

5 The ‘Pro-Establishment’ Radical Right

Japan’s Nativist Movement Reconsidered

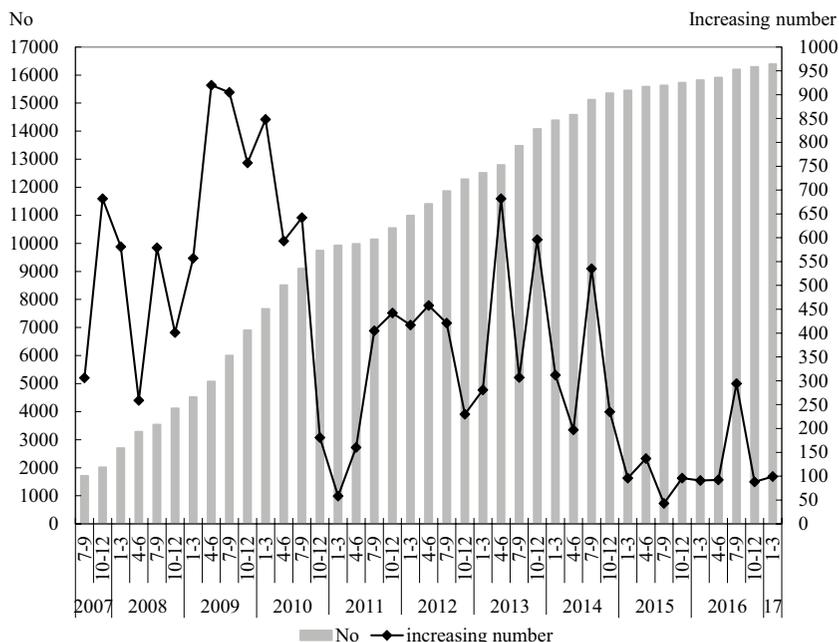
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Abstract

Japan has witnessed the rise of nativist demonstrations and hate crimes since the late 2000s, leading the Diet to enact the country’s first anti-racism law in 2016. The aim of this chapter is to examine the pro-establishment nature of Japan’s nativist movement. The movement often criticizes the ruling right-wing establishment but should be regarded as a detachment force of the establishment in two ways. First, Japanese nativism is a variant of historical revisionism and the emergence of nativist violence is a ‘by-product’ of the rise of historical revisionism among the right-wing establishment in post-Cold War Japan. Although the nativist movement and the right-wing establishment are not directly associated with each other, the former took full advantage of the discursive opportunity opened by the latter. Second, the general public favours the nativist movement as part of the conservative establishment.

Keywords: xenophobia, radical right, Zainichi Koreans, racism, nationalism

On 11 April 2009, 200 demonstrators marched around an apartment of an undocumented Filipino family in Warabi (a suburban city of Tokyo), shouting, ‘Illegal families get out!’ This was organized by a nativist group named Zainichi Tokken o yurusanai Shimin no Kai (Association of Citizens against the Special Privileges of Koreans in Japan, hereafter Zaitokukai) established in 2007. This demonstration was rather exceptional for Zaitokukai, whose main target is Koreans in Japan, but became a catalyst for a dramatic increase

Figure 5.1 Changes in Zaitokukai membership

Source: Zaitokukai website (now closed)

in its membership (see Figure 5.1),¹ having grown into the largest and the most well-known amongst nativist groups with more than 15,000 members.² It was sympathetic public opinion to the Filipino family that paradoxically enhanced the visibility of Zaitokukai: its stance strongly resonated with those who disagreed with this trend.

On 3 June 2018, when nativists held a gathering in Kawasaki, a city known for being home to a Korea town, 400 anti-racist protesters surrounded 30 nativists and shouted, 'Racists go home!' keeping them out from a building planned for the venue. After a small scuffle between the two groups, nativists realized they had lost and finally brought the gathering to a halt.

Things had changed in the nine years between the two incidents. Although Japan has a long history of right-wing movements, their core ideologies were

1 However, this figure accounts for members who have registered by email; there is no obligation to disclose information concerning individuals or the payment of fees. Consequently, it would be more accurate to say that there are over 15,000 registered individuals rather than members.

2 Although there have been more than a dozen nativist organizations (Gill 2018), other groups failed not only to recruit a large number of members but to attract public attention.

anti-communism and emperor-centred nationalism, having been rather indifferent to nativism.³ It seems, therefore, Zaitokukai came to the fore out of the blue, targeting Koreans who were a well-integrated ethnic minority in Japan. Although Zaitokukai claims Korean residents enjoy 'special privileges,' such as special permanent residency, the issuing of subsidies to Korean schools, favourable welfare provisions and the alias system (use of Japanese names), this is no more than a groundless rumour. Nevertheless, Japan saw the rise of Zaitokukai and this shocked many Japanese because it was the country's first nativist movement organizing anti-immigrant demonstrations.

The rise of anti-racist countermobilization in 2013 also surprised people enough to win the attention of the general public (Higuchi 2020).⁴ Since then, 'hate speech' has been a buzzword to describe behaviour like that shown by Zaitokukai. A Diet member group of the opposition was also established in May 2013 to urge the ruling coalition to legislate an anti-discrimination law. The ruling conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was reluctant to enact any anti-discrimination laws, but it finally yielded to the opposition, passing the Hate Speech Elimination Law in May 2016. Although the effectiveness of this law is limited, because it neither prohibits hate speech nor punishes it (Martin 2018), this is still a remarkable change all the more because it is Japan's premier law against racism.

After Zaitokukai founder Makoto Sakurai⁵ resigned in order to take responsibility for a physical assault against an anti-racism activist by Zaitokukai members at the end of 2014, the group quickly deteriorated. Figure 5.1 shows that few members have joined Zaitokukai since January 2015, except for a short period immediately after the enforcement of the Hate Speech Elimination Law, although it managed to overcome the first crisis at the end of 2010 when several members were arrested and charged with forcible obstruction of business.⁶ Finally, Zaitokukai stopped updating its webpage in

3 Here nativism refers to 'an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-states' (Mudde 2007: 19).

4 The countermovement was initiated by a few anti-nuclear activists, but it has been a spontaneous protest independent on any groups. Recruited by social media, thousands of people – including Japanese leftists, Koreans, K-pop fans, and even right-wing activists – have protested against Zaitokukai events.

