes of the movement was that it showed a new form of conservative activism, which emphasized the participation of ordinary citizens.

After the decline of the JSTHR movement, there has recently emerged a “new” right-wing movement. The groups in this movement call themselves Activist-Conservative; the Japanese police officially define them as “so-called right-leaning citizens’ groups claiming issues such as anti-franchise of foreigners based on extreme ethnocentrism and xenophobia” (National Police Agency 2013). These new right-wing groups follow JSHTTR’s revisionist history perspective but have a more xenophobic tendency that was not manifested in JSHTTR’s activism. Among these Activist-Conservative movements, Zaitokukai is considered a representative organization.

Scholars and journalists are interested in this “new” development of right-wing activism because it appears to be different from any of the traditional right-wing activism described above. However, as I explained earlier, scholars have yet to specify what exactly is unique about the new right-wing movement. The following sections address this question by exploring answers to the three familiar questions of movement participation: who, how, and why do they participate in the new right-wing movement?

### Who Participates?

Who participates in the new right-wing movement, and are they really different from the traditional right-wing activists? This is a troubling question because it is difficult to answer

satisfactorily, but one that people are usually interested in the most. Popular and journalistic discourses have portrayed typical movement participants as a young, male and socially deprived group of people such as temp workers. For example, in a New York Times article, Martin Fackler, the chief of the Tokyo branch notes that “most of their members appear to be young men, many of whom hold the low-paying part-time or contract jobs that have proliferated in Japan in recent years.” He also cites an interview with a well-known Japanese sociologist; ““(t)hese are men who feel disenfranchised in their own society,” said Kensuke Suzuki, a sociology professor at Kwansei Gakuin University. ‘They are looking for someone to blame, and foreigners are the most obvious target’” (Fackler 2010). Thus, their view is akin to the stereotypical and outdated views of social movement participation that have been discredited since 1970s.

Higuchi (2014) did a meticulous job of acquiring social profiles of 59 Zaitokukai activists that appeared in Yasuda’s work (2012) and in newspapers. While he did not use this data for analysis himself, I re-coded it using Microsoft Access and compiled Higuchi’s and my own data of 46 activists to produce the basic profile information of 104 activists belonging to Activist-Conservative organizations. Appendix Table A1 shows the list of this profile information. Again, it must be noted that none of our data have been drawn from a random-sample of the membership, and thus, similar to Higuchi, I restrict myself from making any conclusive statements based on this table. However, it may still be useful in capturing a rough picture of the participant population of Japanese new right-wing movements.

As Chart 1 shows, among 103 activists whose gender we know, 89 (86%) are male, and 14 (14%) are female. Chart 2 shows the age of 103 activists after excluding the one for whom we have no information about age. Among them, three (3%) are 10 to 19 years old, 28 (27%) are in



their twenties, 31 (31%) are in their thirties, 28 (27%) are in their forties, 9 (9%) are in their fifties, and 4 (4%) are in their sixties. The exact known ages of 59 activists range from 14 years old to 66 years old, and the average is 35.7 years old. Thus, so long as this sample is concerned, it seems to hold true that the movement attracts more men than women of a relatively young population. Chart 3 shows the education level of 77 activists. 3 (4%) hold a graduate degree, 37 (49%) earned a degree from a four-year university, and 2 (3%) dropped out of university. 11 (11%) finished two-year university or technical/ vocational school. 20 (26%) finished high-school while 3 (4%) dropped out of high school. Therefore, as far as this population is concerned, the education level is higher than the Japanese average as more than half of them have a Bachelor degree or higher, while less than 20% of the entire Japanese population has a four-year university degree or higher. In terms of occupation<sup>2</sup>, because Higuchi did not disclose specific occupational information in his data, there were only 70 activists whose specific occupation was known. Chart 4 shows that, among them, 12 (17%) are high-skilled white-collar workers, 25 (36%) are low-skilled white collar workers, 2 (3%) are high-skilled blue-collar workers, 8 (12%) are low-skilled blue collar workers, 5 (6%) are students, and 12 (17%) are self-employed. There are also 3 people who were not employed (3%) and 3 (4%) full-time activists. In Higuchi's data of 34 activists, he reports that 22 (65%) were white-collar workers, 6 (18%) were blue-collar workers, 4 (12%) were self-employed and the remaining two (6%) were students (Higuchi 2014). Thus, the movement seems to attract more participants from the pool of

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<sup>2</sup> For this classification, I initially coded activists' occupation based on The International Standard Classification of Occupation- 08 scheme. In addition, I added self-employed, student and unemployed to the category. After the initial coding, I re-coded it to the following eight categories. 1) High-Skilled White Collar, which includes 1-Managers, 2-Professionals and 3-Technicians and Associate Professionals; 2) Low-Skilled White Collar, which includes 4-Clerical Support Workers and 5-Service and Sales Workers; 3) High-Skilled Blue Collar, including 6-Skilled Agricultural, Forestry And Fishery Workers and 7-Craft And Related Trades Workers; 4) Low-Skilled Blue Collar, including 8-Plant And Machine Operators And Assemblers and 9-Elementary Occupations; 5) Student; 6) Self-Employed; 7) Unemployed; 8) Full-time Activist.

white-collar workers. It is quite understandable that there are many activists who are self-employed because the costs of participation in activities that are considered deviant in society are lower for them than for those who are hired in other ways.

Chart 1. Activists' Gender (N=103)

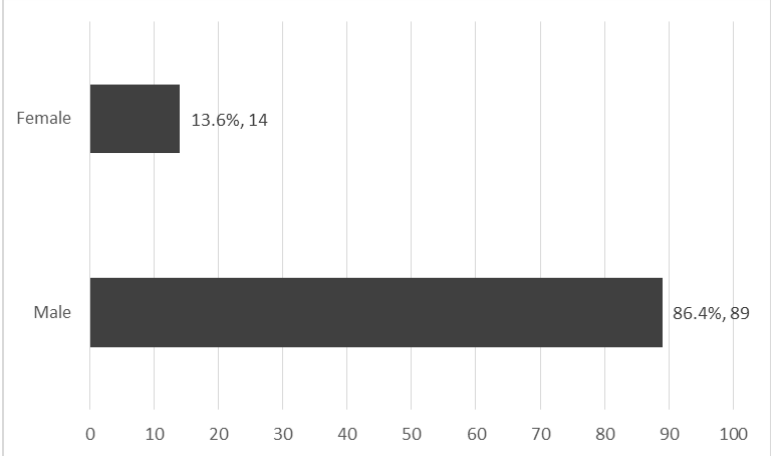


Chart 2. Activists' Age (N=103)

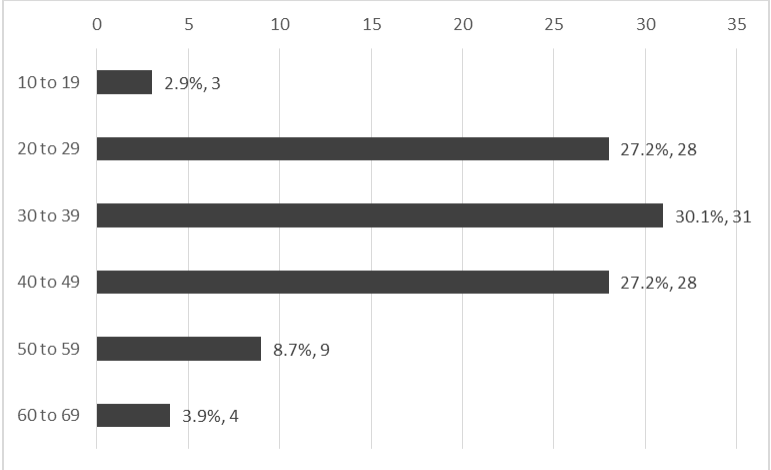


Chart 3. Activists' Education (N=76)

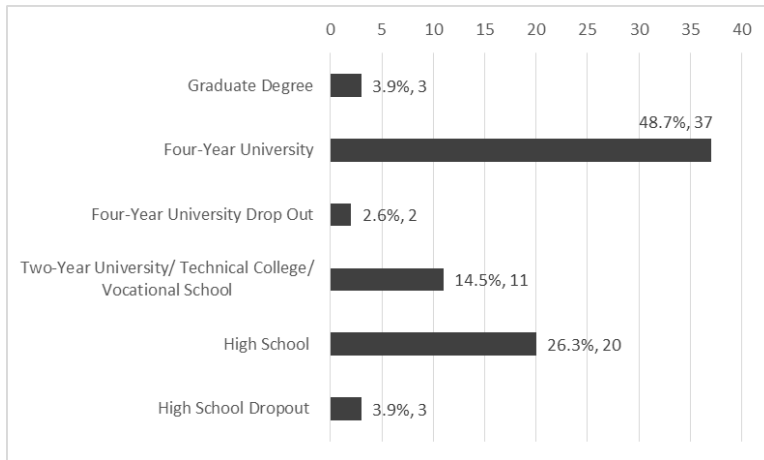
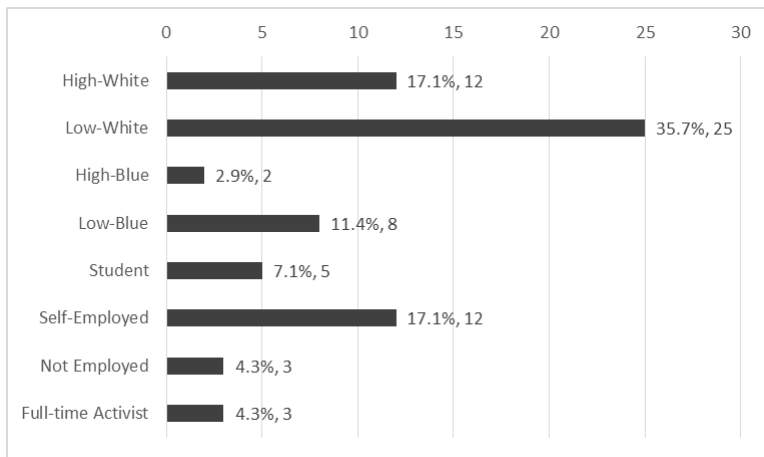


Chart 4. Activists' Occupation



One thing we can notice easily from these charts is that the Japanese new right-wing movement attracts a wide variety of people. Besides the fact that males comprised the vast majority of the activist population, we cannot find a distinctive character for the activists' population. A rough review of the participant population seems to suggest that we cannot, and perhaps should not, define the new Japanese right-wing movement as a class, age or gender specific movement as opposed to the treatment in journalistic accounts. Rather, it attracts a wide

variety of citizens from 14 to 66 years old, from working poor to professionals, from high school drop outs to graduate degree holders. These groups recruit from the general public, although clearly more from the male half of humanity.

It is in this sense that I consider the new right-wing movement “new”: in terms of the population from which they recruit. They recruit people who would otherwise not have been mobilized to traditional right-wing activities that had not succeeded in mass mobilization. Thus, although it is regrettable that I cannot present similar data from older right-wing movements for comparison, new right-wing movements recruit people who would not have been involved in right-wing activities if there were no new right-wing organizations. What makes this possible is their new mobilizing channel, that is, the online recruiting scheme.

#### How Do They Participate?

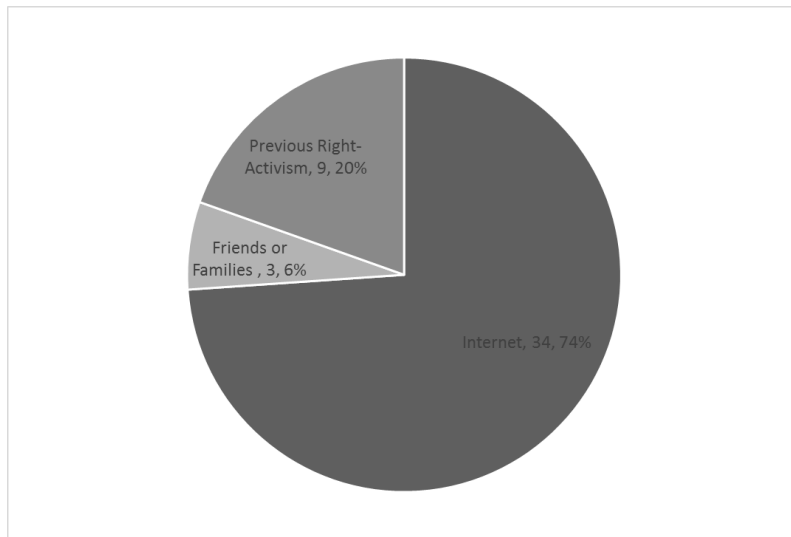
Existing studies suggest that the new right-wing movement’s online mobilizing scheme enabled them to attract wide varieties of people (Higuchi 2014; Yasuda 2012). This point appears not to be disputable, and their mobilizing scheme is indeed “new” compared with traditional right-wing movements. Chart 5 summarizes the ratio of each scheme of recruitment to the new right-wing movement. 34 out of 46 activists, consisting of 74% of our interview sample, were mobilized to Zaitokukai or similar organizations’ events through the Internet. While there is no “hard” data that shows the use of online tools by the old right-wing movements, the existing empirical studies of conservative or right-wing mobilization suggest that none of the organizations they studied were as dependent as the new rightist movement on online recruitment (Hori 1993; Oguma and Ueno 2003; Smith 2011; Yamaguchi, Saito and Ogiue 2012; except for Ducke 2003). The literature suggests that many old right-wing organizations are far

from using sophisticated online recruiting methods. Hori's (1993) interview with activists made it clear that people usually started being involved in the old right-wing movement through a connection with someone already involved in such activism, whether or not they voluntarily sought such a connection or already had it. This contrasts clearly with the new organizations such as Zaitokukai.

