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To cite this article: Yūki Asahina (2019): Becoming right-wing citizens in contemporary Japan, Contemporary Japan, DOI: [10.1080/18692729.2019.1655618](https://doi.org/10.1080/18692729.2019.1655618)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/18692729.2019.1655618>



Published online: 17 Aug 2019.



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## Becoming right-wing citizens in contemporary Japan

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### ABSTRACT

This article explicates the process through which individuals become right-wing citizens in contemporary Japan. By incorporating insights from the sociology of emotion, this article complements the existing analyses that emphasize the cognitive process that makes individuals resonate with right-wing ideologies and frames. Drawing on original and secondary interview data with 46 right-wing citizens and ethnographic observations of activities by right-wing groups, it explores how such feelings as shock, fear, anger, and affective bonds shape the mechanism of political conversion along with the cognitive process and ideological socialization. In particular, short-run emotions can motivate individuals to take part in political activism through which they learn about how they should (not) feel in particular situations. Participation in right-wing activism re-shapes short-run emotions into long-run emotions that tend to sustain their commitment by justifying symbolic boundaries between “us” and “them.”

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 9 October 2018  
Accepted 10 August 2019

### KEYWORDS

Right wing; Zaitokukai;  
emotion; symbolic  
boundary; feeling rules;  
Japan

## Introduction

One important phenomenon that is increasingly visible around the world today is the rise of populist right-wing politics. Such development can be seen in various contexts from Trump's America to surprising support for the national front in France. While not as widely reported in the global mass media, this trend can also be identified in Japan. In fact, relatively little has been written about the recent dynamics of right-wing politics in Japan compared with other industrialized countries, despite the growing attention to the xenophobic political rallies in the country.

After Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, right-wing ideologies have been considered antithetical to the democratic values that people embraced in the post-war period. Being marginal and opposing the mainstream has thus been the core of the collective identity of the Japanese right (Smith, 2011). However, this seems to be changing recently. China and South Korea have increased their presence in the global economy, while North Korea evokes a sense of political risk. These factors have been perceived as threats to the “sense of group position” of Japanese, which has reactivated nationalism and a sense of prejudice against citizens of those countries. In the early 2010s, the fraction of right-wing groups that call themselves Action-Conservative emerged and gained a certain popularity.

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This article asks how men and women become right-wing citizens in contemporary Japan. Because nobody is born a right-wing citizen (Blee, 2002), this inquiry is important if we wish to understand the puzzle of recent right-wing mobilization. While Higuchi Naoto (2014)'s earlier research on the same topic emphasized the cognitive process that made individuals resonate with right-wing ideologies and frames, during my research in the field I found that *feeling* is also highly relevant in the process of political conversion. Individuals confront various emotions and learn about how they should feel in a particular context as they commit to activism. Along with ideological socialization and framing processes, this emotional process makes individuals identify themselves as right-wing citizens.

This article draws on original and secondary interview data with 46 right-wing citizens and ethnographic observations of activities by right-wing citizen groups. These data were gathered in the period from 2012 to 2013 when Zaitokukai and similar organizations were most active and thus produced more political converts than at other time periods. The data provide a rare opportunity to explicate the processes of political conversion in contemporary Japan.

In what follows, I briefly sketch the context of this research, insights proposed by existing studies, and the theoretical and methodological approach of this paper. Then, by focusing on such arenas of social life as online communities, street demonstrations, and daily interactions with other people, I will explore how political conversion to the right happens.

## Rise of the right in contemporary Japan

Since the 2000s, scholars and journalists have paid increasing attention to the right-leaning trend of Japanese society, which is often described as *Ukei-ka* (rightward drift) by popular media outlets and roughly translates to what the political scientist Richard J. Samuels called "mainstreaming of the right" (2010, p. 369). This trend came to be well known through the increasing number of violent acts conducted by right-wing citizen groups. The term *Heito Supiichi* (*Hate Speech*) was selected as one the top ten buzzwords of 2013, a term which was virtually nonexistent before early 2013. Since then, the number of articles about *Heito Supiichi* has grown rapidly, and more than 7,000 articles have appeared in the major 80 newspapers in Japan in the last four years.