5 In 2003, Makoto Sakurai (1973-) started his right-wing activity as a blogger posting anti-Korea content when he was a part-time worker in a municipality office of Tokyo. He is now the leader of the Japan First Party, which backed a dozen of candidates in local elections in April 2019 but failed to gain a seat.

6 In 2010, they attacked a Korean school in Kyoto and also crashed into the office of Tokushima's teacher's union.

June 2017, and its activities came to a standstill. Although Sakurai launched another organization named the Japan First Party in 2017, aimed to field candidates for local elections, the movement was no longer able to recover its momentum.

The aim of this chapter is to reconsider the origins, nature, and breadth and depth of the power base of Japan's nativist movement. At first glance, Japan successfully forestalled the expansion of nativist groups. However, it is misleading if we regard them analogous to the European anti-establishment radical right, because the key to understanding Japan's nativist movement and its support base is their pro-establishment nature. Thus, I examine the hypothesis that behind the rise of the nativist movement lie changing interests of the right-wing establishment.⁷ More precisely, I argue that this is a 'by-product' of the rise of historical revisionism among the right-wing establishment in Japan.

In this chapter, I distinguish three types of actors⁸: (1) the nativist movement as the new radical right, (2) rightist politicians (mostly of the ruling LDP) and organizations around the Japan Conference⁹ as the right-wing establishment, and (3) the LDP as a whole as the conservative establishment. The religious right and groups of war veterans (and their families) make up the organizational base for the right-wing establishment. The religious right is composed of Shinto and Buddhist organizations, including a considerable number of related cults (regarding the orientations of the religious right, see Ho, in this volume). These are characterized by strong political influence in close association with the LDP (Higuchi 2018). The religious right insists on historical revisionism as well as traditional

7 Here the nativist movement is defined as a social movement based on an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-states (Mudde 2007: 19). The radical right in Japan refers to societal groups or parties that adopt nationalism and nativism/historical revisionism/traditionalism/anti-communism as their policies, to the far right of mainstream conservatives (Higuchi 2018). The definition of a 'right-wing establishment' is political elites who are hawkish but still belong to the mainstream.

8 Although Japan's radical right has a three-layered structure (Higuchi 2018), I will not refer to survivors of pre-war fascist organizations in this chapter. In post-war Japan, they created the public image of the radical right. Members of such organizations who held public office were purged in the process of post-war demilitarization by the US occupation power, but they kept close relationships with the conservative establishment (Szymkowiak and Steinhoff 1995). They also include quasi-outlaw cadres with connections to the mafia, making mass mobilization impossible (Smith 2014). But their anti-communist claims lost legitimacy and they have been on a course of decline in the post-Cold War period.

9 Nippon Kaigi (The Japan Conference), the largest nationalist group in Japan, was launched in 1997.

ethics and emperor-centred nationalism, but has been rather indifferent to migrants and ethnic minorities.

At first sight, the nativist movement differs greatly from the right-wing establishment. Although some activists back their favourite politicians, the movement has little contact with the right-wing establishment, distancing itself from the 'established'-style radical right. In addition, the nativist movement often opposes policies of the ruling LDP, while the right-wing establishment has been staying in line with it. However, I argue nativists took full advantage of the opportunity that the right-wing establishment opened, which brought about the rise of the movement.

Discursive Opportunities: An Analytical Viewpoint

The notion of 'political opportunity structure' is widely used to explain the relation between social movements and politics. The basic premise of this is that the rise and fall of social movements are usually mediated by politics, which not only facilitates or constrains mobilization but also characterizes the nature of movements. Among the five important dimensions classified by Tarrow (1998: 76) (opening of access, political realignments, split within the elite, influential allies and declining capacity to repress dissent), influential allies have been the most important factor for Japan's right-wing movement because it has been in close association with the LDP's right-wing politicians. However, given that the nativist movement lacks contact with political elites, it is difficult to explain the rise of the movement in relation to institutional aspects of political opportunities. Instead, I focus on discursive opportunities that have provided favourable conditions for the nativist movement (Koopmans and Muis 2009; Koopmans and Statham 1999). Discursive opportunities refer to 'institutionally anchored ways of thinking that provide a gradient of relative political acceptability to specific packages of ideas' (Ferre 2003: 309). They prescribe which cause will stand out in a given political system at a given time; the credibility of a construction of reality; and the legitimacy of demands (Koopmans and Statham 1999: 228).

Activists can more easily gain visibility, resonance and legitimacy by constructing movements in accordance with elite discourse, as is the case with the rise of violence against asylum seekers and the revision of asylum rights in Germany in the 1990s (Koopmans and Olzak 2004). This issue was a matter of maximum priority for politicians and the media for a year and a half and radical right violence increased, taking advantage of controversy over asylum

seekers. The radical right adjusted themselves to the political circumstances that had caused asylum seekers to be perceived as an unbearable burden by some in Germany. Xenophobic violence might not have broken out if the discursive opportunities in Germany had not become anti-immigrant.

In contrast, migration has seldom attracted political interest in Japan, as I will explain later. However, politicians have been repeatedly uttering remarks to justify pre-war Japanese colonization and invasion of neighbouring countries (Wakamiya 2006). Regardless of whether or not the term 'hatred of Koreans' (*kenkan*) is used, a Japanese-style orientalism towards Korea is deeply rooted both politically and socially. However, even if we regard this enduring common fault of Japanese society as the cause, it cannot explain the rise of the nativist movement in the late 2000s. We need to focus on changes in discursive opportunities over several decades. I argue the rise of historical revisionism served as a fertile ground for the nativist movement.