New right-wing organizations have websites on which one can find all kinds of information about the movement, including details about upcoming events, and where people can register to join the movement or make donations online. Furthermore, the organizations also take advantage of online media such as Youtube and online broadcasting websites like Ustream for their mobilization. This has indeed changed the right-wing movement mobilization scheme. Asahina (2015) explains the typical micro-mobilization process of the new right-wing organizations. First, people have some kind of discontent in society. Then, they happen to watch movies of protests that the organizations uploaded online, which usually include insulting speeches. Encountering such videos "shocks" many viewers and cause a typical response akin to what James Jasper calls "moral shocks" that "are often the first step toward recruitment into social movements: when an unexpected event or piece of information raises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action" (1997: 106). In this way, the new right-wing organizations succeed in stimulating "reflex emotions" in activists which arise suddenly without conscious cognitive processing, such as anger and surprise (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2004: 416-418). These reflex emotions shape the motivation to express their feelings through participation in the movement, and indeed, the majority of activists experience moral shocks before their participation in the movement. Hence, the online recruiting method is at the core of Japan's new right-wing mobilization. Thus, the "new" right-wing movement can

also be differentiated from traditional ones by the way they recruit members, which provides an explanation for why they are able to recruit a wide variety of people.

Chart 5. Initial Access to the New Right-Wing Movement

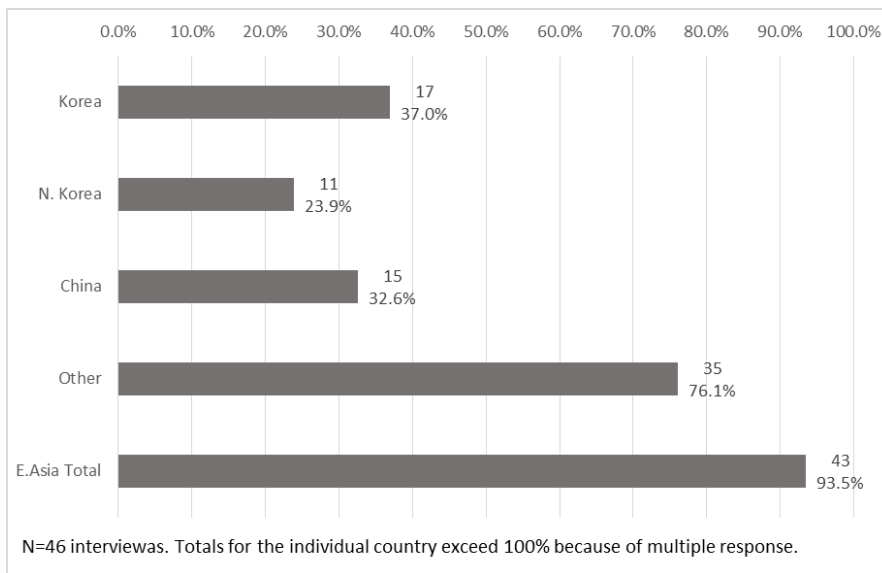


### Why Do They Participate?

The starkest difference between the newer and the older right-wing movements lies in the messages with which they attract people. In the case of “old” right-wing activism, Ino (2005) identified 20 features of right-wing ideologies including devotion to the Japanese emperor, anticommunism/socialism, patriarchy, totalitarianism, etc. (11-12). Among them, a combination of anticommunism and devotion to the Japanese emperor system had been considered the core of Japanese right-wing ideologies (Szymkowiak and Steinhoff 1995; Smith 2011). However, this is not the central concern of today’s rightist movement. The collapse of the Soviet Union made right-wingers’ opposition to communism less compelling, and devotion to the Japanese emperor system became less salient in their ideologies as well (Suzuki 1988; Smith 2011). Instead, issues

related to historical and contemporary relationships with neighboring states in East Asia seem to have become more important for contemporary Japanese right-wingers. Chart 6 summarizes the countries that triggered activists' initial participation in Japan's new right-wing movement. China, South Korea, and North Korea, when combined, amount to 93% of the initial cause of participation in the movement. Thus, it is East Asian neighbors that arouse today's right-wing activists.

Chart 6. Motivations for Participation by Country

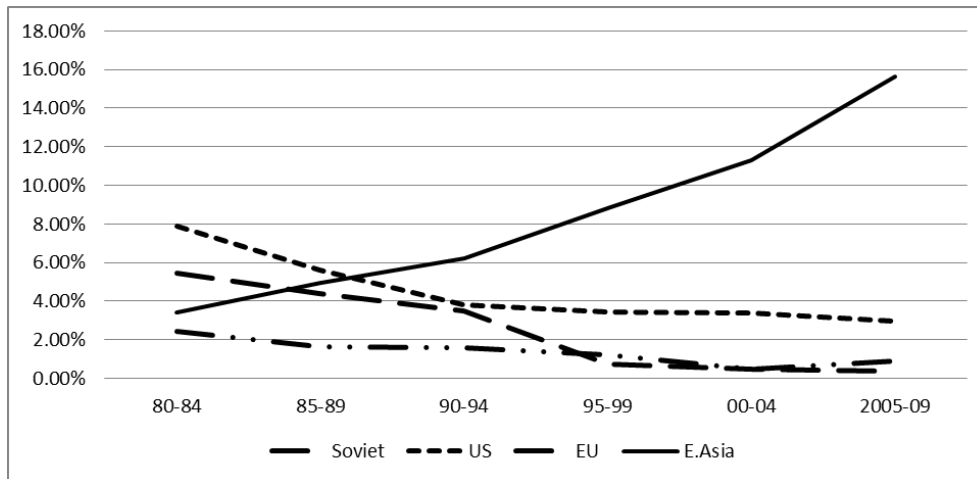


We observed previously that problems related to East Asia concern new right-wing activists more than other issues. This brings us to another question. If East Asia is an important concern for today's right-wing citizens, is this something peculiar to today's movement and its supporters? Or has it been an important issue for right-wingers for a longer time? The literature suggests that traditionally right-wingers have been concerned more about the US and Soviet Union, and less about East Asia. Is this really the case? The analysis of right-wing discourse is

helpful to examine these questions. Chart 7 shows the percentage of articles related to East Asia that appeared in *Shokun!* and *Seiron* from 1981 to 2009 (N=21,919). East Asia related articles refer to the sum of articles that are related to either China, South Korea, North Korea, Hong Kong or Taiwan. As the chart shows, in the early 1980s, articles related to East Asia appeared far less often than those related to the US and Soviet Union. In the period from 1980 to 1984, there were 121 articles related to the Soviet Union, and 175 articles concerning the US, which constitute 5.4% and 7.8% of all the articles, respectively. In contrast, there were only 76 articles related to one or more of five East Asian countries, consisting of only 3.4% of all the articles. However, in the latter half of the 1980s and 1990s, the number of articles related to East Asia increased and the number of articles related to the US and Soviet Union decreased. In the period from 1995 to 1999, there were only 34 articles (0.7%) related to the former Soviet regions. There were 21 articles (0.5%) from 2000 to 2004 and 12 articles (0.4%) from 2005 to 2009. The US comprised about 8% of all the articles in the early '80s, but decreased to around 3% in the subsequent two decades. In contrast, the number of articles related to East Asia has grown steadily for the last 30 years. Although there were only 76 articles in the period from 1981 to 1984, this increased to 614 articles between 2005 and 2009, constituting nearly 16% of all the articles in this period. Therefore, the data clearly indicate that the relative presence of East Asia related articles increased significantly in the last three decades, while that of the Soviet Union, the US and Europe decreased to a varying degree.



Chart 7. Percentage of Articles Related to the Soviet Union, the US, Europe and East Asia in Shokun! and Seiron, 1980-2009

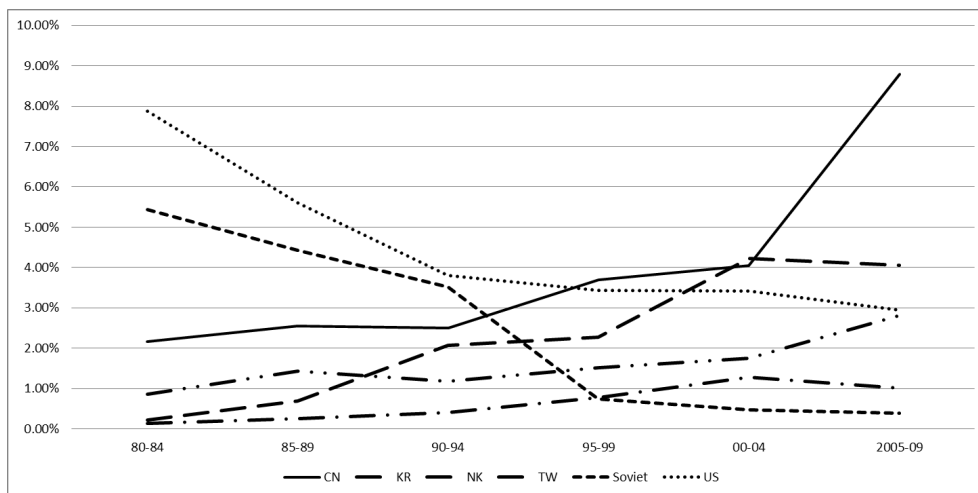


You may notice that the percentage in each category may appear too low. For example, East Asian articles consist of only about 16% of all the articles at its greatest. I suspect that this is due to two reasons. First, given the nature of nationalist/right-wing magazines, it is understandable that the articles tend to be more concerned with Japan's domestic issues and less about international issues, yet it is clear that a considerable degree of attention has been paid to East Asia-related issues. The second reason is related to coding scheme. For this analysis, I did explicit coding rather than implicit coding, meaning I include the articles only when the titles explicitly show the connections with coding categories. Therefore, there may be a pool of articles left in the sample that mention either one or more of the coding categories but do not have titles that explicitly show that. However, as I applied the same coding rule to all of the coding categories, this point does not undermine the validity of this analysis.

Certainly, East Asia related issues have become more salient in the last three decades. However, because I used the crude category of "East Asia" for the sake of simplicity, it remains unclear if all of the East Asian countries increased their presence or there exist different patterns

among countries. For example, it is possible that only China-related articles increased while all the other East Asian articles decreased. If this is the case, then it is not East Asia but China that increased its presence in the right-wing discourse. To clarify this point, Chart 8 shows the trend for each East Asian country. In contrast to the Soviet Union and the US, all of the East Asian countries, especially China, North Korea and South Korea, show an increasing trend. China-related articles consisted of about 2% of all the articles in the period of 1980-1984. However, as is indicated in Chart 8, after three decades of changes, it comprised nearly 9% of the articles in 2005-2009. Similarly, articles related to North Korea increased from about 0.8% of all the articles in 1980-1984 to 4% in 2005-2009. South Korea-related articles increased from about 0.8% of all the articles to about 2.8%. The data show that it is not a single East Asian country that increased its presence in Japanese right-wingers' discourse, but all of them. Thus, we reach the conclusion that issues related to East Asia have become more important concerns in right-wing discourse in the last few decades.

Chart 8. Percentage of Articles Related to the Soviet Union, the US, and East Asian Countries in Shokun! and Seiron, 1980-2009



If the US and the Soviet Union were the countries that occupied the central place in Japanese right-wingers' discourse in 1980s and '90s, it is the set of East Asian countries including South and North Korea and China that are dominant in their discourse today. But why have East Asian countries become more salient than other regions? Obviously, the changing context of international politics is the primary cause of the decline of the relative presence of the Soviet Union and the US and the rise of that of East Asia. As Nathaniel Smith (2011), among others, pointed out, the collapse of the Soviet Union made anti-communism, the core ideology of Japanese right-wingers, less compelling. It also raised questions about the mainstream conservatives' pro-US stance in the post-Cold War period. It is in this context that East Asian countries became a more important concern for Japanese right-wingers. At the same time, events and incidents between Japan and the other East Asian countries are crucial to explaining such changes. For example, North Korea's confession in 2002 that they had kidnapped Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s is crucial to understanding the increase in articles related to North Korea in the early 2000s. Although my aim is not to show the correspondence between the changes in right-wing discourse and external events, we can see that right-wing discourse is heavily influenced by international events.

In short, beyond the differences in the population from which the new right-wing movement recruits and the way this population is recruited, I found that the grievances with which the movement attracts participants is a critically new factor for the "new" right-wing movement. Moreover, the analysis of magazine articles confirmed that such changes in their messages is not peculiar to a single social movement, but it appears to be grounded in the changes of the public discourse of right-wingers. Thus, I argue that it is concern about historical and contemporary relationships with East Asian countries that characterizes today's rightist

activism in relation to older movements. This is also the point that differentiates Japan's "new" right-wing movement from its foreign counterparts.

Is the Japanese Case Unique?

Scholars point out that the recent resurgence of xenophobic sentiments in Japan resembles that of Western Europe (Higuchi 2014; Mori 2012). At the same time, America has also experienced an expansion of conservatism in the past few decades, most evident in the popularity of such political factions as the Tea Party (Horwitz 2013; Skocpol and Williamson 2013). Compared with these two contexts, however, I argue that it is distinctive to the Japanese case that historical and contemporary relations with the neighbor countries are the core concern of right-wingers. The account that will be shown below is far from a rigorous comparison, and I understand that this kind of simple comparison entails the risk of oversimplification. Nevertheless, it is still worth taking a quick look at contexts other than East Asia to understand the character of Japan's right-leaning trend.

Robert Horwitz (2013) notes, "European conservatism has typically been oriented toward the concern with tradition and cultural inheritance. In contrast, American conservatism, born of classical liberalism's focus on the individual, has usually gravitated toward theories of freedom and property" (4). While this statement should be regarded as a kind of exaggerated characterization rather than a precise depiction of reality, it helps us to understand the fundamental character of conservatism and right-wing ideologies. In Europe, as Horwitz pointed out, cultural traditionalism occupies a central place in right-wing ideologies. This is also true in the case of the recent rise of extreme right parties and movements, which have characterized Western European politics over the last two decades (Art 2011). Difficulties European societies

are facing with the influx of immigrants, especially the integration of the Muslim population, provides a key source for the revival of such political factions (Mering and McCarthy 2013; Rydgen 2007). European right-wingers claim the right to protect their national culture from the threat of the immigrant population. For example, Goodwin (2011) explored in his study of the British National Party and its grass-roots supporters how Muslims were targeted because they were perceived as threats to the traditions of British religion and culture. As such, today's right-wing parties and social movements in Europe make claims based on the perceived threats posed by the influx of immigrants to their culture and tradition.