Zaitokukai is considered a representative organization of a fraction of right-wing groups that call themselves Action-Conservative. It is "the largest of its kind among conservative and right-wing organizations" in Japan (Yasuda, 2012, p. 20). The organization was founded in 2007 with about 500 members and grew rapidly by making use of the internet as a powerful mobilizing resource. Today, Zaitokukai alone claims to have more than 16,000 members and 33 branches throughout Japan (Zaitokukai, 2018a). In the last few years, organizations like Zaitokukai have held around 350 rallies per year, which is indicative of these citizens' frustrations against their perceived "enemies" (Osaki, 2016).

Put simply, they claim that Korean residents in Japan are given privileges that they do not deserve. In their literature, "Korean residents' special privileges" specifically refers to the special permanent residency right and all other rights derived from it (Zaitokukai, 2018b). At the same time, they are hostile toward a wide variety of groups, from mass media outlets they call *masu-gomi* (mass-trash) to major newspapers and TV broadcasting stations that they believe to deliver biased information, as well as to liberal political parties. Their hostility is connected to a set of issues pertaining to three East

Asian states: North Korea, South Korea, and China. Two historical developments are particularly important to understand the contextual threats that make some individuals in Japan inclined to convert their political views.

First, there is a long history of racially prejudiced discourses and movements in Japanese society. The Japanese massacre of Koreans in the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake exemplifies the forms such prejudice have taken in Japan. In this incident, at least several hundred Koreans were murdered, and it remains a horrific collective memory among Korean residents in Japan. Even in the post-WWII period, the first opinion survey conducted by the US Occupation forces in December 1945 showed that 86% of Japanese respondents answered, “Japanese people were superior to the other people of East Asia” (Berger, 2012, p. 141). Since then, Koreans in Japan have had to endure various forms of discrimination in Japanese society. In the 1990s and 2000s, there were a series of hate crimes against students of Korean ethnic schools, which terrified the Korean community by invoking the 1923 massacre.

Chinese have also been subjected to racial prejudice in Japanese society as well. One such example is the use of pejorative terms such as *Shina-Jin* to refer to Chinese (Yamaguchi, 2013, p. 104; Smith, 2018). This term has been a subject of controversy (Fogel, 2015) as it was used to characterize the Chinese as uncivilized people as part of the Japanese government’s strategy to justify the military’s aggression in the process of colonization .

Second, the declining significance of Japan’s symbolic presence in the regional economy of East Asia has strengthened the sense of uneasiness about other East Asians. Since the burst of the overheated economy in the beginning of the 1990s, the East Asian tigers, including Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, surpassed Japan in terms of purchasing power parity and that of South Korea came closer. Since Japan’s successful economy has been seen as one major background of cultural nationalism in Japan in the 1970s and 80s (Yoshino, 1992, pp. 164–165, 188–191), it is not difficult to imagine that Japan’s relative economic decline in comparison to other East Asian countries affected the ways many Japanese see themselves and others.

Globalization and changing economic conditions have added a new dimension to the already existing prejudices in Japan. The diffusion of human rights discourses has been creating new spaces for minorities within nation-states across the globe to raise their voices as a global majority (Appadurai, 1996; Tsutsui & Shin, 2008). A set of disputes in East Asia over the memories of violence during the two World Wars, and other conflicts such as North Korea’s abduction of Japanese citizens and territorial disputes with China and South Korea, contributed to this trend. In this period, Japanese citizens’ perception of China and South Korea deteriorated. According to a national survey by the Japanese government, only 42.2% and 50.8% of respondents viewed China and South Korea “unfavorably” in 1990. The rates increased to 83.1% and 66.4% in 2014: the worst record since the start of the survey in 1978 (Cabinet Office Government of Japan, 2017).