Data

In this chapter, I use a series of data related to the radical right in Japan.¹⁰

Data (1): I used the blog of Zaitokukai founder Makoto Sakurai. Because Sakurai's blog covers events from the beginning of the formation of the nativist movement and posts links to information about related events, information that is essential to coding can be gathered from it. Using this method, I collected information about 1,006 protest events occurring between 2007 and 2012.

Data (2): This data examines the interests of the right-wing establishment with the aim of elucidating the changes in its designation of enemies. I listed the titles, from 1982 to 2015, of issues of the major right-wing monthly journals *Shokun!* and *Seiron*, to which many right-wing politicians contributed: articles by the current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe appeared in these journals 42 times from 1993 to 2015.¹¹ I used the data to deal with discourse that was further to the right than that of the conservative establishment.

Data (3): I use the data of an online survey we conducted with 77,084 greater Tokyo residents in December 2017.¹² These data are used to map public sentiment towards social movements, political parties and foreign countries.

10 For details of the data used, see Higuchi (2016: Appendix) and Satō et al. (2018). Data collection was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 17H01005.

11 As *Shokun!* ceased publication in 2009; I replaced it with *Will* from that point onwards.

12 This survey was supported by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (grant-in-aid for Scientific Research (A) 17H01005) in collaboration with Shun Harada, Yuko Hirabayashi, Barbara

Data (4): I conducted interviews with 34 activists in the nativist movement from February 2011 to October 2012. Throughout my fieldwork, I asked activists to tell me their life histories leading to their participation in the movement. The attributes of participants were: gender – 4 females and 30 males; age – four people in their 20s, thirteen in their 30s, eleven in their 40s, four in their 50s, and two in their 60s.

The Nativist Movement in the Right-wing Discursive Space

Opening Discursive Opportunities towards East Asia

As Koopmans argues, it is assumed that the nativist movement developed in a given discursive space. Thus, we need first to trace how it changed over time by illustrating the interests of the right-wing journals through two graphs. Figure 5.2 plots the changes in the frequency with which the Soviet Union/Russia, China, South Korea and North Korea appear in articles. Two broad changes emerge for the 1990s and the 2000s from this graph. Throughout the 1980s, the frequency for the Soviet Union, then the imaginary enemy of Japan, remained at a high level. Conversely, East Asian countries (China, South Korea and North Korea) appeared in only 4.8% of articles in the 1980s.

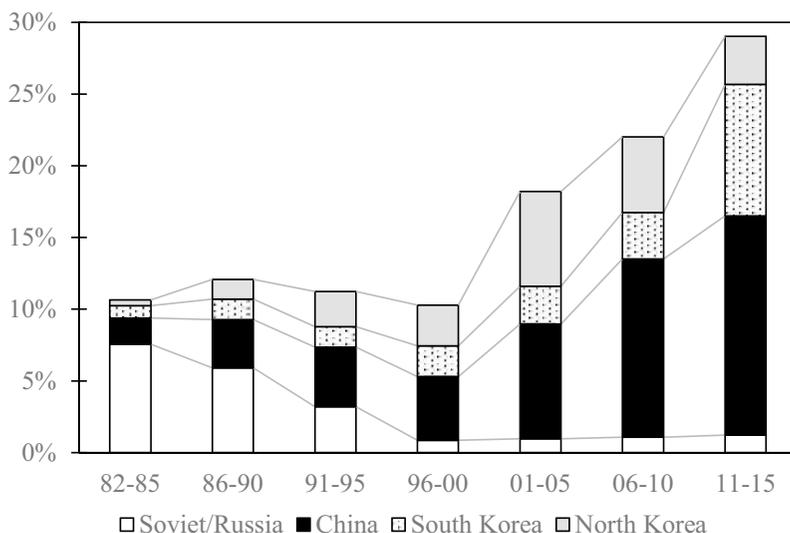
This was to change in the 1990s: although the Soviet Union continued to be of interest until its dissolution, after that point its ratio dropped dramatically and failed to return to its former levels.¹³ In the 1990s, right-wing journals lost interest in foreign countries, and in 2000 the figure for all four countries combined fell below 10%. However, signs of the changes that would take off in the 2000s were already visible in the 1990s, and Figure 5.3 shows the direction that this discourse was taking. Until the mid-1980s, the number of articles related to military affairs and defence sometimes exceeded 10%. After the end of the Cold War, military affairs and defence ceased to make up the central concerns of the right-wing establishment, and in their place history-related articles exceeded 10% for the first time in 1997. One of the background factors to this was the fact that the right-leaning *Sankei Shimbun Co.*,¹⁴ which

Holthus, Mitsuru Matsutani, Kikuko Nagayoshi, Hiroshi Ohata, Keiichi Satō and Woncheol Sung. Preliminary results are shown Satō et al. (2018).

¹³ The decreasing presence of the Soviet Union resulted in a striking reduction in discursive opportunities for old radical right groups, and may be seen as one of the causes of their decline.

¹⁴ *Sankei* is the smallest of Japan's five national newspapers and most clearly expresses rightist opinions.