Like their counterparts in Western Europe, American right-wing and conservative movements have recently come to exhibit powerful political forces influencing American society (Berlet 2013; Blee and Creasap 2010; Binder and Wood 2013; Gross, Medvetz and Russell 2011; Medvetz 2006; Skocpol and Williamson 2012). The rise of the Tea Party Movement with which about 18 percent of American eligible voters are said to be self-identified is an exemplary case (Zernike and Thee-Brenan 2010). On the most fundamental level, what characterizes the American right is "its virtually unalloyed embrace of individualism and capitalism, and its selective hatred of the state" (Horwitz 2013: 5; also see Ansell 1997; Blee and Cleasap 2010). Scholars argue that the merger of two initially different conservative ideologies –economic liberalism and Christian traditionalism– into the core value of the neoliberal "anti-establishment" is instrumental to today's rise of the "New Right" in the US (Harvey 2005: ch.2; Horwitz 2013; Blee and Cleasap 2010). The tradition of economic liberalism finds expression in a theory of individual freedom and a deep suspicion of the power of the state. Religious traditionalism can be observed in opposition to teaching evolution, gender equality and sex education in schools. Hence, the American right identifies diverse enemies, including but not limited to "immigrants,

liberals, working women, counterculturalists, abortion providers, welfare recipients, secular humanists, feminists” (Blee and Cleasap 2010: 274). Thus, while they have many specific issues through which they express their political values, the core interest of American conservatism is its embrace of individualism, capitalism and suspicion toward authorities, especially those of the government<sup>3</sup>.

In sum, if the recent rise of the right in Europe is characterized by a reaction to threats posed by the increased immigrant population based on cultural conservatism, the development of conservatism in the US builds on a core value of anti-establishment with a strong focus on economic liberalism. Seen in this light, as we have observed earlier, Japan’s new right’s obsessive concern in regard to historical and contemporary relationships with neighbor states in East Asia is its definitive character. Put in a different way, American conservatives are not concerned about their relationship with Mexico and Canada to the extent that their Japanese counterparts are with China, South Korea, and North Korea. The same goes for the European case. Thus, to understand the reason people are motivated to join in right-wing activities today, we need to pay particular attention to problems related to East Asia. Existing studies have not paid sufficient attention to the mechanism that creates grievances among Japanese people and encourages them take part in rightist activism. While Higuchi seems to be aware of the importance of this point when he notes, “the foundation of today’s xenophobic sentiments are more of historical relationships with the neighbor states than stereotypical negative images for foreigners” (2014: 205), he does not explore the specific mechanism that drives certain people into new rightist activism. Therefore, the question is, specifically, why were activists so concerned about East Asia problems or even outraged by them? To answer this question, we first

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<sup>3</sup> It must be noted that economic individualism is the core ideology of even such a faction of the American right wing as the Ku Klux Klan (Blee 2002; McVeigh 2009).

need to know the specific issues with which activists were concerned. Through the analysis of the interview data and the magazine articles, the following chapter introduces issues related to East Asia that make Japanese right-wingers concerned, and explains the reasons these issues matter to them.

### **CHAPTER 3. WHY DO EAST ASIA PROBLEMS MATTER?**

Why were activists so concerned about problems related to East Asia? This chapter explores the answer through the analysis of interview data and right-wing discourse. I refer to a set of international conflicts in East Asia that stipulates Japanese nationalist “East Asia problems.” In the following, I firstly explain what I mean by East Asia problems. I then explore the reasons “East Asia” matters for Japanese rightist activists and right-wing discourse. The analysis of interview data and magazine articles reveals that, quite understandably, North Korea, South Korea, and China have provoked activists’ sense of anger in different ways.

#### East Asia Problems

In this study, I use the term East Asia problems to refer to a combination of historical problems that scholars call “East Asia’s History Problems” and other contemporary problems between Japan and the other East Asian countries. First, there are historical problems. From the 1980s onward, driven by a host of historical factors such as changing geopolitics in the region, domestic politics, and a shifting public culture, East Asia History Problems emerged over how Japan should face the history and memories of its wartime colonial acts (Saito and Wang 2014; Saito 2014; Chiro, Shin and Snider eds. 2014; Seraphim 2006; Togo 2008). Battles have been fought over different views of history on specific issues such as the “comfort women” issue, the Nanjing massacre, forced migration, and the ways these histories are depicted in the history books of each country. These history problems are crucial to understand the rise of right-wing activism because they divided not only Japan and the other East Asian states, but also the left and the right in each society (Seraphim 2006).



Second, there are contemporary issues that also divide the left and right of each society and create conflicts in East Asia. The obvious example is the territorial disputes including the Senkaku/Diaoyu island issue between Japan and China and the Takeshima/Dokdo issue between Japan and South Korea. North Korea's abduction issue, which refers to a series of events that followed the admission of Kim Jong Il that his government had abducted Japanese young people, is another important constituent of East Asia problems. It is my contention that the East Asia historical problems and the other problems should be considered a package of the same sort of problems, because that is the way these problems are usually understood by citizens. Samuels, taking the case of the abductions, notes that

those activists and politicians leading the abductees issue have also been active combatants in Japan's culture wars, pressing forward to secure right-wing preferences, such as elevating the emperor, revising the constitution, revising accepted interpretations of the Pacific War, revising the conclusions of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, confronting territorial disputes with Japan's neighbors, and enhancing Japan's national security through the acquisition of more modern weapons" (2010: 369).

Thus, although the literature tends to separate the history problems from contemporary issues, in terms of its relations with Japan's right-wing politics, we should recognize that the two kinds of problems have been perceived in a similar way and thus both problems should be considered together. That is why I call these problems East Asia problems. East Asia problems, when combined, constitute 46.3% (599 out of 1295) of the responses derived from the analysis of the interview data. This shows how central East Asia problems are to today's right-wing activists. In the following, I present the analysis of the interview data and the magazine articles. As I explained earlier, the magazine articles have been drawn from *Shokun!* during the period of 2000 to 2009.

## North Korea: Discontent Directed at Japan

North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens was a crucial incident for many Japanese right-wing activists. The analysis shows that among 79 responses specifically mentioning North Korea, 70.9% (56) were about the abduction problem. The abduction problem was not well known among the Japanese public until 2002, when the then Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visited North Korea and extracted an admission that they had abducted Japanese citizens. Disclosure of the incident shocked many Japanese, and indeed, the abduction issue functioned as the initial cause that led many interviewees to the movement. An activist recalls;

I used to be very much liberal oriented and so were people around me. I had opinions like we should value the Article 9 of the Constitution. Then, the initial cause was that about 10 years back, I think it was 2002, there was the disclosure of North Korean abduction of Japanese citizens. Mass media were thrown into commotion at the time, and the Internet as well. Because of that I came to be interested in websites related to Korea and found out many things that are different from what I had learned (in schools). I learned that the textbooks are totally opposite (to the facts). That made my identity change (1, Male, 40's).

For this activist, the disclosure of North Korean abduction was shocking enough to convert his ideology. However, interestingly, unlike the other issues such as the history problems with South Korea and China, their rage is primarily directed at the Japanese mass media, government, politicians, and public but not toward the North Korean government and citizens. For instance, many activists have a strong sense of suspicion that the mass media has neglected or even kept the issue hidden for a long time.

I have been influenced by the magazine *Shokun!* The magazine *Shokun!* has taken up the puzzles of the disappearance of a couple [refers to the abduction]. And other mass media had neglected it. After more than 10 years, the existence of abductees was

disclosed. I just knew that so I wasn't surprised but the mass media had been neglecting the issue until that point, so people should have been really surprised. (41, Male, 50's)

It seems that activists were more familiar with the kidnapping issue than were the mass public because of their exposure to conservative media outlets such as *Shokun!* that have been trying to problematize the abduction issue. As a result, their anger was directed at mass media outlets (other than the right-oriented ones) that intentionally or unintentionally failed to convey information about the kidnappings. Their anger is also directed at politicians, political parties and the government that are considered to have been neglecting the issue. For example, the account below shows a strong sense of dissatisfaction with the existing political parties' treatment of the issue, which triggered the activist's participation in the movement.

What was most striking at the time was that all the political parties from LDP to the communist party assumed that the abduction issue was manipulated by right-wingers. (...) That was the moment my mind changed from the usual party politics to anti-authority stance, through the abduction issue. (28, Male, 40's: Higuchi 2012u)

In the same way, their anger is directed at the government, whose attitude against North Korea is considered to be too "weak" from the viewpoint of right-wingers, as an activist's complaint suggests.

I think there's no such a thing as sovereignty for the state, which lets things as they are even though their own citizens are kidnapped. So, I think this is an indication that this country is crazy. That will never happen in other countries, like, to accept the citizens from the country (that kidnapped Japanese), and even give them welfare benefits. (45, Female, No information about age)

Hence, their discontent is directed towards the Japanese government, which they think does not make sufficient effort to solve the problem. Put simply, what is characteristic about the North Korean abduction case is that activists' discontent is expressed in a form of self-criticism against Japanese individuals, groups, and institutions that have failed to address the problem. Furthermore, the analysis of articles showed that this pattern is consistent with the discourse that appeared in the right-wing magazines.

In the articles, the Japanese government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were by far the most often targeted subjects, followed by the former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and the liberal-oriented Asahi newspaper. However, quite understandably, the magazine discourse is more articulated and focuses on the reasons why these particular Japanese groups and individuals are problematic. In the right-wing discourse, the Japanese government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been assumed to be incapable of settling the problem by acting forcefully toward North Korea. They claim that the government should use economic sanctions instead. Articles that summarize a talk by hawkish rightist politicians Nishimura Shingo and Ishihara Shintaro capture this logic.

(Nishimura) Not only have they been neglecting the citizens who had been abducted, but they have also shaken hands with the dictator who just disclosed the death of those citizens. Where else in the world we can find such a government?  
(Ishihara) Exactly. Too many Japanese diplomats are like the "China School," who are spokespersons of other countries. (8395: *Shokun!*, 2002.11)

Here, the fact that Prime Minister Koizumi shook hands with Kim Jong Il was seen as a problematic sign of the government's conciliatory stance toward North Korea. Ishihara adds that not only politicians, but also diplomats are subservient to other countries' governments, by

referring to “China School,” the pejorative term popular among conservative authors that refer to diplomats who choose to learn Chinese in the mandatory language training session upon their entrance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ishihara goes on to mention the chairperson in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and posits that “if it were in the past, such a betrayer of one’s country must have been killed” (8395: *Shokun!*, 2002.11). Although there were many other individuals and groups that were targeted in similar ways, these are variations of the offence against the Japanese government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These and other individuals are targeted as they are considered as representing the government and the ministry’s incapability. Overall, the interview data and the magazine articles share the same logic in that they see political actors in Japan’s domestic politics as more problematic than the North Korean government.

But why is this the case? They think that the abduction issue undermines Japan’s capability as a nation-state to protect its citizens, as one activist emphasized: “I think there’s no such a thing as sovereignty for the state, which lets things as they are even though their own citizens are kidnapped.” (45, Female, No information about age). Their strong sense of identification with Japan makes them angry: “It was certainly shocking when the truth about abduction was disclosed. Rather than being just political, as a Japanese I thought it was something unimaginable” (4, Male, 30’s: Higuchi 2012d). Nishimura’s argument in his article makes this point clear.

The state cannot protect its citizens, cannot defend its territory as well and cannot preserve the spirit of the national community. Needless to say, states consist of the three elements of citizens, territory as the place of being and spirit that binds the community. What has been happening in parallel to the abduction issue is the disastrous diminishment of all these three elements (8764: *Shokun!*, 2003.1).

The fact that the Japanese government has failed to protect its citizens in their territory and continues to fail to rescue them is crucial for nationalists who emphasize the autonomy of nation-states. Thus, North Korea's abductions pose a question about Japan's capacity as a nation-state. From the fact that Japan let North Korea abduct its citizens, they fear that the same thing can happen with other countries:

At times when its citizens are facing a crisis, Japan emphasizes solving the problem peacefully by dialog and does nothing. (...) As we can see in the abduction problem, Japan's diplomacy and national security cannot save even Japanese citizens (8608: *Shokun!*, 2003.5).

It is in this line of reasoning that they consider the Japanese government, ministries, and politicians more responsible for the problem than North Korea. In this sense, we can say that what makes activists concerned about the North Korean case is not so much about North Korea so much as about Japan. Although to some extent this logic of "self-criticism" applies to the issues with China and Korea, it is characteristic of the North Korean case that discontent about the North Korean government and citizens is virtually absent. For activists, North Korea is not recognized as a "threat" in the way China and South Korea are. Unlike those two countries, North Korea is politically and economically isolated in the region and in the world, and is perceived as a powerless nation. What is more problematic is Japan, which failed to settle the problem even with North Korea.

#### South Korea: Apology Demander

South Korea aroused right-wing anger for different reasons from North Korea and China. One activist's remark tells us a lot about this point: "it is the same nativism, but reasons are very

different regarding Chinese and Koreans. The sense of hatred against Koreans comes from political issues, whereas toward China I feel fear.” (30, Male, 40’s: Higuchi 2012w). The analysis revealed that history problems including such issues as comfort women, forced labor, and forced migration during the colonial period, made activists concerned more than other problems. Indeed, among 204 responses specifically mentioning South Korea, at least 45.6% of them (93 responses) mentioned one of the history problems including the comfort women system, forced migration, forced labor and other historical incidents between Japan and South Korea. Right-wingers hold a sense of unfairness that Japan has continuously been required to apologize by South Korea. The following remark shows a typical way activists express their anger about the history problems:

I wonder like if they are to keep saying something about history problems forevermore? Because we can’t change the history are they going to keep saying this forever? So, I think it’s better for us to break off diplomatic relations with them. Because we can’t change the history. If they keep speaking about it, we should break off relations with South Korea, so with China, and of course with North Korea (41, Male, 50’s).