In this context, some Japanese came to feel threats to their sense of group position, which is a general feeling of a race or ethnic group standing in relation to other groups (Blumer, 1958, p. 5). The peak of Zaitokukai’s activities, however, has passed. Higuchi Naoto pointed out that their member increase rate peaked two times: between 2009 and 2010 in reaction to the infamous Calderon Affair, in which the group protested around the house of an overstaying Filipino family, and between 2013 and 2014, when they caught public attention and the term *Heito Supiichi* became widely known among the public (Higuchi, 2017, pp. 70–72).

In response to growing concern over Zaitokukai's hateful activities, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) issued a report and suggested "the State party to adopt specific and comprehensive legislation prohibiting racial discrimination" (2014, p. 3). The National Diet passed a law aimed at curbing *Heito Supiichi* in May 2016, though the law has been criticized for not banning or penalizing hate speech. There have also been counter-efforts by civil society (Lim, 2018; Shibuichi, 2016). These efforts, to some extent, have curbed the movement's impetus. Since 2013, the number of Zaitokukai's members has not increased as greatly as it previously did.

Some might call the people who participated in this movement racists, nativists, far-right activists, or other terms. In this paper, I call them right-wing citizens, because the majority of research participants did not want to be labeled as activists. Instead, they preferred to call themselves *Uha-Shimin* (right-wing citizens). This paper operationally defines right-wing citizens as those who have participated in the activities of Zaitokukai and related groups. Not all right-wing citizens can take part in these activities due to certain constraints. However, participation in physical activities of hate-speech groups is a relatively straightforward manifestation of their political orientations and the most practical method to assure that they are right-wing citizens.

## Studies of the right in contemporary Japan

There is a growing number of works that examine various dimensions of the rise of right-wing politics. These analyses encompass a wide variety of themes including but not limited to the internet (Schäfer, Evert, & Heinrich, 2017), education (Kitayama, 2018), history and sexism (Yamaguchi, 2018) and ideologies of Action-Conservative movements (Gill, 2018; Shibuichi, 2015). These writings employed the "externalist" perspective, which observes right-wing groups from outside relying on secondary data in contrast to the "internalist" perspective, which some scholars claim to be essential in the studies of the right (Goodwin, 2006; Blee, 2017, p. iii).

Yet, there are also a few important works that applied the "internalist" perspective such as Nathaniel Smith's study of right-wing groups (2018). Among them, Journalist Yasuda Koichi argued that the sort of ontological insecurities some people experience in contemporary Japan and their desire for social approval and recognition are the clues to understand their participation in right-wing activism (Yasuda, 2012). In contrast, drawing on insights from social movement theories such as the political process model, resource mobilization theory, and framing theory, sociologist Higuchi Naoto (2014) argued that grievances by itself is not sufficient to explain the rise of new right-wing activism. Recent empirical studies based on a large scale online survey also proved that right-wing netizens do not necessarily recruit primarily from economically insecure groups of people (Nagayoshi, 2019, p. 34).

Higuchi carefully showed the importance of both personal socialization in early childhood years and the roles of organizations in people's participation in activism<sup>1</sup>. Although many individuals he interviewed had an ideological affinity with right-wing thought, they did not recognize Zainichi Koreans or Chinese as a problem. He examined how, based on primal ideologies that they had internalized, individuals adjusted participant frames and resonated with the frames articulated by the movement leaders. Then, he analyzed

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<sup>1</sup>For the summary of Higuchi's arguments, please see (Lim, 2015).

the ways in which the internet had changed the nature of mobilization and facilitated micro-mobilization. Higuchi also showed how the discursive opportunity structure favored right-wing political actors<sup>2</sup> (2014, chap. 6).