Figure 5.2 Frequencies of appearance of countries in right-wing journal articles, 1982-2015

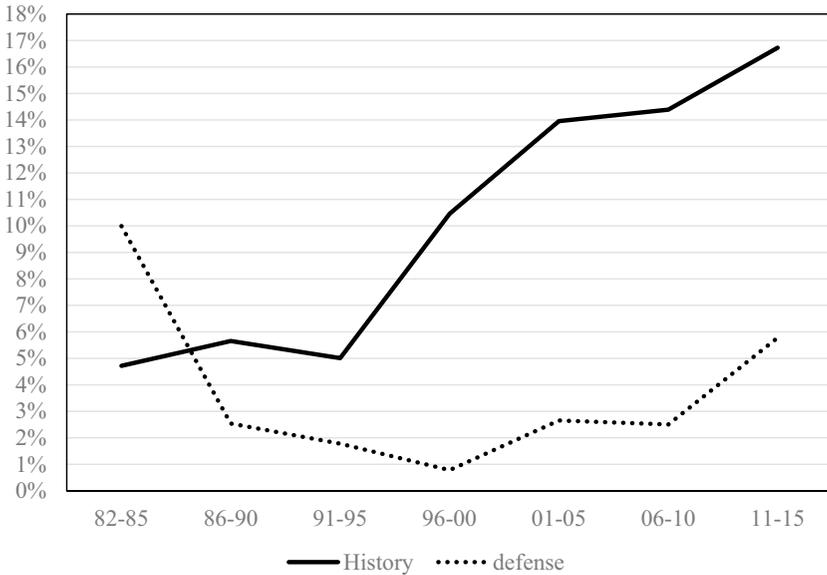


Source: Own analysis, for details see data (2) in the section on data sources

publishes *Seiron*, was backing new revisionist history textbooks in this year. The increasing importance of historical issues and the additional steady increase in the proportion of those related to foreign countries occurred from the second half of the 1990s, and this focus remains unchanged to the present day.

Figure 5.2 also shows the beginning of an increase in articles about foreign countries following the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in New York, and a further increase with the 2002 visit to North Korea by Prime Minister Koizumi. This is not just a matter of passing interest: these articles reached and maintained a level of over 20%. The only exception came at the time of the drubbing handed out by the change of the government from the conservative LDP to the centrist Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) when it took office in 2009. With the advent of this century, there was an increase, amongst articles related to foreign countries, to around 20% of articles related to East Asia. Furthermore, leaving aside North Korea in 2003, which breathed new life into the abduction issue, it was China that attracted overwhelming attention (see the introduction by Chiavacci and Grano, in this volume). In line with the hypothesis presented in the introduction, East Asian countries had come to be seen as the biggest enemies.

Figure 5.3 The rise of history as an issue for the radical right



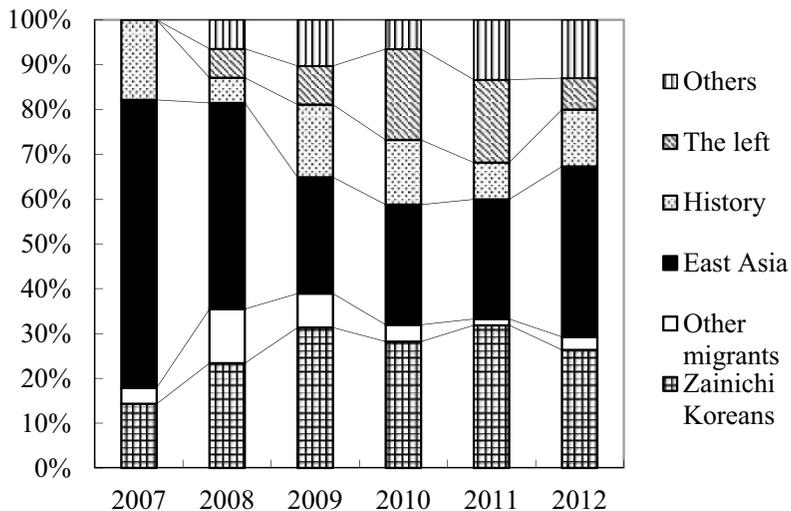
Source: Own analysis, for details see data (2) in the section on data sources

Japan’s Nativist Movement as a Detachment Force of the Right-wing Establishment

When we compare the topics of right-wing journals and events by the nativist movement in Figures 5.4 and 5.5, we find both similarity and difference between the two. Nevertheless, the targets of Zaitokukai and right-wing journals roughly shifted together in the following ways. (1) Events and articles targeting East Asia fell in 2009 and then shot up in 2012, because both relentlessly bashed the DPJ government as a new threat during its rule for three years. (2) History-related events and articles increased in 2009 to champion Toshio Tamogami, the former Chief of Staff of Japan’s Air Self-Defense Force who caused a problem by presenting a revisionist article, but the proportion fell once again in the following year.

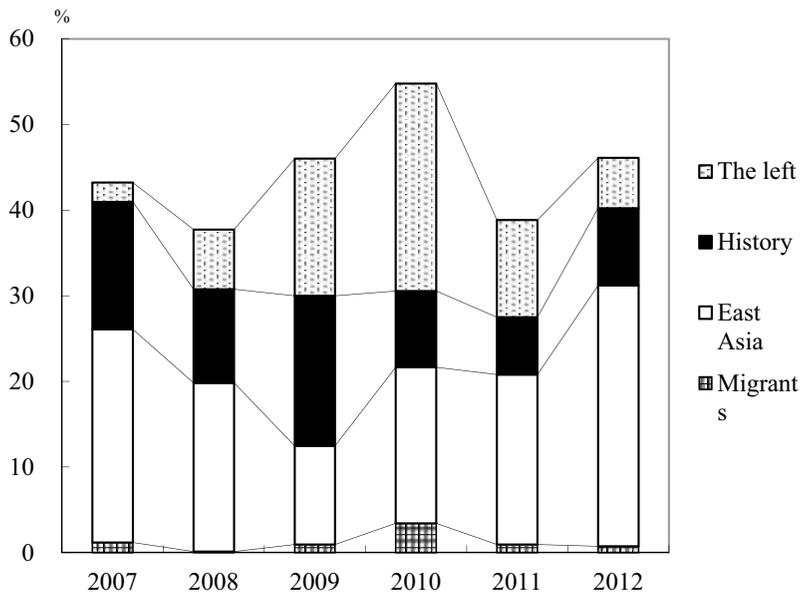
This is an unexpected result, because the primary goal of the nativist movement is expulsion of Koreans in Japan as the name of Zaitokukai alludes. In fact, its targets are more varied. Figure 5.4 shows targets of events organized by Zaitokukai. In total, 28% of events called for attacking Koreans in Japan and 4% against other migrants such as Chinese and Filipinos. As a result, events targeting ethnic minorities were outnumbered by those related to neighbouring countries (33%): nearly half (45%) of events were related to history and East Asia.