Their sense of anger reflects the nature of the East Asia History Problem and the difficulty of the politics of apology. Scholars point to the negative spiral of Japan’s efforts to apologize and compensate through such forms as the 1993 Kono Statement, the 1995 Murayama Statement or the Asian Women’s Fund, which have not been considered sincere enough by East Asian neighbors, and this in turn has fueled the anger of Japanese nationalists (Shin 2014; Park 2011). But at the same time, another aspect of the problem is that activists’ understanding of the history of Japan’s war-time conduct is based on the revisionist view that is substantially different from the widely accepted or more liberal-oriented view of history. Because the comfort women

problem appeared as the most frequently mentioned concern for right-wingers, consisting of 61.3% of the responses about South Korea's history problems (57 out of 93 responses), here I use it as the exemplary case to examine their historical view. While there are slight differences in the ways activists understand this historical incident, their dominant understanding is total denial of the existence of the comfort women system. Following is a quote from an interview with an activist.

Especially like comfort women. According to what they say, they were kidnapped, put into comfort stations, and forced the labor as sexual slaves without payment. That had never happened. In brothels of the old days, there were brokers called *Zegen*. They buy girls in poor villages by cash and take them to brothels for work until their contract ends. Girls can go back home after that. There were Japanese too like that. I think Koreans too were those who were bought by *Zegen* brokers, and accordingly, 80% of *Zegen* brokers themselves were Koreans. Moreover, there is no evidence that shows that they were forced to work for free. There were advertisements saying like high-pay guaranteed. So much so that I feel it's unjust that we need to remain silent even though they made such a story like a fairytale and built the comfort woman monument, or like, I just heard it today that they put an advertisement in a newspaper in New York (41, Male, 50's).

As we can see, activists' understanding contradicts the history of comfort women. Activists usually claim that the comfort women system was like any other form of prostitution and sexual services were provided in exchange for rewards by free will, and therefore it cannot be considered a crime by the Japanese regime. On this basis, they claim that neither the Japanese government nor Japanese people owe responsibility for this issue. Similar logic is often applied to the other historical problems such as forced migration, in that they claim that Koreans came to Japan by their free will to seize opportunities to make money, and therefore the Japanese government is not responsible for the problem. Here, the connection between activists' individual-level grievances and the public right-wing discourse is crucial. To believe in the



version of history unique to nationalist understandings, one needs coherent stories and evidence that persuade them and help them convince others. Right-wing intellectuals provide this. Because readers usually do not have the time and ability to investigate historical materials to find support for their view of history, the magazines are crucial in the making of a nationalist version of history.

Regarding the comfort women issue, the interviewee made a claim that “there is no evidence that shows that they were forced to work for free. There were advertisements saying like high-pay guaranteed,” to support his view. It is this kind of evidence that the public right-wing discourse provides for individual activists. For example, the historian Hata Ikuhiko, in his article entitled “This is How to Correct the Kono Statement, which Manipulated Illusionary ‘Comfort Women’!” shows such evidence in an attempt to invalidate the testimony made by former comfort women. Table 2 is a translation of the table he presented in the article. He shows how the former comfort woman Lee Yong-Soo’s testimony has changed over time. Indeed, we can find many inconsistencies in Lee’s account. For example, in the record of the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal in 2000, she reported that the master of the comfort station had deceived her and made her a comfort woman. However, in testimonies made after 2002, she reports that soldiers kidnapped her. In some accounts, she was captured by a man while in the other testimonies “a group of men,” “soldier and woman,” or “two big men” did so. It is also unclear if she was kidnapped at the age of 14 or 16.

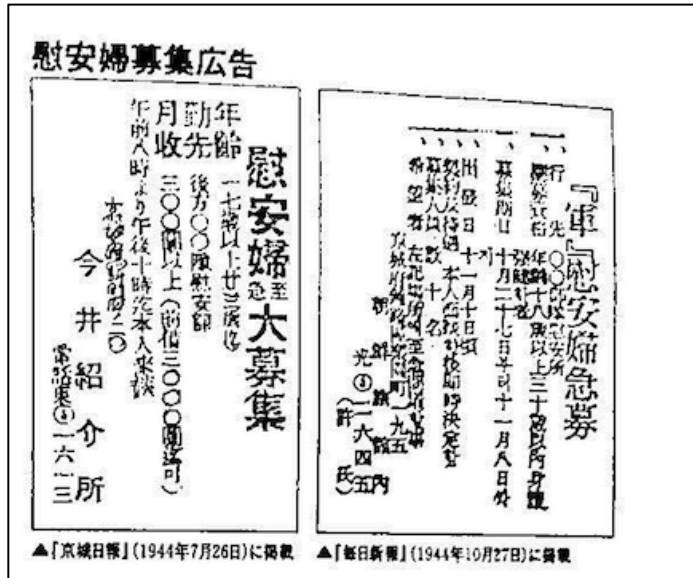
Hata’s argument is misleading as he treats Lee’s account as a representative case to posit that testimonies by comfort women, in general, are unreliable even though readers have no way of knowing this. Nevertheless, the value of this evidence for right-leaning readers should not be underestimated, as it renders clear support for the version of history they are already inclined to

believe. Because Hata indicates the sources from which he collected this information, if I were a reader with a nationalistic orientation, perhaps I would not doubt the validity of Hata's argument. As we observed, right-wing activists, as well as the authors of magazine articles, often claim that comfort women were given appropriate compensation at the time. To make this point, Hata shows the advertisements that appeared in the newspapers *Keijo nippo* (Kyungsung ilbo) and *Mainichi Shinpo* that include information about payment (see Picture 2). Whether or not he uses historical evidence appropriately is not a concern for the present study, but it is certain that these kinds of evidence have played important roles in bolstering the revisionist view of history that right-oriented readers are eager to believe.

Table 2. Summary of Lee Young Soo's Testimonies about Kidnapping (9969: *Shokun!*, 2007.5, p.143)

Date	Source	Self-declared situation of kidnapping
1992	At the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan	“a guy wearing national uniform and military hat gave me a red one-piece dress and leather shoes, I was so happy that I followed him immediately”
12/2000	At the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery	“Deceived by a Japanese guy (Master of a comfort station)”
6/26/2002	Akahata	“Kidnapped with being pointed a gun at the age of 14”
4/12/2004	At Kyoto University	“Kidnapped by a “guy wearing something like a military uniform””
8/3/2005	Civil gathering at Koshigaya	“Kidnapped by a “guy wearing something like a military uniform” by being threatened with a gun.”
2/15/2007	Public hearing at the US House of Representatives	“Kidnapped by a group of men wearing something like people’s army’s uniform at the age of 16 from her house. Put into a train with three other girls and sent to Dalian via Pyongyang.”
2/22/2007	Japan Times	“Kidnapped by a Japanese soldier from her house at the age of 14”
3/2/2007	At the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan	“At 2 or 3 in midnight, a soldier and a woman came into her house, threatened her with a sword, and then kidnapped her with her mouth being covered. Later, a soldier with three other women joined the party and put on the train”
3/6/2007	New York Times	“Japanese Soldier kidnapped me from my house with my mouth being covered to prevent me from calling my mother”
3/7/2007	Washington Post	“Two big men grabbed her hand, and kidnapped her on the way to the restaurant where she worked in Ulsan in July 1942.“ Put into a truck with five other women.”

Picture 2. Comfort Women Recruitment Advertisements and English Translation (9969: *Shokun!*, 2007.5, p.143)



<p>Comfort Women Urgent Mass Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age: Older than 17 years old and younger than (...illegible..)</li> <li>• Place: 00 Unit Comfort Station</li> <li>• Monthly Salary: More than 300 (Maximum 3,000)</li> <li>• Interview from 8 AM to 10 PM</li> </ul> <p>Keijo [now Seoul] (...illegible....) 20          Imai Introduction Agency          Tel 1613</p>	<p>“Military” Comfort Women Urgently Needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place: 00 Unit Comfort Station</li> <li>• Eligibility: Those who are older than 18 years old and younger than 30 years old</li> <li>• Period of Recruitment: From October 27 to November 8</li> <li>• Departure: November 10</li> <li>• Treatment: Salaries will be determined through an interview</li> <li>• Number of positions: Dozens</li> <li>• Contact: Mr. Kyo Tel 2645, Chosen Hotel Keijo [now Seoul] (...illegible.....) town 195</li> </ul>
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It is not only Hata who made such arguments. In the special issue “If South and North Korea Say This...,” authors tell readers the specific ways to counter North and South Korea’s claims. Nishioka Tsutomu of Tokyo Christian University teaches readers how to counter the claim that the comfort women system was coercive. Accordingly, there were four forms of evidence that support the coerciveness of the comfort women system. Those include: 1) the existence of a women’s volunteer corps system, 2) testimonies given by soldiers who kidnapped

women, 3) official documents and 4) testimonies given by former comfort women. Nishioka refutes the validity of all those four kinds of evidence. Below is the summary of the points Nishioka made (8483: *Shokun!*, 2003.1).

1) Indeed, the women's volunteer corps system was a compulsory system that mobilized unmarried women, but their duty was limited to factory labor and had nothing to do with comfort women.

2) There were two testimonies made by soldiers who had kidnapped women, but it was already proved that these testimonies were not reliable either because the witness admitted that he had lied or the testimony did not match the empirical evidence found in the field research.

3) All the official documents that have been found so far indicate that the sole purpose of those documents was to restrict brokers' kidnapping-like recruitment to comfort women system but did not indicate the government's involvement in the system.

4) There exists no single reliable testimony by comfort women. The Japanese government conducted interviews with 16 former comfort women, but they did not disclose the data and even denied the fact that they have conducted interviews. Therefore, this cannot be considered an available data source. There is also the interview data collected by the professor An Byeong-jik of the Seoul National University. Among An's research group's sample, after excluding half of the respondents whose testimonies appeared to be distorted, only four claimed that the system was coercive. Two testimonies among the four lacked consistency, and the remaining two did not match with the historical facts, and, therefore, there is no single reliable testimony that indicates the coerciveness of the comfort women system.

As Nishioka's article shows, conservative authors made considerable efforts to deny the coerciveness of the comfort women system. Their argument sounds plausible for someone like the activists in my data who are the deniers of the comfort women system.

Because activists believe that history problems such as the comfort women problem do not reflect the historical facts, they see Koreans as the ones who "manipulated" the problems. Certainly, these history problems did not exist a few decades ago, although they emerged not as a

result of someone's manipulation. For example, the comfort women issue emerged as a problem of human rights violation only after the 1980s, but before that the issue was not known as widely as it is today (Tsutsui 2006). Changes in domestic and global political-cultural environments facilitated the re-emergence of those history problems after the 1980s, not only in East Asia, but in Europe as well (Seraphim 2006; Berger 2006). However, Japanese right-wing activists interpret the emergence of these history problems as the result of South Korea's manipulation of history. For example, an experienced activist started his current activism because he thought that the comfort women problem had been manipulated.

Ten years ago, there was the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery. That was the time I first went on the streets to protest. Because nobody responded to that. [Because they claimed] Japanese kidnapped comfort women by force on the Chinese continent. [They claimed] Japanese caught every single woman and raped them and sent to Manchuria. I couldn't stand that they made such a nonsensical argument in the international conference (26, Male, 60's: Higuchi 2012s).

Thus, activists were aroused because Japanese with whom they identified strongly were required to apologize and pay compensation for the crimes that they believed those Japanese did not commit. Some activists go so far as to claim that South Koreans are committing fraud by using these history problems.

They are doing a thing like almost a crime, even if it is not a crime in a strict sense. I mean, the comfort women problem. They extort money from Japan by making non-factual claims. That's a fraud. I cannot tolerate their doing such a thing shamelessly (23, Male, 40's: Higuchi 2013e).

Thus, unlike the case of North Korea and China, Japanese right-wing activists have a sense of unfairness over South Korea's history problems. They perceive Koreans as the "apology-

demanders” who use history to request apologies and compensation, and to influence domestic and regional politics.

### China: The Real Threat

Many activists feel that China is the most serious threat to Japan. The first and the foremost reason that the Japanese right-wing is frightened about China is that Chinese outnumber Japanese, as activists typically mention: “Chinese (Shina-Jin) are more frightening (than Koreans). They have such a large population so that they can do it (invasion) easily” (3, Male, 30’s: Higuchi 2012c). 41.4% of the responses related to China were about the threat of the Chinese population, which made it by far the most frequently mentioned topic (79 out of 191 responses). For example, one activist noted that the increasing Chinese population became a “real threat” to Japan recently.

Chinese increased rapidly. In that sense something that used to be an abstract threat came to be a real threat. The sudden increase of Chinese is a big thing. Among foreigners who come to Japan, Chinese are the vast majority (27, Male, 60’s: Higuchi 2012t).

The Chinese population is perceived as a threat because they are thought to use their population to influence Japanese culture, tradition, and politics. For instance, the following remark made by an activist is a typical example.

I feel, if we don’t do anything, peaceful Japan with no sense of crisis will be swallowed by greedy Chinese. That’s the real crisis for my precious country, culture, tradition and everything. They may not have interests in those things, so it is only us Japanese who can save that (24, Female, 40’s: Higuchi 2013f).

At the same time, activists caution that the Chinese population matters because it enables China to dominate Japan using its economic power.

The Chinese case is a little different. I'm afraid of being oppressed by their numbers. If lots of Chinese come to Japan, Japanese companies will print their simplified Kanji on products, or teach Chinese to employees to attract Chinese customers, for their business's sake. That is inevitable. But then, I'm afraid it will be difficult to live in Japan if we only understand Japanese. Thus, I have a fear that eventually it will lead to selling our country (to Chinese) (30, Male, 40's: Higuchi 2012w).

Thus, the Chinese are problematic not only because they are large in numbers, but moreover because of the threat that the Chinese population poses to Japanese culture and economy.