In sum, by examining the mechanisms of ideological socialization through such institutions as family and education, framing alignment process, and the internet, Higuchi's approach convincingly shows the cognitive process through which rational individuals accept seemingly irrational beliefs (Higuchi, 2014, p. 25 and chap. 3, 4, and 5). His analytical framework, in this sense, focuses mostly on *thinking* involved in the process of political conversion.

In the field, however, I noticed that *feeling* in right-wing activism is no less important than *thinking* in the process of political conversion. This point resonates with the insights proposed by the sociology of emotion. Accordingly, any explanation of political action cannot be sufficient without taking emotions into account as a key link between structure and action (Hochschild, 1979; Jasper, 2011; Yang, 2000). Feeling and thinking are parallel and thus "virtually all the cultural models currently in use (e.g., frames, identities, narratives) are mis-specified if they do not include explicit emotional causal mechanisms" (Jasper, 2011, p. 286). Hence, emotions are as important as the cognitive scheme emphasized in the previous studies including, but not limited to, frames, political opportunities, ideologies, and collective identity. Against this backdrop, this article focuses on emotional dynamics in the process of political conversion.

### Short-run and long-run emotions

In the 1990s, studies of social movements saw reviving interests in emotion, which had been ignored due to its assumed association with irrationality. Initially, it was driven by a pushback against theories based on a rationalist view of human behavior and a structuralist tendency in social movement studies (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001; Yang, 2000). From this perspective, separating the cognitive process from emotional dynamics can lead to exaggeration of both the calculative nature of *thinking* and the irrationality of *feeling* (Jasper, 2018, p. 7–9). In response, researchers have come up with and refined the typology of emotions relevant to political action.

In this article, a distinction between the emotions that arise quickly such as shock, fear, and anger, and emotions that last longer such as affective commitment and moral emotions is important (2011, pp. 286–287). In the process of political conversion, emotions that are strong and quick to arise have to be channeled into long-lasting ones that sustain their commitment such as moral emotions: the sense of affirmation coming from their self-recognition of doing the right thing. However, a question concerning how different emotions sequentially relate to each other remains to be explored (Jasper, 2011, p. 297). This study contributes to sociological studies of emotion by providing a concrete case to observe how short-run emotions are bridged to long-run emotions through the mediation of social action.

Short-run emotions such as anger, fear, disgust, and surprise can encourage individuals to take part in right-wing activism (Jasper, 2018, p. 32). Emotions can focus an

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<sup>2</sup>According to Ferree's definition, which Higuchi uses, discursive opportunity structures "are institutionally anchored ways of thinking that provide a gradient of relative political acceptability to specific packages of ideas" (Ferree, 2003, p. 309).

actor's attention to one particular aspect of the world. The emotional dynamics Jasper calls moral shock, which "raises such a sense of outrage in a person that she becomes inclined toward political action" (Jasper, 1997, p. 106) is often a part of the flow toward movement participation (Gamson, 1992, p. 73).

Short-run emotions encourage a particular social action such as participation in social movements. These actions, in turn, shape different emotions. In particular, through actually participating in right-wing activism, individuals learn the collective sense of what they should and should not feel in a given context, called "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 56; 2016, pp. 15–16). Hence, emotions can be both a means and ends of social action and they can direct and constrain action in particular ways through feeling rules (see also Bourdieu, 1977, p. 124; Scheer, 2012).

In this process, short-run emotions are transformed into long-run emotions. These long-run emotions help individuals to learn about and justify symbolic boundaries. Essentially, becoming right-wing citizens means to identify oneself with this collective category through drawing "lines that include and define some people, groups, and things while excluding others" (Epstein, 1992, p. 232; Lamont, Pendergrass, & Pachucki, 2015). To constitute collective social identity, individuals have to differentiate themselves from others and this process must also be recognized by others (Jenkins, 2008, p. 23). In the process of collective identification, emotions inform individuals to make sense of the difference between them and specified "others." Individuals also use emotions as a discursive resource to represent their "others" (Cangia, 2017). Long-run emotions also tend to oblige individuals to sustain their commitment (Jasper, 2018, chap. 6). These long-run emotions give a sense of satisfaction when you do a "good thing," but makes you feel "wrong" for not taking part in moral behavior.