Figure 5.4 Issues in events related to Zaitokukai, 2007-2012



Source: Own analysis, for details see data (1) in the section on data sources

Figure 5.5 Topics of right-wing journals, 2007-2012



Source: Own analysis, for details see data (2) in the section on data sources

This is because the core idea of the nativist movement is rooted in historical revisionism. The movement primarily followed the way paved by the right-wing establishment and then took its own line. The primary goal of Zaitokukai is to repeal the Special Immigration Control Act legislated for Koreans because they say it is a symbol that Koreans are bestowed 'special privileges.' This legal status is applied to those who are former colonial citizens and their descendants who have been living in Japan since before Japan's defeat in World War II. Under US military rule, the Japanese government stopped allowing these people (mostly Koreans) the right to choose their nationality. When the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect in 1952, former colonial citizens lost their Japanese citizenship, making their legal status unstable. Japan's reluctance to grant rights to former colonial citizens, as well as the division of the Korean peninsula, delayed fixing the legal status of Korean residents. Finally, Japan-South Korea bilateral negotiations reached an agreement to legislate the Special Immigration Control Act in 1991. Insistent criticism by Zaitokukai of the law exemplifies its revisionist desire to erase a dark chapter in Japan's history by expelling Koreans.

This is the most salient characteristic of Japan's nativism, which should be regarded as a variant of historical revisionism that tries to justify the disgraceful history of modern Japan. The rights and status of Koreans have been associated with the history of their migration under colonial rule, which reminds the Japanese of things they would rather forget. This is why the nativist movement persists in its focus on Koreans: a web poll conducted by Zaitokukai also showed that of the 5,272 people who voted 78% (4,123 people) said the country that they 'hate the most' was South Korea (with 12% for China and 4% for North Korea).¹⁵ While anti-China and anti-Chinese movements have also been organized, these mobilized only a very small number of people, failing to attract attention. Koreans are well integrated into Japanese society and their population has now been overwhelmed by other immigrants,¹⁶ but they are the sole group that evokes the issue of colonial settlement.

15 The result of the vote was retrieved from the following webpage: http://www.zaitokukai.info/modules/xoops/poll/pollresults.php?poll_id=78 (6 June 2013).

16 Korean nationals number 452,701 or 17% of the total foreign population in Japan, according to the Ministry of Justice: 'Statistics on the Foreigners Registered in Japan' (<https://www.e-stat.go.jp/stat-search/files?page=1&layout=datalist&lid=000001216283>, retrieved 28 April 2019). They were the largest nationality group until this population was exceeded by Chinese nationals in 2007.

Table 5.1 Events leading to nativist movement membership

Classification	Actual motive	N	
"Foreigner problem"	Contact with foreign workers	2	6
	Legalization for a Filipino family	2	
	Voting rights for foreigners	1	
	Hostility toward Korean residents	1	
South Korea	Sport (Soccer World Cup, Olympics)	2	2
North Korea	Abduction issue	4	4
China	Territorial dispute over Senkaku Islands	1	5
	Anti-Japanese demonstrations in China	1	
	Tianemen Square incident	1	
	Beijing Olympics	2	
Historical revisionism		8	8
Others		9	9
Total		34	34

Source: Own analysis, for details see data (3) in the section on data sources

Such features also shape people's journey to nativist activism. Whilst all of the activists I met were keen to talk about how Koreans are harmful to Japan, the impetus for their activism varied. Although they became nativists, most of them did not recognize the 'evil conduct of Koreans' until joining the movement.¹⁷ Some had negative feelings towards Koreans, but most had gone about their lives without paying any attention to them: the majority of the activists I met did not have contact with foreigners living in Japan. Table 5.1 shows the results of Data 4, in which only six out of 34 activists whom I interviewed indicated hostility towards migrants or foreign residents as their initial interest leading to activism: antipathy towards neighbouring countries served as impetus for eleven, and eight felt sympathy with historical revisionism. Negative feelings towards neighbouring countries and historical revisionism are mutually reinforcing – repeated criticisms from South Korea and China easily turned historical revisionism into hate

17 Makoto Sakurai, the founder of Zaitokukai, also started his activity as an anti-South Korea blogger and then started to accuse Koreans in Japan.

towards neighbouring countries, and those who felt antipathy towards Japan's neighbours accepted historical revisionism when they regarded these criticisms as unjustifiable intervention in domestic affairs.

Thus far there is nothing different between the right-wing establishment and the new radical right. The notion of discursive opportunities is based on the premise that the culture of social movements borrows part of the dominant culture and, for that reason, it operates under structural constraints (see Steinberg 1999). Most of the discourse of the nativist movement also can be seen as having been taken from the discourse of the right-wing establishment. It is not that the discourse of the right-wing establishment and the nativist movement are directly linked, but that of the latter can increase its appeal by appropriating that of the former.

Nativism as a Variant of Historical Revisionism

Nevertheless, the discourse of the nativist movement is more than a simple repetition of that of the right-wing establishment. It is true that fundamental changes in economic and political conditions in the region lie behind the rise of East Asian countries as adversaries (Chiavacci and Obinger 2018). During long-term economic stagnation since the 1990s, Japan began to view China and South Korea as economic rivals. The rise of China as a military superpower also brought about favourable conditions for the nativist movement (see the introduction by Chiavacci and Grano, in this volume).

In fact, Japan is a country of rather weak anti-immigrant sentiment (Igarashi and Nagayoshi 2019), making xenophobic claims unconvincing. A minor exception is anxiety about 'foreigner crime.' In Japan at the end of the 1980s, migrants or foreigners were basically seen as 'workers' looking for better-paid jobs under Japan's booming economy. By the latter half of the 1990s, they began to be criminalized by the National Police Agency (NPA) that emphasized the threat of foreigners to public security (Takaya 2007). As a result, the Japanese public is characterized by strong anxiety about migrants as potential criminals (Simon and Sikich 2007).