Some articles in the data were devoted specifically to the dangers of the Chinese population. For example, journalist Tomisaka Satoshi cautions of the increase of crimes committed by Chinese immigrants. Quoting a comment by a Japanese police official he interviewed, Tomisaka notes "Chinese who use lock picking to enter other people's places are by no means petty thieves. They would murder people without hesitation if they were in need. We need to take that terror seriously" (7897: *Shokun!*, 2001.7). Similarly, journalist Kubo Hiroshi posits that "the recent sudden increase of crimes committed by foreigners is the result of the growth of number of crimes committed by Chinese," and argues that the taxes paid by Japanese workers have been wasted to imprison Chinese criminals (9014: *Shokun!*, 2004.8). Japanese right-wing' rhetoric against Chinese resembles that of their western-European counterparts against the Muslim population, and is simply more xenophobic than their attitudes towards North and South Korea and their citizens. At the same time, these articles also consider China as an economic threat (26 of 60 articles) and a militaristic threat (13 of 60 articles). For nationalists,



China's rise is problematic in many ways. Journalist Kodama Hiroshi, quoting the pre-war intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi's famous *On Departure from Asia* (Datsu-A ron) notes:

Now at the turn of the century, Shina, or in other words China, the country that Fukuzawa once pitied by noting "it is unfortunate for us (Japan) that there are neighboring countries. One is called Shina (China). The other one is named Chosen (Korea)" and calling it the "unfortunate country,"<sup>4</sup> is transforming from a big power in Asia to a superpower in the world (9201: *Shokun!*, 2005.1).

What is interesting about these articles is that, on the one hand, the authors warn about China's hegemonic acts based on its economic power. On the other, they tend to downplay China's rise as an economic power by discussing the risks involved in the Chinese economy, and caution Japanese not to be fascinated with China's economic boom. Meanwhile, articles about militaristic expansion try to overestimate militaristic power. Many articles analyze China's foreign policy and its ambition to seize hegemony in East Asia. Typically, the authors conclude their arguments by noting that Japan should have more forceful foreign policy independent of the US, including the deployment of nuclear weapons, to confront China.

In short, these right-wing activists and commentators are afraid of China as a threat that attempts to invade Japan culturally, economically, and politically using its large population and military power. Such a view is based on the underlying idea that Chinese have a distinctive ethnic character which makes them a peculiar threat. An activist insists:

It comes from the ethnic problem. Really. If it is a matter of culture, because they came into the calm, gentle, and polite Japanese society and culture, they should become gentle, calm and polite beings, but it never happens. They aren't assimilated at all (29, Male, 20's).

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<sup>4</sup> I quoted this translation from Kwok (2009: 17).

Activists think that Chinese tend to make their own exclusive communities, and that this is because of their own distinctive ideology called China-Centrism (Chuka-Shisou). An activist whose primary interest is China argues that:

Chinese make their own exclusive communities like Chinatown. So, China-Centrism is a discriminatory ideology that they have an idea that 'they are the only humans while the rest are animals'. If they come into Japan and become a majority of Japan's population, Japan will become China, so we should prevent that from happening (30, Male, 40's: Higuchi 2012w).

The notion of China-Centrism justifies activists' activities based on racist assumptions. This unique concept of China-Centrism appears not to be the original tenet of activists, however. In the article entitled "Chinese Identity as Opium," Takagi Keizou, a professor of International Relations, gives a detailed explanation of the concept of China-Centrism. He posits that "to put the nature of China in a word, it is 'Chinese Identity,'" and claims that this is the ideology that makes the Chinese think they occupy the center of the world. For Chinese, "'World' (Tenka) refers to the 'world revolves around Han Chinese' and thus to the 'area where Chinese civilization extends,' and please note that it is not about China as a country." Therefore, as Hiramatsu Shigeo, a scholar who studies the Chinese military, wrote in another article:

We need to be cautious about the fact that Chinese do not have the concept of 'national border.' (...) The conception of 'national border' for us, the citizens of democratic countries, is a notion that has emerged in Western Europe where civil society was highly developed through various conflicts. So that there is not such an idea of 'national border' in China where China-Centrism, serfdom and Maoism prevail (9628: *Shokun!*, 2006.3).

What follows is that without the concept of a national border, Chinese do not consider invasion as it is because they think the world is theirs. Thus, China-Centrism supports the right-wing

perception that Chinese have hegemonic tendencies and are attempting to invade Japan. According to Takagi, China-Centrism is still alive today: “Needless to say, ‘China-Centrism’ prevails in today’s China known as the People’s Republic of China. It is still alive, and it is the ‘truth’ (about them), or you could say, it is the core of them.” Therefore, Takagi concludes the discussion by noting, “it is impossible to build a cordial relationship with such a country” as long as “China-Centrism continues to exist.” Right-wing intellectuals conceptualized this China-Centrism in a very interesting way, because the notion applies not only to China but also to South and North Korea. Despite their names, “South Korea, North Korea, and China all have their Chinese ideologies.” Furuta Hiroshi, a professor of the history of political thought at Tsukuba University, made the point clear that although the roots of China-Centrism lies in China, because Korea was once colonized by China and influenced by Chinese culture, they share the notion that they occupy the center of the world. Authors use the term “Small China-Centrism” to refer to the Korean version of the ideology.

Korean China-Centrism is known as ‘Small China-Centrism,’ which they started using by themselves in 17th century. When the Qing Dynasty conquered the Ming Dynasty, as they think Qing is the country of the barbarous Jurchen people, Korea began denying all the knowledge that originated in Qing and claimed they are the successors of the Ming Dynasty, and started calling themselves “Small China” (9371: *Shokun!*, 2005.7).

Such an ideological construct enables right-wing ideologues to consider all East Asia problems as the same kind of problem, as they have been caused by the same Chinese ideologies. This explains why many activists emphasized that all the dots are connected, like an activist said: “I personally consider Koreans just like the vanguard of Chinese.” Another activist argues, “eventually, they (Korea) are also the instrument of China. They are not directly involved, but

using Korea as a puppet. Like observing the political situations, by using Koreans” (15, Male, 50’s: Higuchi 2012o).

Such conspirational “China-Centrism” can be considered a manifestation of the paranoid style in Japanese form, to borrow Richard Hofstadter’s famous notion from his now classic *Paranoid Style in American Politics*, that “evokes the qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy” (1965: 3). By using the notion of the paranoid style, Hofstadter explores the political style characteristics of the right-wing movement that was expanding its influence at the time, and also shows that such a way of thinking had its own history. In the essay, Hofstadter repeatedly argues that he writes about the American right because he happened to be the specialist in American politics, but that the reach of paranoid style extends to similar politics in other national contexts. It might be true that beyond national borders, the right-wing way of seeing things has some degree of familiarity with conspiracy. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that activists do not articulate such an ideological construct individually, but right-wing authors do. Leaders and followers of the right-wing movement might not be the inventors of right-wing knowledge, but they use ideas such as China-Centrism that are there in the right-wing discourse. Paranoid style requires what Hofstadter calls “the paranoid spokesman.” Then, who are the paranoid spokesmen articulating conspiratorial right-wing knowledge, in the Japanese case?

### Production of East Asia Problems

One of the characteristics of the present study is the concurrent use of two kinds of data sources. This enables me to think about the ideological continuity between social movement activists and mainstream conservatives. The analysis suggests two points regarding the

production of right-wing knowledge. First, it is not activists but right-wing intellectuals who articulate right-wing knowledge. Second, those right-wing intellectuals are influential, high-profile individuals in society, contrary to the popular imagination that the right-wing are marginalized groups of people in society.

As a theory of the relationship between social change and social actors, some scholars started conceptualizing a sphere that is beyond a single social movement but below society, or what Pierre Bourdieu (1993) might call a “field” that influences a movement but is also influenced by a movement. In the constantly changing dynamics of a field, changes in an individual’s position directly lead to changes in field structure, and thus this enables researchers to transcend the structure-agency dichotomy by synthesizing both subjective and objective analysis. Social movement scholars call these spheres strategic action fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2012), arenas (Jasper 2014b), or public spheres (Koopmans 2004). Differences between their theories do not matter here, but having the concept of a field in mind is helpful when we think about the relationship between the collective level of right-wing discourse and that of individual activists. Let me suppose that there is a Japanese conservative field. What it means to be an actor in this field is to have a shared collective identity with other right-wing actors (Medvetz, Gross and Russell 2011). Therefore, at the core of the dynamics of such a sphere is the communication through media, which shapes collective identity (Koopmans 2004). This is crucial because “most ordinary people, including most activists, are not full-time political analysts” (Koopmans 2004: 379) and thus do not possess resources to analyze and produce right-wing knowledge. Consequently, “what most people know about politics is what they know from the media” (Koopmans 2004: 379). Thus, the ways in which activists perceive social problems

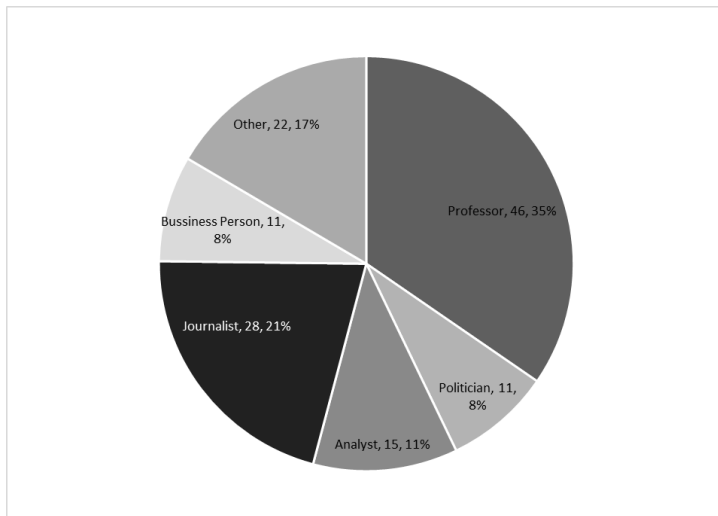
can be understood only in relation to these media. In this sense, right-wing magazines are the media that provide the knowledge necessary to have a right-wing identity in the field.

The analysis presented here suggests that the discourse of right-wing magazines plays an important role in the making of the right-wing collective identity that centers on East Asia problems. The case of the South Korean comfort women issue is telling. In this context, the attitude about the comfort women issue –either denial or apology– can be considered what signifies one’s political identity. To have a right-wing identity, one needs stories and evidence that convincingly show that there was no comfort women system. As we observed, right-wing magazines provide these. Right-wing intellectuals show the ways to refute the counter argument, and the evidence that support their arguments. Activists learn to be right-wing through learning the right-wing knowledge produced by right-wing authors. This interpretation explains the ideological continuity of mainstream conservative actors and radical activists within the same conservative field. Ann Swidler, in her classic article about culture and social action, argued that culture influences people’s actions not by setting values and end-goals as Max Weber had thought, but by providing a cultural “‘tool-kit’ of symbols, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems” (1986: 273). Thus, right-wing magazines are the media that provide this “tool-kit” for right-wing actors in the field, from mainstream politicians to radical activists. The magazines provide basic worldviews, narratives, and evidence that they can use for their political struggle. By modifying right-wing knowledge about East Asia, social movement organizations such as Zaitokukai articulate their collective action frames to attract citizens into the right-wing field. By modifying the same information, mainstream right-wing politicians in the field such as Prime Minister Abe set more moderate political goals such as the revocation of the 1993 Kono Statement that acknowledged

Japan's wartime regime's involvement in the comfort women system. Therefore, the knowledge produced in right-wing magazines is something that has made the right-wing field possible, and something that mediates the space between the prime minister and radical activists.

This discussion about right-wing knowledge production brings us to re-consider the social marginality of right-wing activists. Right-wing activists in Japan have been considered deviant as much as their counterparts are in other societies. On the one hand, traditionally right-wing activists have been considered as having connections with organized crime groups. On the other, the majority of "new" right-wing activists have been considered as representing the group of unsociable people with little education and low income (Furuya 2013). Such a conception dismisses the importance of understanding right-wing ideology by seeing it as the idea of marginalized lone wolves and weirdos. Contrary to the popular imagination, the analysis of magazine articles shows that right-wing ideas are not something peculiar to extremists and marginalized people in society. Rather, producers of right-wing knowledge are, quite understandably, high-profile individuals in society.

Chart 9. Right-Wing Authors' Occupation



Roughly classified, there were five types of authors in the magazine data, including academicians, politicians, analysts hired by non-academic institutions, business elites, and journalists. Professors employed by universities comprised 35% of all of the 134 authors who contributed to 158 articles in my data sample (see Chart 9). They held a professorship at virtually all the best academic institutions in Japan including the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Tokyo Metropolitan University, Tohoku University, Nagoya University, Tsukuba University, Waseda University, Keio University and Sophia University. Some authors belonged to institutions outside of Japan such as the University of Hawaii, Beijing University or the University of Auckland. There were 11 politicians in my sample. Although the fact that they are politicians in itself implies their success, especially successful ones including Ishihara Shintaro, the former governor of Tokyo, and Abe Shinzo, the current Prime Minister, were frequent contributors to the magazine. As for businesspersons, who comprised 8% of the authors, my sample included the most status-privileged individuals such as the honorary president of Fujitsu (one of the big eight in the Japanese electronics industry), the president of the Central Japan Railway Company (JR-Tokai), the board advisers of Hakuodo (the second largest advertising agency) and Mitsui&Co. (the largest trading company in Japan). Among journalists, who comprised 21% of the authors, many worked for Sankei-Newspaper; for example, my sample included the chief of their Seoul and Washington D.C. branches as well as a member of the editorial board. Many journalists and analysts are freelancers, and a different kind of research would be needed to know more about their social profiles. However, of particular relevance, I want to note that journalist Sakurai Yoshiko, the most frequent contributor to the right-wing magazines with seven articles in my sample, and perhaps the most prolific right-wing writer with more than 80 books, is a graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa with a major in History,



and started her career at the Christian Science Monitor's Tokyo branch in 1971, which for certain was not a career open to many Japanese in the 1960s and the 1970s. Without adding further examples, it is clear that the producers of right-wing knowledge are by no means marginalized individuals, but those who are successful in mainstream society. Thus, the widespread perception that right-wing individuals are deprived by society is somewhat misleading because the very people who create right-wing ideas are influential individuals. Rather than assume that right-wing activists are marginalized lone-wolves, we need to extend our understanding of the right-wing in society by recognizing the fact that the right-wing field is a sphere that is broader than we usually imagine, and that it contains various actors from prime ministers to radical activists, with a collective identity as right-wing that is enabled by right-wing knowledge produced in magazines.

In the next chapter, I will examine my initial question about the puzzle of the right-wing movement's success by incorporating theoretical insights.