My analytical approach does not contradict or negate the knowledge produced by earlier studies. Rather, it complements the lucid framework proposed by Higuchi by incorporating insights from the sociology of emotion. For example, as Higuchi (2014) argued, most interviewees did not have interest in *both* Koreans and Chinese in Japan at the time they entered the organization. This point is significant because it means that the construction of Korean residents in Japan as an enemy must owe much to the movement's framing efforts. In addition to these dimensions proposed by the earlier studies, like the contributions by Steinhoff and Motoyama in this issue, this article sees that the researcher's sensibility to emotional dynamics in social interaction enables deeper analysis of political activities in various contexts, in this case, specifically for understanding the processes of political conversion.

## Data and method

This article draws on two kinds of data. First, I conducted participant-observation of activities by right-wing groups such as demonstrations, signature collecting campaigns, and informal gatherings. Observations were conducted mostly in Tokyo, especially at three sites around Yasukuni Shrine, Shinjuku, and Akihabara where events hosted by right-wing groups tend to take place, with the addition of a few observations in another city. I also attended their parties that happened after these activities. Second, I will make use of two sets of interview data. One is my own life-history interview data with 15 right-wing citizens in Japan. I also analyzed interviews with 33 Zaitokukai and Activist-Conservative citizens that sociologist Higuchi Naoto made public for secondary analysis.

Observations and interviews took place between June 2012 and March 2013. The period in which the interviews and observations were conducted coincided with the time Zaitokukai caught attention from media and citizens. Data that were collected before their pace of recruitment stagnated provide a rare opportunity to explicate how individuals convert their political views.

I recruited the interviewees at the events that I attended. Interviews lasted one to four hours and were held in places the interviewees chose. All the interviews were recorded with additional notes being taken during and following each interview. Among the 15 original interviews, 11 interviewees were male, and the remaining four individuals were female. Four among them were in their twenties, another four were in their thirties, and another four were in their forties. Two interviewees were older than fifty. One interviewee did not want to disclose her age. Four among them graduated from four-year college, seven interviewees graduated from two-year college or vocational school, and four interviewees graduated from high school. Only three among fifteen interviewees were either regular or non-regular employees of corporations. The majority of other interviewees were self-employed, while one interviewee was on sick-leave and one was a housewife.

Higuchi's interview method basically follows the same structure as mine, ensuring the compatibility of the data (2014, pp. 213–216). I interviewed two of the same individuals as Higuchi, which I was informed of by the interviewees themselves. The total number of interviews is 46. I analyzed the interview data interpretively and systematically with close reading of interviews and qualitative content analysis.

I analyzed all 46 interviews in the same manner. First, I created a dataset of interviews by putting all quotations from the 46 interviews together using Microsoft Access. I carefully went through all 46 interviews in which respondents talked about the issues that concerned them and coded them. I identified 1,078 quotations in which they discussed one or more issues that concerned them and coded them to a set of 24 different categories. In this process, I identified the quotations that expressed emotional responses by interviewees. This analysis revealed the general trend of the data. Then, based on close reading of the data, I selected some exemplary quotations that represented the trend that I found in the analysis and translated them into English. Thus, while the quotations that appear in this paper are limited to those of certain interviewees, the cited quotations represent the pattern that I found through the analysis of all 46 interviews. I have replaced the names of all 46 interviewees with pseudonyms to maintain their privacy. The quotations I selected from the data that Higuchi made public will appear with citations. Otherwise, the quotations were selected from my data.

Steinhoff's article in this issue shows that supporters' attachment to political prisoners with whom she interacted changed over time for some of the prisoners as the period of imprisonment grows longer. As she argues, emotions have a temporal dimension, and thus the following account aims to address emotions of right-wing citizens in a processual manner starting from their initial encounters with right-wing ideas to their immersion in the world of right-wing politics, although the accounts are narrated from a specific point in time within this ongoing process.