However, this neither gave nativists the chance for the rise of their movement nor turned the attention of the right-wing establishment to migration issues. While the nativist movement played a part in campaigns of the right-wing establishment, it is still distinguished by its insistence about Koreans and other migrants. One-third of events by Zaitokukai targeted Koreans and other migrants in Japan, while right-wing journals have been rather indifferent to them. Focus on migration in right-wing journal articles peaked at 3.5% in 2010 when the DPJ government planned to submit a law to grant voting rights

to foreign residents (see Figure 5.5).¹⁸ These journals neither regard migrants or foreigners as a threat nor as a useful tool for political manoeuvring. As a result, right-wing journals have only once referred to the phrase ‘special privileges for Koreans,’ which is the primary concern of Zaitokukai.

So, how did the nativist movement make this half-opened discursive space their own? Table 5.2 simply shows the difference between Koreans and other migrants. Firstly, it indicates that the right-wing establishment showed some interest in foreign workers other than Koreans in the 1980s, although the number of articles is not so large. Almost all related articles appeared between 1988 and 1990, the era in which there were heated debates about introducing foreign workers. The tone of the articles was relatively neutral, discussing the pros and cons of accepting migrants. Since then, the right-wing establishment has lost interest in migration even while the NPA was engaged in a series of campaigns to criminalize migrants from the late 1990s: only one article related to migrants appeared from 1996 to 2000 and five articles from 2001 to 2005. Disregard by the right-wing establishment of migration issues resulted in the lack of successful nativist movements before Zaitokukai. When a right-wing organization named the National Socialist League (copying the Nazis) started an anti-Iranian migrant campaign in the early 1990s, it could neither attract public attention nor recruit new members. It then established an organization named the NPO Movement to Expel Foreigner’s Crimes in 2004, which is one of harbinger groups of Zaitokukai, but this again failed to become a successful movement.

Table 5.2 Number of articles on foreign residents in right-wing journals

	Other migrants	Koreans	South Korea	North Korea	History
1982-1990	19	3	57	46	251
1991-1995	6	12	48	83	169
1996-2000	1	19	77	102	375
2001-2005	5	28	97	244	515
2006-2010	9	42	124	202	551
2011-2015	23	23	374	137	683
Total	63	127	777	814	2544

Source: Own analysis, for details see data (3) in the section on data sources

¹⁸ Then opposition LDP also launched a campaign against voting rights for permanent resident foreigners.

Secondly, Table 5.2 also shows how right-wing journals were much more concerned about Koreans than other migrants between 1991 and 2010. It is no coincidence that an increasing number of articles on Koreans corresponded to those on history and South and North Korea. Articles related to Koreans in Japan focused mostly on three topics. (1) Voting rights for foreigners: the right-wing establishment believed that enfranchisement would risk paving the way for invasion by Koreans as enemies within. (2) Korean intellectuals: the right-wing establishment treated those intellectuals critical of Japanese historical revisionism as enemies. (3) The pro-North Korean community organization Chosen Soren (General Association of Koreans in Japan) and affiliated organizations: the right-wing establishment has been harshly attacking them (Itagaki 2015) each time a conflict breaks out between the two countries (e.g. development of nuclear weapons and abduction of Japanese by North Korea).

Yet the number of articles regarding Koreans in Japan has been much smaller than those dealing with the Korean peninsula and history. This indicates Koreans in Japan have been of secondary importance to the right-wing establishment. This is why harbingers of the nativist movement started from anti-Korea activities, with Zaitokukai founder Makoto Sakurai initially opening his webpage named 'South Korea as the Wonderland' in 2003. The nativist movement then succeeded when it added Koreans in Japan as its main target by expanding the discursive space that the right-wing establishment exploited.

As we can see, a wide array of targets helped to attract people with various motives to the nativist movement. Activists first became interested in the movement in accordance with their own interests, as Table 5.1 indicates. The diversity seen in initial motives of Zaitokukai activists reveals that Japan's nativist movement was born from a mixture of historical revisionism, hostility towards neighbouring countries and xenophobia. After joining the movement, activists learned the core ideology of Zaitokukai to be nativists moving against Koreans as nearby enemies. The core idea was nurtured in cyber space, in which many posted 'evidence' of 'special privileges of Koreans' being systematized, but this idea was basically adapted from discourse of the right-wing establishment (Higuchi 2016).

Public Attitudes towards the Nativist Movement

Geopolitical Conditions Favourable to the Nativist Movement

The mainstreaming of the radical right has become a popular topic (e.g. Akkerman, De Lange and Rooduijn 2016; Minkenberg 2013; Mondon 2013; Mondon and Winter 2017), and scholars often argue that radical right parties

generally started from anti-system, populist or even fascist and pariah status, encountering ostracism by other parties, while some became accepted by mainstreaming themselves, gaining increasing support and seeking political office. Some mainstream parties also began to pedal policies similar to the radical right, while others (although reluctantly) invited them to ruling coalitions. In this sense, Japan's success to drive out the nativist movement seems exceptional.