## CHAPTER 4. JAPAN'S DECLINE AND NEW RIGHT-WING ACTIVISM

From the discussion presented above, now we know that East Asia problems are something unique to the new right-wing movement in the Japanese context. Chapter 3 examined the reasons why activists were so concerned about East Asia problems. North Korea's case is problematic because it makes activists perceive Japan's powerlessness. South Korea irritates activists because they think South Korea manipulated histories to take economic and political advantage. Activists are afraid of China because of its large population, which might enable it to have the strong purchasing power to influence economy, culture and politics. These explanations are, in the distinction Isaac Reed made in *Interpretation and Social Knowledge: On the Use of Theory in the Human Sciences* (2011), minimal interpretations. Reed distinguishes two kinds of interpretations in human sciences: one that he calls minimum interpretation, which is a description of facts and evidences with minimal theoretical inferences, and one that he calls maximum interpretations, in that theory and facts are articulated together in a way that enables a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon. Minimal explanations are powerful but not sufficient for good social research. Reed argues, "it is the responsibilities of the social researcher not only to report the facts, but to propose a deeper or broader comprehension of them" (2011: 17). In this final chapter, I attempt my maximal interpretation of the "mainstream of the right" phenomenon by incorporating the theoretical discussion with the empirical findings presented above. Moreover, I will address the question that I posed at the beginning of the thesis; why did right-wing activism achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japan?

## Japan's Decline and New Threats

As I explained in Chapter 2, the perspective that sees right-wing movements as a reaction to perceived threats is useful to overcome the shortcomings inherent in the existing explanations. This perspective sees that macro-structural changes create threats to the economic, political and symbolic status quo of a relatively privileged group in society. It creates room for the right-wing social movement to mobilize out of those threats. Guided by these theories' basic premise, I argue that the new Japanese rightist movement is a reaction to Japan's power devaluation in East Asia. Let me briefly introduce how three forms of Japan's decline created a sense of unease among some Japanese people.

### *Economic threats*

Following Max Weber, who conceptualized that one's life chances correlate most strongly with one's economic conditions, I consider that Japan's economic decline is the foremost source of threats right-wingers perceive. Today, there is little room to doubt that Japanese people feel the decline of Japan's economic power in relation to other countries. Recently, the anthropologist Anne Allison used the term "precarious Japan" to refer to Japan's state of being, which had lost "a particular notion of, and social contract around, work." Allison continues, "precarity marks the loss of this – the loss of something that only certain countries, at certain historical periods, and certain workers ever had in the first place. Japan was one of those places" (2013: 7). While Allison's focus was on domestic labor conditions, such "precarity" is more problematic for Japanese when they see themselves in comparison with other countries, such as China and South Korea. Once believed to be a "classless society" or "mass-middle society," today Japan has the second highest level of poverty among OECD countries. After the

burst of the “bubble economy” in the beginning of the 1990’s, Japan has been suffering from two decades of prolonged recession now called Japan’s malaise. Except for a few years around the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998, Japan has been the least growing economy among the East Asian countries in the last two decades (The World Bank 2015). As a result, 40 years after Japan had made itself the world’s second strongest economy in 1969, Japan lost the position to China in 2009. Given the extent to which Japanese nationalists have been proud of Japan’s strong economy, it is not hard to imagine how shocking it was for them to see that Japan had lost the position. In addition, many Korean companies are performing far better than their Japanese counterparts in the markets where Japanese companies used to be dominant. For example, while Japanese companies such as Sony, Sharp, or Panasonic used to show their strength in the electronics market, now Korean counterparts such as Samsung or LG electronics dominate the market. In the case of the television market, Samsung and LG accounted for about 35% of the worldwide market share in 2013, followed by Chinese companies such as TCL, Hisense, and Skyworth that together held about 15% of the market share, while Sony, Toshiba, and Panasonic, when combined, counted only about 13.6% (Statista 2015). The trend is not confined to a single market, but is shared in other areas such as the computer market as well. It is more telling in the entertainment industry, where Korean pop culture contents such as TV-dramas and music have had significant success in Japan and in many parts of the world (Lie 2014). As Japanese news media outlets frequently report these and other difficulties Japan is facing in the global market, it is no wonder that people sense Japan’s decline in relation to their counterparts in East Asia.

### *Political threats*

Economic power precedes the other powers in many ways. Therefore, as Japan's economic power has declined, its political power in the region and the world has declined as well. As we observed in Chapter 3, North Korea's kidnapping of Japanese citizens is the sort of problem from which people perceive the decline of Japan. It poses a question about Japan's capacity as a nation-state. From the fact that Japan let North Korea abduct its citizens and failed to force North Korea to release abductees by exercising its political power, people came to have the sense that Japan's political power has been decreasing. As I argued earlier, North Korea's kidnapping problem motivated many activists to join in the right-wing activities. The data suggests that about 24% of activists joined in the movements at least partially because of the problems with North Korea, and among those problems, about 70% of the responses were about the kidnapping problem. This is consistent with the public view. In the 2014 national survey by the Japanese government about people's perception of Japan's diplomacy, 88.3% of the respondents answered that the abduction issue is of interest to them regarding North Korea, followed by the missile problems (55.6%) and nuclear problems (54.0%). North Korea's kidnapping is an important issue that has created the perception of Japan's political power devaluation.

Another dimension of political power decline is observable in the rise of the territorial disputes with China and South Korea. Territorial dispute-related responses comprised 16.7% of all the responses about South Korea (34 out of 204 responses), and 12% of responses about China (23 out of 191 responses). Because territorial disputes have emerged as international conflicts only very recently after the rise of China and South Korea as economic powers in the region, this simultaneously signifies the relative deprivation of Japan's power in East Asia's

regional politics. It is not a negligible number of Japanese who are furious about the territorial disputes. Horiuchi (2014) explains that the increasing anti-Chinese sentiments among the Japanese public influenced even the Japanese government's foreign policy against China. In 2012, Ishihara Shintaro, the nationalist politician, proposed the idea to purchase the Senkaku Islands, which both Japan and China had claimed but were privately owned by an individual, and called for donations. Soon afterwards, about US \$14 million was donated. The pressure from public opinion made the Japanese government buy the islands officially.

Furthermore, political power decline is related to activists' fear about China's large population. Their fear makes them strongly oppose the proposal for expanding suffrage to foreigners in Japan. Although there is not even an indication that such a policy change is to take place, at least under the current LDP's rule, activists have been loudly opposing the expansion of suffrage. In the interview data, responses about anti-suffrage expansion consist of 41.8% of "foreigner problems" (56 out of 134 responses). In a simple microeconomics logic, they think, if the Chinese community acquires more purchasing power using their large population, it will enable them to influence Japanese politics as well. There is even a rumor in the right-wing circle that China attempted to take over small Yonaguni island with a population of about 1,500, which is located at the westernmost point of Japan's territory. Some in the right-wing believe that the Chinese government will send numerous Chinese to the island and dominate the island's politics (Higuchi 2014). Perceived threats often have a real consequence, however. In the case of the Yonaguni island, through the process of referendum, the residents decided that they needed a Japan Self-Defense Force base on the island to protect them, which will indeed be deployed by the year 2016 (Asahi Newspaper February 23, 2015). This example illustrates how various kinds of threats are interconnected in complex ways to shape people's sense of crisis, which is the

source of the new right-wing mobilization. In short, political power is a significant dimension of the multiple power declines that activists perceive.

### *Symbolic threats*

The decrease in economic and political power shape the perception that Japan's symbolic status in East Asia has also been declining. The Korean entertainment fad known as Korean-Wave is the most telling example, which makes people perceive symbolic threats. An activist's remark about South Korea is suggestive.

I hate South Korea most. Yes, I hate them most. (Because) there is the issue of Takeshima, and because of this phenomenon called the Korean-wave, now they look down on us, Japanese, who used to be the far superior existence in the past, 10 or 20 years ago (38, Male, 30's).

It is reported that there has been bashing against fans of Korean entertainment content by conservative people (Kitahara 2013). Similarly, the analysis of the magazine articles found many arguments reacted against popular discourses that emphasize the success of other economies in East Asia as well. For example, although she is neither a typical right-wing activists nor a political author, but a cartoonist who specializes in women's life, Kurata Mayumi claims that the Korean-wave was popular only among older women.

It is highly questionable if we can consider this phenomenon a fad. Because of my job, I meet many people in their 20's, but even in the midst of "Winter-Sonata fad," I have never heard something related to it. Eventually, that fever raged only among people of a specific age group, such as middle-aged women (10836: *Shokun!*, 2006.4).

Kurata, by using her symbolic power derived from the fact that she is the “specialist” of women’s culture, tried to deny the popularity of Winter Sonata, the symbol of the Korean-wave in Japan. As the activist says, the rise of China and South Korea is an inconvenient truth for nationalists because it contradicts their perception that Japan is the leading country in East Asia, and that the Japanese nation is superior to the other East Asian nations. Their view that they are the superior compared with Chinese and Koreans appears in their language use as well. For example, many activists persistently use pejorative terms such as *Shina-Jin* for Chinese. *Shina* is the pejorative term referring to China, which *Encyclopedia Nipponica* explains as follows;

While the term Shina itself does not have a pejorative connotation, because Japanese looked down on local people as a strategy to justify their aggression in the process of Japan’s advancement into Asia, the term has a pejorative nuance when used by Japanese. Chinese tend to have a strong sense of resentment that they are looked down on when Japanese use that term, therefore, people have tended to avoid using the term after World War II (*Encyclopedia Nipponica*).

They can simply use the other terms to refer to China as the majority of Japanese speakers do. But, they stick to use of the pejorative term. A scholar of Chinese literature, Takashima Toshio, even wrote a 20 pages article in *Shokun!* to argue that *Shina* is not an ethnic slur. This is another example illustrating the circulation of right-wing ideas in the right-wing field. The former governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro, is a famous user of this derogatory term. For example, in a meeting of the House of Representatives, Ishihara explains;

It seems that people were disgusted when Japanese used the term Shina. But this is ridiculous. The *Shina* government’s website that discloses their information is called ‘Sina. Com.’ (...) And, *Chugoku* [the more popular and not pejorative term referring to China] usually refers to the Japanese region that includes Yamaguchi, Okayama and



Hiroshima prefectures. It is just okay to call *Shina* as *Shina* (Ishihara, quoted from the Diet record, the budget committee, February 13, 2013).

Despite their contention that *Shina* is not a derogatory term, it appears that the whole point is they cling to use of the pejorative term *Shina* because it is an ethnic slur. The fact that they use a pejorative term that is no longer used by the public suggests that they cling to their assumed status over the other East Asians. For activists, the problem is that the countries and citizens they have been looking down upon, grew rapidly and threatened Japan's status in East Asia. In short, Japanese have been forced to face the reality that Japan is no longer the one and only leading power in East Asia in terms of economic, political and symbolic power. This has different meanings for different people. Cosmopolitan liberals might not care about it. However, it matters a lot to people who identify themselves strongly with Japan. Thus, changes in Japan's political and economic power in East Asia created the perception of symbolic threats to certain populations of Japanese.

### *Threats and East Asia Problems*

Japan's power decline coincided with the deterioration of Japanese citizens' perception of China and Korea. Chart 10 shows a summary of the national survey that the Japanese government has been conducting since 1978. This survey intends to investigate Japanese's perception of other countries. In 1988, when Japan was in the midst of the bubble economy and China was not as economically developed as it is today, only 26% of respondents viewed China "unfavorably"; this increased to 83.1% in 2014 (57.1% increase). Furthermore, people's perception of China and South Korea has changed significantly in the last ten years in particular. In 2003, 48% of the sample indicated that they did not like China, and 41% did not like South

Korea. In the latest survey conducted in 2014, 83.1% of the respondents thought China was unfavorable (35.1% increase) and 66.4% thought South Korea was unfavorable (25.4% increase). Both marked the worst record since the start of the survey in 1978. However, strictly speaking, perceiving threats is one thing, and having a sense of resentment toward China, South and North Korea is another. Here, East Asia problems are crucial because these events might have shaped people's antagonistic feelings about East Asia. Activists' discontent was created not simply by the decline of Japan's power; East Asia problems mediated the creation of new grievances among people.

The case of South Korea is illustrative. As the survey data show, Japanese' perception of South Korea improved in Kim Dae-Jung's presidency and even after his term of office, continuing until 2011 when only 35.3% of respondents had negative feelings about South Korea. However, in August of the following year, then South Korean president Lee Myung-Bak landed in Dokdo/Takeshima, the small island both South Korea and Japan claimed. As a result, the "unfavorable" answer increased to 59% (23.7% increase) in one year. The history problem had a similar effect. Activists thought that such a problem did not exist before, and thus considered it to be "manipulated" by Koreans. Although it was global cultural and political trends that made the problem controversial, activists interpreted the phenomenon as the result of Japan's power devaluation in the region, which allowed South Korea to make unjust demands. In the case of North Korea, it was the abduction issue that provoked the public as well as the activists. As we have observed, the kidnapping issue was problematic for activists because it reminded them of Japan's powerlessness. They perceived the issue as if the North Korean government made a fool of Japan, and thus undermined Japan's status in the region. More problematically, they thought that the Japanese government was incapable of solving the problem by forcefully requesting

North Korean government to release the victims. Other problems functioned in the same way. In China's case, activists were afraid of being invaded by the Chinese, physically and culturally. This is the simple reflection of their perception that China has been growing as a hegemonic power when Japan has been declining. Thus, East Asia problems function to translate the perceived sense of threats to more aggressive grievances about East Asia. If so, the next question will be about the ways in which those grievances bring people to collective action such as the new right-wing movement. The theories suggest that it is only through the movement's framing efforts that grievances are channeled into collective action.

Chart 10. Japanese Public View of China and South Korea (Unfavorable), 1978-2014



### Framing East Asia Problems

Japan's power devaluation, through the translation of East Asia problems, created new discontent, a sense of unfairness, and fear. However, right-wing mobilization occurs only when movement organizations mobilize those perceptions to attract participants. Here, David Snow and Robert Benford's notion of core framing tasks (Snow and Benford 1988; Benford and Snow

2000; Snow et al. 2014) serves as a useful tool. Snow and Benford introduce three core components of framing, including diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing. Through diagnostic framing, movement organizations identify the “source(s) of causality, blame, and/or culpable agents” (Benford and Snow 2000: 616). Prognostic framing “involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan” (Benford and Snow 2000: 616). Borrowing the ideas from this theory, in the following, I briefly explain how Japanese new right-wing movements mobilized the perceived threats emerging from Japan’s power devaluation through the attribution of causality and the identification of solutions.

### *Diagnosis*

How did the new right-wing movement mobilize out of the newly emerged discontent about East Asia? Through diagnostic framing, the movement leaders identified Koreans and Chinese in Japan as the targets, which was not an arbitrary decision but their strategic planning. At a first glance, it is puzzling to see why they are targeted. Firstly, although East Asia problems provoked Japanese rightist activists, Chinese and Koreans in Japan are not the ones who are responsible for those problems. Second, both these Chinese and Korean populations pose no immediate threats to Japan. Chinese and Koreans consist merely of about 0.8% of the population in Japan (Ministry of Justice 2013). In addition, unlike some Western European countries where the Muslim population is targeted because of assumptions that they are unwilling to be assimilated, Chinese and Koreans in Japan are well-integrated into Japanese society despite legal and institutional discriminations. Third, it does not make clear sense why other major foreign populations in Japan such as Brazilians, Peruvians and Filipinos are not targeted instead of

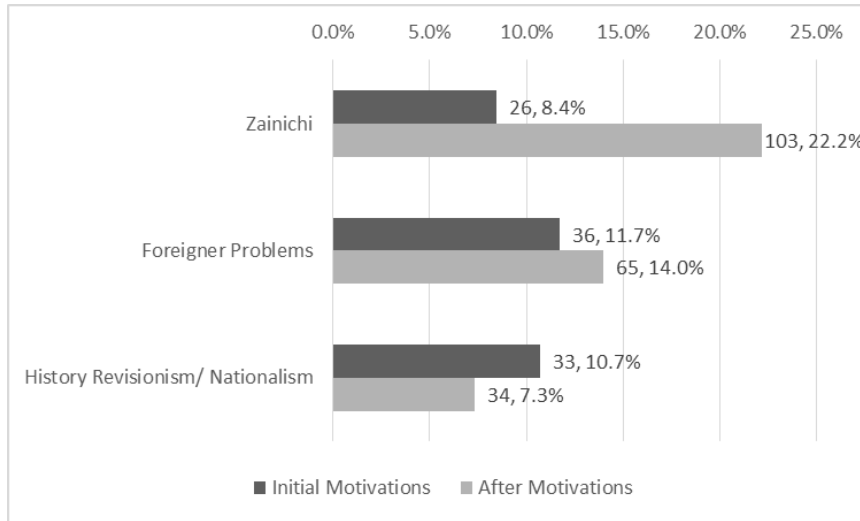
Chinese and Koreans. Their native culture is more “foreign” to Japanese than that of Chinese and Koreans, and immigrants from those countries are more likely to hold jobs such as low-skilled manual labor or sex-workers than their Korean and Chinese counterparts. However, in terms of the movement strategy, Koreans and Chinese in Japan among the few possible targets that enable the movement to address the discontent based on East Asia problems.

Depending on the organization to which one belongs, the main target differs. While the leading organization *Zaitokukai*'s main focus is Koreans, other organizations such as the *Nativist-Society* (Haigai-Sha) and *Society for Restoring Sovereignty* (Shuken Kaifuku wo Mezasu Kai) target Chinese. In the following, I look at the leading organization *Zaitokukai*'s framing about Koreans in Japan as an exemplary case. *Zainichi* or *Zainichi Korean* that will appear in the quotes is a Japanese term referring to Koreans living in Japan, the majority of whose ancestors came to Japan because of Japan's colonial policy before and during World War II (Lie 2008). The analysis of the interview data suggests that the most activists did not have interest in Korean residents or the Chinese population in Japan at the time they entered the organization. For example, an activist notes that “my initial interest was China problems. But it shifted to *Zainichi* problems as I do activism in *Zaitokukai*, and I came to be interested in any problems that are relevant to Japan's disadvantages” (11, Male, 40's: Higuchi 2012k). Similarly, another activist entered the organization with an interest in history but then learned of the problems about Korean residents in Japan: “by watching *Zaitokukai*'s activism, I learned that there are so many things that I don't know. Among them, the *Zainichi* problem is the one that I came to learn from *Zaitokukai*” (42, Male, 20s).

Chart 11 summarizes the number and percentage of motivations activists held before their participation in the movement and the motivations cultivated after participation related to

Zainichi Koreans, foreigner problems, and history revisionism. While this chart simplifies the complex sequence of events and ideological changes that brought activists to the movement, it is still useful to understand the ways activists experience ideological conversion. While only 8.4% of the responses about initial motivations belong to the “Zainichi” category (26 out of 308 responses), it comprises 22.2% of their motivations after they started their involvement in the movement (103 out of 465 responses). Thus, the available evidence suggests that Korean residents in Japan are recognized as a target of accusation mainly after activists’ participation in the movement. If so, the construction of Korean residents in Japan as an enemy must owe much to the movement’s framing efforts. Kathleen Blee’s classic study of women in the Ku Klux Klan made it clear that not only do racist individuals make racist groups, but racist groups also make racist individuals: “they were taught new ways to think about themselves and other whites, whom to consider enemies, and how to change the world. They went from holding racist attitudes to being racist activists, from racial apathy to racist zeal” (2002: 188). In a sense, activists “learn” to hate Koreans and Chinese in Japan by being in the right-wing movement.

Chart 11. Initial Motivations and Motivations after Participation, Zainichi, Foreigner Problems, and History Revisionism



How does the organization frame Koreans in Japan as an enemy? Zaitokukai’s goal makes this point clear.

Not letting the *Korean residents’ special privilege* be. Quite simple, but this is our goal. Then what is *Korean residents’ special privilege*? First of all, there is the “special permanent resident right.” This is the privilege given to Koreans who used to be Japanese nationals, based on the special immigration act that came into effect in 1991. *Zaitokukai*’s ultimate goal is to abolish the special immigration act, which is the basis of *Korean residents’ special privilege*, and to treat Koreans equally with other foreigners. However, in Japanese society where there is a persisting delusion that sees Koreans as “victims of Japan’s imperialism” and will “pity Zainichi” based on the faulty understanding of history, it is still the case that there is a tacit agreement to treat Korean residents differently from other foreigners (Zaitokukai 2007).

Put simply, the organization claims that Korean residents in Japan are given privileges that they do not deserve, and that these privileges originated in “the faulty understanding of history.”

*Korean residents’ special privilege* specifically refers to the special permanent residency right and all the other rights derived from it. This right was awarded in 1965 to the South Korean

citizens who had stayed in Japan from before the end of World War II and their heirs when Japan signed a basic treaty with South Korea, and was changed to the current name in 1991. These Korean citizens were Japanese nationals during Japan's colonization of Korea, and the majority of them were either forced or had little choice other than to migrate to Japan (Ryang 2009; Zainichi Korean no Rekishi Sakuseiinkai ed. 2006). Given this historical background, such special citizenship should be considered a legitimate right that those Korean populations deserve. However, because the nationalist view of history denies the history of forced migration, they see it as a privilege that is given to those who came to Japan by their own free will. Higuchi (2014) calls this framing the *Korean residents' special privilege* frame. Through the movement's framing efforts, Koreans in Japan are constructed as an enemy responsible for the aforementioned East Asia problems. The majority of the third and the fourth generation of Korean residents in Japan do not speak Korean, and therefore it is difficult to think of them simply as South or North Korean "nationals." However, for activists, Korean residents in Japan represent the problematic North and South Korea, and at the same time are people who have been enjoying privileges by staying in Japan. Here, East Asia problems are the key that link Korean residents in Japan with the states of North Korea and South Korea.

Korean residents in Japan use history politically. Not only comfort women, but also colonization and forced labor. Even if Korean residents in Japan do not explicitly talk about comfort women, they claim rights based on their history as victims. Those things disgust me. I am not the one who is responsible for it. I'm not in a position to owe responsibilities for the past war or the colonization. I have nothing to do with that. Even if there were colonization, the current third and fourth generations of Korean residents in Japan are only the offspring of victims of the colonization, but they are not the victims. Why, in a relation between the descendants of aggressors and the descendants of victims, do we need to prioritize their claims? I have discontent. Why are they always on the side of victims. I think it is not acceptable that they make political claims based on the one-sided view of the history of victimization (30, Male, 40s: Higuchi 2012w).



In the earlier section, we observed that South Korea was considered an “apology demander,” and here we can see the same logic applied to Korean residents in Japan. With this framing, it is possible for activists to interpret Korean residents in Japan as a source of East Asia problems who claim rights based on a history that that they have “manipulated”. When we add up the responses about Zainichi Koreans and China’s population threats, 31.9% of all the responses about these motivations were reported only after participation in the movement (148 out of 464 responses). The movement’s framing, in which Chinese and Koreans in Japan hold responsibility, explains why so many activists were motivated to act because of Koreans and Chinese in Japan. It also explains why they do not target other foreigners, but only Koreans and Chinese in Japan. A committed Koreans and Chinese hater explains why Brazilians do not bother him.

Brazilians. Yes, I would feel that they are noisy if I were together with a group of Brazilians in a train, and according to what I heard from a person living in a neighborhood that hosts many Brazilians, they make noises in the middle of the night by partying and drinking, and they steal mopeds too. It is just an annoyance, but they are not a group with a political character. They don’t request us to give them rights, force us to do this and that, or claim that Japan is bad. Brazilians don’t claim that they were forced to migrate from Brazil to Japan. They are not anti-Japan. Rather, they are pro-Japan. Yes, we have a Brazilian person in our movement. He always has flags of both Japan and Brazil and chants “kick Chinese and Koreans out!” (29, Male, 20’s)

Making noises at night or stealing mopeds seem like they ought to be good enough reasons to make Japanese nationalists angry, but they are not. Brazilians are not “a group with a political character,” while Koreans and Chinese are. In short, through the movement’s diagnostic framing,

Koreans and Chinese in Japan are identified as a culpable enemy even though they are not responsible for East Asia problems.

### *Prognosis*

Through prognostic framing, another core framing task which involves the articulation of solutions to a perceived problem, the movement encourages direct actions against Koreans and Chinese in Japan. In the last several years the Activist-Conservative organizations held many protests to accuse Koreans and Chinese in predominantly Korean or Chinese neighborhoods such as Okubo and Ikebukuro in Tokyo or Tsuruhashi in Osaka. They also targeted Korean ethnic schools. This exhibits the character of their strategy. As explained earlier, the new right-wing movement calls themselves Activist-Conservative and it is not without reason. By calling themselves Activist-Conservative, they try to differentiate themselves from the old right-wing and conservative activism that they see as “non-Activist-Conservatives.” Sakurai Makoto, the leader of Zaitokukai, recalls in his book:

We call the activism of Zaitokukai “Activist-Conservative,” and the reason we started such a movement is that we had a sense of indignation with the existing conservatives’ idle attitudes. Until about six years ago, it had never happened that the conservative people take to the streets to protest though it has become natural today for conservatives to do demonstrations (Sakurai 2013: 34).

Sakurai continues to explain; “the conservatives at the time did not do anything by assuming that they would just be fine because the left is losing their power. They said conservatives should not do demonstrations, conservatives should not do signature-collecting campaigns, and everything like that” (35). That is why he, with the leaders of four other organizations, started the Activist-Conservative movement as what he calls the “antithesis” to the existing movements. Thus, from

the beginning, leaders conceptualized direct action as the core of their movement strategy. Their strategy of direct action “shocked” many viewers who watched it through online media, and functioned as the first step to movement participation for most of the participants. Their prognosis worked to a certain degree, to mobilize those who would not have been mobilized in other ways. It is important to note that Koreans and Chinese in Japan are the two of very few possible targets that enable them to take direct action as a solution. Activism against the governments of North Korea, South Korea, and China, as traditional rightist groups have been doing for China and Russia for a long time without success, can hardly be an effective movement strategy. It is also difficult to frame other foreigners such as Brazilians as the enemy responsible for East Asia problems. Other foreigners are also less visible to the majority of Japanese because those immigrant populations tend to be concentrated in immigrant communities in local cities where manufacturing factories are concentrated. Therefore, this should be seen as the outcome of movement’s leaders’ strategic choices rather than an arbitrary decision for the movement to target Koreans and Chinese in Japan.

#### Summary: Mainstreaming of the Right in East Asia’s Context

By incorporating the theory with the empirical findings, this chapter answered the question proposed in the beginning: Why did new right-wing activism achieve a degree of success in contemporary Japan? To summarize the argument, macro-level social changes in East Asia, through the translation of East Asia problems, produced new grievances among Japanese people. What this means for rightist movements is that there were new opportunities to articulate collective action frames, using these threats to mobilize. Traditional Japanese rightist movements failed to address grievances revolving around East Asia problems. Instead, leaders of the new

right-wing organizations articulated a new vision of the right-wing movement that problematized East Asia. By denouncing Koreans and Chinese in Japan, the movement leaders sought to address the discontent of the Japanese, who had the sense that Japan's relative advantage in East Asia has been diminishing. Through this diagnostic framing, the leaders identified Koreans and Chinese in Japan as the source of East Asia problems, and thus as the ones to be blamed. Through prognostic framing, they articulated the scheme of direct action such as street protests in predominantly Chinese or Korean neighborhoods, which had not been a popular strategy of rightist movements in Japan. Thus, my analysis answers the question of why this movement has achieved a degree of success today. In short, the sense of discontent through which they attract participants emerged only after Japan's power devaluation in East Asia. It was China and South Korea's rise in East Asia that shaped new discontent and resentment among Japanese. My analysis suggests that today, people are motivated to take part in right-wing activities as a reaction to the perceived decline of Japan's status in East Asia.