The reality is quite the contrary: the nativist movement is under siege only because they went too far to be tolerated. Whilst its brutal attacks shocked the general public, its core ideologies – nativism, racism and xenophobia – were relatively supported. Figure 5.6 shows the results of Data 3, which illustrate the scores of feeling thermometers, in which 0 represents the coldest and 100 the hottest, towards social movements, political parties and neighbouring countries.¹⁹ As far as the results of the data indicate, the Japanese general public do not feel negatively towards the nativist movement even since the enactment of the Hate Speech Elimination Law in May 2016. The movement is even slightly (but statistically significantly) more favoured than the leftist anti-national security law movement that mobilized hundreds of thousands of demonstrators surrounding the Parliament House in 2015.²⁰

The favourable public image of the nativist movement comes from antipathy towards neighbouring countries. Our respondents were much more negative about South Korea and China. More than a quarter of them demonstrated the least favourable attitudes (0 degree) towards the two countries. Behind Zaitokukai's self-definition as a 'civic association' organized by 'ordinary citizens' lies latent public support for the movement.²¹ Although their reckless behaviour and escalating hate speech caused the downfall of Zaitokukai, strong antipathy towards Japan's neighbours opened a huge discursive space for nativists.²²

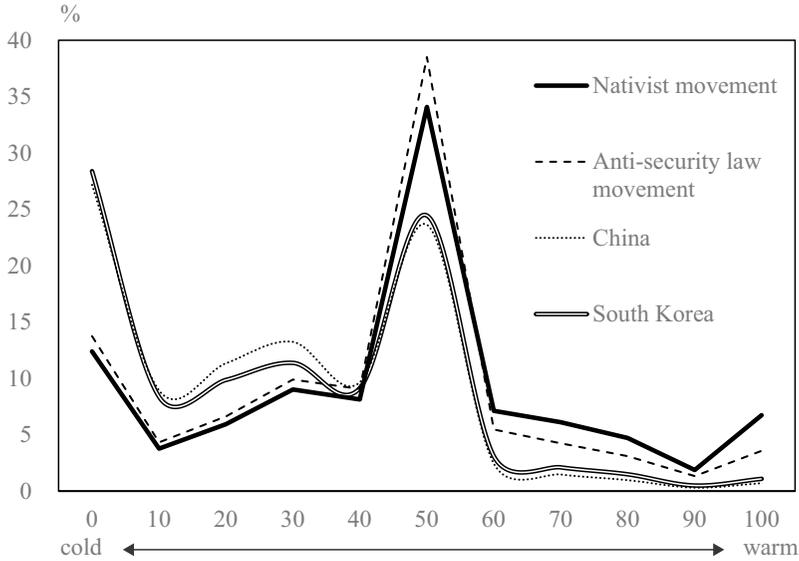
19 For results of a similar survey, see Kobayashi et al. (2015).

20 This will be because of the disparity between the left and the right: 14% of our respondents saw themselves as left-wing and 24% as right-wing. Although the anti-national security movement was widely supported, demographically dominant rightists felt hatred towards it.

21 Japan's radical right disapprove of the use of words such as 'citizen' and 'civic,' which they believe are leftist terms; instead, they preferred words like 'patriot' or 'national.' As a result, Zaitokukai included 'citizens' in its name because its founders wanted to differentiate it from the right-wing establishment and regarded themselves as a rightist rival of leftist civic movements. In this sense, Zaitokukai's idea to include 'citizens' in its organization name was a breakthrough for Japan's radical right movement.

22 This is why I have proposed the notion of Japanese-style nativism, which refers to nativism rooted in relations with Japan's nearest neighbouring countries, and is based on the colonial

Figure 5.6 Scores of feeling thermometer



Source: Own analysis, for details see data (3) in the section on data sources

The Radical Right on the Side of the Establishment

Another feature of the support base for the nativist movement is its pro-establishment nature.²³ I performed an exploratory factor analysis using the same data as Figure 5.6. The analysis of the items shown in Table 5.3, which includes foreign countries, political parties and the nativist movement, resulted in a three-factor solution: East Asia, the Left and the Right. Given Zaitokukai’s strong hostility towards Japan’s neighbours, it is natural that the first three indices (China, South Korea and the nativist movement) comprise a single concept. Feelings towards the nativist movement first depend on East Asian geopolitical conditions: worsening bilateral relations have led to expansion of the support base of the movement. Indeed, hate towards Chinese and Koreans is different from general anti-immigrant sentiment: patriotism heightens the hostility towards them while it is not significantly related to anti-immigrant sentiment (Tanabe 2018).

settlement and the Cold War (Higuchi 2016).

23 The same data also revealed that those who voted for Makoto Sakurai during the Tokyo gubernatorial election in August 2016 showed significantly higher political trust than other respondents (Higuchi et al. 2019).

Table 5.3 Result of exploratory factor analysis

	Factor loadings		
	East Asia	Left	Right
China	0.846	0.118	0.189
South Korea	0.872	0.115	0.119
Nativist movement	-0.614	0.261	0.537
CDP	0.058	0.854	-0.039
JCP	0.097	0.841	-0.137
LDP	0.080	-0.250	0.781
USA	0.200	0.004	0.779
Eigenvalues	2.386	1.566	1.172
% of variance	34.09	22.37	16.74
Factor covariance	Left	0.238	
	Right	-0.075	0.036

Source: Own analysis (method of extraction: principal component factor analysis, factors are extracted from promax rotation), for details see data (3) in the section on data sources

Furthermore, the nativist movement also marked higher factor loadings for the third dimension along with the conservative LDP and the United States. Other surveys have also found a strong correlation between feelings towards the LDP and those towards the United States, which exemplifies support for the post-war Japanese political system characterized by long-term conservative rule and dependence on the United States. At first glance, it seems strange to find the nativist movement belonging to the same dimension, because the nativist movement is composed of grassroots groups organized by outsiders to the political arena (except for a few veterans of old right-wing organizations). However, it should be remembered that the changing enemies of the right-wing establishment brought the nativist movement into the world. They gained strength by taking advantage of the expanded discursive space. A simple look at the protest events hosted by the nativist movement shows that it demonstrates a high level of faithful response to discursive opportunities, and this makes it difficult to deny the political links to the right-wing establishment.

Figure 5.7 also suggests affinity of the nativist movement with the conservative establishment. This is based on the results of Data 3, which

asked respondents their feelings towards the nativist movement and South Korea. I plotted each category's average scores of feeling thermometers towards the former on the horizontal axis and those towards the latter on the vertical axis (0-100 degrees). The result shows that feelings towards the nativist movement and South Korea are negatively correlated. In addition, the nativist movement is far more preferred to South Korea: the average score of the former is 45 degrees and the latter 28 degrees.