This case study has illustrated the factors that are unique to the "mainstreaming of the right" phenomenon in East Asia. It showed that the characteristics of East Asia's political economy, where Japan was the leading economy of the region in 1960s and 1970s but lost its relative superiority as a result of the rise of the other "East Asian Tigers," influence even such a phenomenon as right-wing mobilization. The new right-wing movement is new because it addresses the new grievances that have emerged from the new political-economic reality. However, it is also "old" because the movement builds on the unchanging racism against Chinese and Koreans that has existed among Japanese for a long time. According to Thomas Berger, in the first opinion survey conducted by the Occupation forces in December 1945, 86% of respondents answered, "Japanese people were superior to the other people of East Asia"

(2012: 141). The new right-wing movement just created a new expression of the traditional racism in Japanese society. Hence, the other side of the story is that this traditional racism made the new rightist activism possible. As Isaac Martin pointed out with the familiar “tool-kit” metaphor in his book about the history of rich people’s social movements in the US, “tradition is not just the suitcase we drag along behind us. It is the toolkit we reach for when we want to change the world” (2013: xiii).

This study contributes to the study of conservatism and right-wing social movements by adding a case from East Asia that is neither American nor European. The theories that were conceptualized based on American cases defined the perceived threats narrowly as if they resulted solely from inter-racial competition. In both McVeigh and Cunningham’s studies, specifically, the primary vehicle of such movements was the middle-class white’s fear that the expansion of rights and economic resources to Blacks threatened their status quo. Such a narrow conception of threats, however, ignores the theory’s powerful applicability to explain various movements that are as reactionary as the Ku Klux Klan but not necessarily race-based. My case from East Asia suggests that these theories are not only useful to explain the movements that mobilize out of perceived threats based on interracial competition but also to explain movements that mobilize threats that have emerged from the power decline at the international level. Thus, I suggest the extension of the theory to analyze movements in which similar perceptions of threat result from status and power devaluation that arise from macro-level change other than inter-racial competition.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: “EAST ASIA” FOR JAPANESE

This thesis examined the “mainstreaming of the right” phenomenon in Japanese society using the rise of the new right-wing social movement as a case. The analysis explored the characteristics unique to the resurgence of the right-wing movement in Japan. In Chapter 2, I explored the character of the new right-wing movement in Japan in relation to the traditional and foreign movements. The analysis suggested that they had recruited participants from people of diverse social backgrounds, and an online recruiting scheme enabled them to do mass recruitment. Nevertheless, I argued that the reasons participants were interested in the movement should deserve attention. This analysis suggested that while the US and Soviet Union used to be the central concern of Japan’s right, their interests have shifted to issues related to East Asia in the last few decades. In addition, the literature suggests that it is the character of the Japanese case that the historical, political and economic relationships with neighboring countries have affected right-wing activism more than in America and Europe.

In Chapter 3, I explored the reasons East Asia problems mattered for today’s right-wing activists in Japan. In the case of North Korea, activists considered the Japanese government problematic because it failed to exercise its power to solve the abduction problem. South Korea aroused activists because they were firm believers in the revisionist perspective of history and they felt it unfair that South Korea demanded that Japan apologize and compensate for things that, they believe, are not Japan’s responsibilities. Activists were afraid of China because of its large population, which could be used to influence economy, politics and culture. I pointed out that right-wing activists have the shared assumption that Chinese and Koreans are distinctive ethnic groups different from Japanese. The unique concept of China-Centrism illustrated the way they justify their racist assumption.

Drawing on the findings presented in Chapter 3, I attempted a maximum interpretation of the rise of the right phenomenon in contemporary Japan in Chapter 4. Guided by the theoretical perspective that sees right-wing movements as reactions to threats perceived by certain populations in society, I argued that Japan's new right-wing mobilization should be understood as the result of Japan's power decline in East Asia. Decline of Japan's economic, political, and symbolic power in East Asia created the new perception of threat among some Japanese. Through their encounters with various conflicts that I call the East Asia problems, that sense was channeled into more aggressive sentiments against the East Asian neighbors. It also created a sense of symbolic threats. The right-wing movement, through its strategic framing, turned this sense of resentment into a basis for mobilization. Thus, it was the macro-level economic and political changes in East Asia that enabled the success of the new right-wing movement. The new right-wing movement was new because it seized the new opportunities emerging from the new political-economic environment. Meanwhile, it also held old beliefs, as racism against Chinese and Koreans has been persisting in Japanese society for a long time. Therefore, we also need to recognize that the right-wing movement used unchanging racist sentiments already present in society.

In closing, let me note a few points regarding the future of the "mainstreaming of the right" phenomenon in Japan. On the one hand, the movement from which this study's data were drawn has already lost its momentum and perhaps will decline. On the other hand, when we see things in a broader perspective, there are possibilities that this kind of sentiment will continue to grow, and that even more radical activism will emerge.

There are some obstacles that might prevent the new right-wing movement from growing. First, there have been counter protests that emerged from the civil society of the left. The

flourishing of various kinds of activism after the triple disaster that hit Japan in March 2011, most notably the anti-nuclear protests, made active counter protests against the new right-wing movement possible. Recently, a few organizations such as the Counter-Racist Action Collective have been founded specifically to counter the new right-wing movement. Active participants in these counter protests are also committed activists in other kinds of social activism. For example, Noma Yasumichi, the leader of the Counter-Racist Action Collective, is an activist who became famous because of his leading role in the anti-nuclear protests. Immediately after the disaster, he started his involvement in the online-based anti-nuclear activism TwitNoNukes. Then, as one of the core members, he founded a network of various social movement organizations called the Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes to organize a series of large protests in front of the Prime Minister's residence. As Noma's involvement suggests, the counter protests against the new right-wing movements were shaped because of other flourishing social activism. This effectively obstructed the new right-wing movement.

Second, the most significant obstacle to the new right-wing movement's further development was that authorities started seeing it as problematic. People who were involved in counter protests such as Arita Yoshifu of the Democratic Party of Japan and intellectuals like the political scientist Gono Ikuo framed the new right-wing movement as violating human rights. They appealed that Japan needed to deal with this kind of problem seriously as Tokyo had been running for the election to host the Summer Olympics in 2020, and had won that right. Their appeals for the international moral standard pressured authorities, both political and judicial, to take actions against the right-wing movement. Even conservative politicians such as Prime Minister Abe, who in many ways shares the vision of the new right-wing, started criticizing the movement. In December 2014, the Japanese Supreme Court ruled that Zaitokukai's activism



constituted racial discrimination in reference to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and ordered Zaitokukai to pay about US \$120,000 as compensation to the victims of their 2009 protest in front of a Korean ethnic school in Kyoto. As the leader of the organization, Sakurai complained that the compensation was unfairly expensive for this sort of case (Sakurai 2013), and apparently the court's decision was intended to have severe punitive damages. The compensation plus the cost of the litigation struggle deteriorated the organization's financial situations. It also damaged the public image of the movement seriously. It seems to hold true that right-wing and ethnic violence can be prevented if authorities are serious in repressing them (Blee 2002; Cunningham 2013). Furthermore, the growth of the movement had started slowing down even before the counter protests and the court ruling. Regarding the leading organization of Zaitokukai, the powerful founding leader of Sakurai Makoto has recently stepped down from the position of president. Hence, there are many indications that suggest the decline of the movement in the near future.

At the same time, we cannot be too optimistic about the future of the "mainstreaming of the right" phenomenon. There are two reasons that, based on my analysis, the kind of nationalistic sentiments that supported the mobilization of the new right-wing activism are likely to continue to grow. First, my analysis suggested that the "mainstreaming of the right" has structural roots. As Japan's relative power in the existing regional economy of East Asia keeps declining there will always be a population who has a sense of threat, which will provide opportunities for right-wing movements to attract participants. Second, it can easily be inferred that as long as East Asia problems exist, they will continue to fuel the anger of a certain population. Unfortunately, most of the East Asia problems are not likely to be resolved in the foreseeable future. Thus, I anticipate that the "mainstreaming of the right" phenomenon will

continue to exist in Japan at least for a short while. It is also possible that more radical social movements will emerge. Eventually, what this problem forces us to think about is how the Japanese perception of Chinese, Koreans and themselves has (or has not) changed in the last several decades. A part of the problem is, as it was shown, that not an insignificant number of Japanese still share the kind of perception of East Asia that the nationalists of the pre-World War II period conceptualized. While the new right-wing movement has seized the opportunities that have arisen from the new political-economic environment, it is, at the same time, only the newest expression of a traditional sentiment. Now, at about 70 years after World War II, East Asia problems continue to create hostilities between these countries; yet, I hope that they also provide opportunities for Japanese to self-reflect critically on the way Japanese have been seeing their East Asian neighbors.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1. Activists' Profile

ID	Age	Age (Specific)	Gender	Education	Occupation	Source
1	30 - 39	38	M	Advanced Degree	High-White	Yasuda
2	40 - 49	49	M	Four-year University	High-White	Yasuda
3	20 - 29	29	F	Four-year University	Low-White	Yasuda
4	30 - 39		M	Four-year University	Self-Employed	Yasuda
5	20 - 29	27	M	Four-year University	High-White	Yasuda
6	20 - 29	25	M	Four-year University	Full-time Activist	Yasuda
7	50 - 59	58	M	Four-year University	Self-Employed	Yasuda
8	50 - 59	57	M	Four-year University	Low-White	Yasuda
9	40 - 49	44	M	Four-year University	High-White	Yasuda
10	60 - 69	62	M	College Drop Out	High-White	Yasuda
11	30 - 39	34	M	College Drop Out	High-White	Yasuda
12	20 - 29	28	M	Four-year University	High-White	Yasuda
13	30 - 39	39	M	Two-year university and technical college	Low-Blue	Yasuda
14	30 - 39	32	M	Two-year university and technical college	Low-Blue	Yasuda
15	30 - 39	35	M	High School	Low-Blue	Yasuda
16	30 - 39	39	M	High School	Low-White	Yasuda
17	40 - 49	40	M	High School	Low-Blue	Yasuda
18	40 - 49	47	M	High School	Self-Employed	Yasuda
19	30 - 39	36	M	High School	Full-time Activist	Yasuda
20	40 - 49	45	M	High School	Low-White	Yasuda
21	20 - 29	27	M	High School		Yasuda
22	40 - 49	42	M	High School	Low-White	Yasuda
23	20 - 29	21	M	High School	Low-White	Yasuda
24	20 - 29	24	M	High School	High-Blue	Yasuda
25	30 - 39	35	F	High School Drop Out	Low-White	Yasuda
26	40 - 49	42	M	High School Drop Out	Low-Blue	Yasuda
27	10 to 19	14	M	Middle School or Less	Student	Yasuda
28	50 - 59	54	M		Low-White	Yasuda
29	30 - 39	32	M		High-Blue	Yasuda
30	20 - 29	28	F		Low-White	Yasuda
31	40 - 49	41	M		Low-Blue	Yasuda
32	30 - 39		F		Low-White	Yasuda
33	30 - 39		M		Self-Employed	Yasuda
34	40 - 49		M		Low-White	Yasuda
35	30 - 39		M		Low-White	Yasuda
36	30 - 39	32	F		Low-Blue	Yasuda
37	50 - 59				Self-Employed	Yasuda
38	20 - 29	25	M			Yasuda
39	30 - 39	31	F	Advanced Degree	High-White	Other
40	30 - 39	34	M	Four-year University	Self-Employed	Other
41	20 - 29	20	M	Four-year University	Student	Other
42	10 to 19	19	F	Four-year University	Student	Other
43	10 to 19	18	M	High School Drop Out		Other
44	40 - 49	49	M		High-White	Other
45	50 - 59	54	M		High-White	Other
46	40 - 49	45	M		Low-White	Other
47	20 - 29	25	M		Unemployed	Other
48	30 - 39	34	M		Self-Employed	Other
49	40 - 49		M		Low-White	Other
50	30 - 39	39	M		Low-White	Other
51	20 - 29		M		Low-White	Other
52	20 - 29	25	M		Low-White	Other
53	20 - 29	26	M		Low-Blue	Other
54	20 - 29	26	F		Low-White	Other
55	20 - 29	27	M		Low-White	Other
56	20 - 29	28	M		Low-White	Other
57	30 - 39	33	M		Low-White	Other
58	20 - 29		M		Student	Other
59	40 - 49	41	F		High-White	Other
60	30 - 39		M	High School		Higuchi
61	30 - 39		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
62	20 - 29		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
63	20 - 29		F	Four-year University		Higuchi
64	20 - 29		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
65	30 - 39		M	Four-year University		Higuchi

66	40 - 49		M	High School		Higuchi
67	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
68	40 - 49		F	Four-year University		Higuchi
69	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
70	50 - 59		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
71	50 - 59		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
72	30 - 39		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
73	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
74	20 - 29		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
75	20 - 29		F	High School		Higuchi
76	20 - 29		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
77	30 - 39		M	High School		Higuchi
78	30 - 39		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
79	30 - 39		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
80	40 - 49		M	High School		Higuchi
81	40 - 49		M	Two-year university and technical college		Higuchi
82	30 - 39		M	Advanced Degree		Higuchi
83	40 - 49		M	Two-year university and technical college		Higuchi
84	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
85	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
86	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
87	40 - 49		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
88	50 - 59		M	High School		Higuchi
89	50 - 59		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
90	60 - 69		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
91	60 - 69		M	Four-year University		Higuchi
92	30 - 39		M	High School	Low-White	Asahina
93	60 - 69	66	M	Two-year university and technical college	High-White	Asahina
94	20 - 29	28	M	High School	Self-Employed	Asahina
95	40 - 49	45	M	Two-year university and technical college	Low-White	Asahina
96	30 - 39	39	M	High School	Self-Employed	Asahina
97	30 - 39	33	M	Two-year university and technical college	Self-Employed	Asahina
98	30 - 39	31	F	High School	Unemployed	Asahina
99	20 - 29	53	M	Four-year University	Unemployed	Asahina
100	20 - 29	28	M	Four-year University	Low-White	Asahina
101	40 - 49		F	Two-year university and technical college	Low-White	Asahina
102	20 - 29	21	M	Two-year university and technical college	Full-time Activist	Asahina
103			F	Two-year university and technical college	Self-Employed	Asahina
104	40 - 49		M	Two-year university and technical college	Self-Employed	Asahina

White 22  
Blue 6  
Self-Employed 4  
Student 2