Socio-economic status is weakly correlated to the scores of the two: all education background and most occupations concentrate near the intersection of dash lines that indicates average scores.²⁴ Age and gender are more strongly correlated: younger people and women tend to dislike the nativist movement and to feel better about South Korea.²⁵ However, the most statistically dispersed are relations between party support and both scores. Those supporting rightist parties such as the ruling LDP are more favourable to the nativist movement and more unfavourable to South Korea.²⁶

These results show that support for the nativist movement is not based on social class but on party identification; it is neither related either with ethnic competition, nor deprivation.²⁷ Rather, it should be understood as 'pathological normalcy' (Mudde 2010) in the sense that the general public regard the movement as part of the conservative establishment. As we saw in Table 5.3, feeling towards the nativist movement is positively correlated with the conservative establishment and negatively with East Asian countries. The movement bridges sympathy with conservatism and antipathy towards neighbouring countries. In addition, Japanese are much more 'tolerant' of hate speech against Koreans than against other minorities such as women and the disabled (Kohno and Nishizawa 2019), which suggests that the discourse of the nativist movement has legitimacy. The pathological movement is supported as something normal.

The nativist movement was launched in concert with the conservative shift in the LDP in this century (Park 2015) but aimed to stimulate the conservative establishment to be more hawkish from its position on the

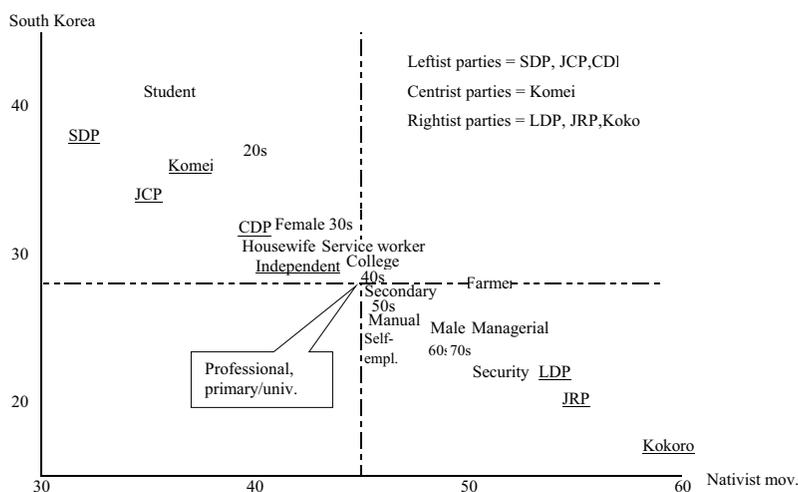
24 Household income and stratum identification are also poorly related to both scores.

25 This is due to the recent growth in the popularity of Korean pop culture.

26 The defeat of the LDP in the 2009 general election brought about new parties on the right of it, as is the case with JRP (Japan Restoration Party) and Kokoro (The Party for Japanese Kokoro). But both have been falling into decline: while JRP is still popular in the Kansai area, Kokoro is moribund.

27 Other studies in Japan also found a weak relationship between social class or economic deprivation and nativism (Higuchi 2019).

Figure 5.7 Scores of feeling thermometers towards the nativist movement and South Korea



Source: Own analysis, for details see data (3) in the section on data sources

right of the right. This is why they call themselves ‘action conservatives’ (Yamaguchi 2013): founders of the nativist movement accuse the right-wing establishment, such as the Japan Conference, of embracing ‘armchair’ activism. They claim other organizations limit themselves to conventional repertoires of action such as gatherings and petitions. Although they share political views with the right-wing establishment, they believe more direct actions are needed to reach their goal.

Conclusion

On 14 October 2018, 130 nativists marched around downtown Tokyo, shouting ‘We don’t need immigrants! LDP, repeal the immigration policy!’ The Japan First Party, established by the leader of Zaitokukai, organized demonstrations in six cities against a new policy to introduce unskilled migrant workers. They explained the background of the demonstration as follows: ‘We decided to start protest actions against the immigration policy by the *centre-left* ruling coalition of the LDP and Komei Party.’²⁸

²⁸ Webpage of the Japan First Party: <https://japan-first.net/news/2018-10-14-hanimin-day/> (11 November 2018). Emphasis added.

Like its European counterparts, which have often been labelled as 'anti-system,' 'protest,' or 'countercultural,' Japan's nativists appear to be protesting the conservative establishment. Given its criticism of Shinzo Abe, the core pillar of the right-wing establishment, it sounds somehow strange to regard Japan's nativist movement as pro-establishment. As we have examined in this chapter, however, Japan's nativists have built a support base to back up the right-wing establishment, which began to look on East Asia as the primary enemy. The root of the problem lies not in anti-immigrant sentiments but in the fact that the nativist movement in Japan took full advantage of deep-rooted support for historical revisionism and hostility towards neighbouring countries among its political elites. Although LDP politicians superficially criticize hate speech by the nativist movement, they have never regarded its historical revisionism as a problem. Such attitudes of the conservative establishment brought about the legitimacy of the nativist movement, just as in Art's (2006) comparison of the German and Austrian cases. He pointed out that Austrians tended to be afraid to face their war responsibilities, regarding themselves as victims of Nazism. Behind the rise of the Austrian radical right lies a political culture tolerant of fascism.

In addition, geopolitical conditions during the Cold War, in which Japan played a new role as the primary ally of the United States in Asia, also excused – at least partly – Japan's crime of colonization prior to World War II. Lukewarm policies regarding the colonial settlement allowed the right-wing establishment to preserve historical revisionism until its legitimacy was heightened in the post-Cold War era. Conflict regarding recognition of history is not only unresolved but has become one of the most important and difficult issues hindering reconciliation in East Asia. Japan saved the initial cost of stabilizing bilateral relations with newly established neighbouring states by disregarding its responsibility towards them. In the long term, however, Japan is still paying for its ignorance of the past, as exemplified by the rise of historical revisionism and the nativist movement climbing on the bandwagon.

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