### **Short-run emotions: The internet and moral shock**

In the early morning of a day in summer, I met Atsuko, a woman in her 30s, in a café in Shinjuku. She had been working as a temp worker in a big city near Tokyo. This morning,



she came to Tokyo to attend one of the demonstrations after her night shift. She just started participating in right-wing activities early that year, although she had been concerned with politics regarding China and South and North Korea for some years.

Some right-wing citizens recalled that they grew up in a conservative family, which cultivated their interest in political activities. For example, Hideki, who is in his 20s, mentioned that “because my parents were also sympathetic to right-wing thoughts we often went to Yasukuni Shrine together.” But many other people I interviewed described themselves as apolitical. When I asked Atsuko if she had any interest in politics before participating in this group, she answered, “No, no, no, I didn’t. Especially when I was a student, I wasn’t interested in politics so somehow I assumed that I was one of those liberal people.” However, four years before her initial participation in right-wing activism, she discovered her discomfort with South Korea.

Back then, you know there was a drama series called ER, I was watching it. But then Fuyusona started, and the on-air time of ER was pushed back to 1 am. It was from 10 pm before but now it was from 1 am, so I could not watch ER. That gave me a negative impression [of South Korea].

Fuyusona (Winter Sonata) is a Korean romance TV drama which caused a sensation in the early 2000s in Japan. Thus, initially it was a subtle discomfort due to her not being able to watch ER, her favorite American drama, because of the Korean drama. Then, she noticed that this was not an isolated incident. She started suspecting that Japanese mass media outlets such as Fuji TV (one of the major media conglomerates in Japan) were intentionally distorting the media coverage in favor of South Korea.

I was also angry about the mass media during the Vancouver Olympics [2010 Winter Olympics]. In figure skating competitions, you know, Fuji TV did not broadcast Kimiga-Yo [the Japanese national anthem] even when Japanese skaters won. But, when Kim Yuna won, they broadcasted the Korean national anthem from the beginning to the end. I was watching it and wondered why. And the same thing happened again and again, so I came to be suspicious of them.

After the Vancouver Olympics, “somehow I saw this term Zaitokukai on 2channel and I started watching videos,” as Atsuko recalled. The video she remembered clearly was the one uploaded by a radical faction of the group, which called themselves Team Kansai<sup>3</sup>.

That was a spontaneous protest in front of Zainichi people. I thought that ah ... they were doing something very radical. You know Kyoto is famous for ... Buraku and Koreans. I was shocked by the fact that they raised their voices there. Yes, I sympathized with them. It was after watching the video of Team Kansai that I decided to join this activism.

Atsuko was shocked by watching this video, which eventually led her to expose herself more to the online world of right-wing politics, although it was much later that she actually participated in their street activities for the first time.

Takuya, a man in his 30s, found his way to right-wing politics in a different way from Atsuko. I met him in a large protest against the mass media in a big city in central Japan. After the protest, we went to Denny’s, where they usually hang out after their activities on the weekend and make use of their 300 yen (about \$3) all-you-can-drink beverages

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<sup>3</sup>2channel is a popular Japanese online textboard.

service. Takuya had been participating in activism for a few years and was respected by his comrades as a leading figure of this local branch.

As Takuya recalled the time *Winter Sonata* was imported to Japan, “I already hated [South Korea] back then. But it was a country that was so near yet so far. Back then [around the year 2003], it was a totally irrelevant and unexplored country. It was a country that did not matter.” Takuya’s indifference to South and North Korea changed when he became interested in the North Korean government. Back then, “I was like an addict of Pachinko [a gambling device] and I also did slot machines. Ten years ago, I couldn’t resist. Perhaps many people were in the same situation.” When Takuya was reading a thread about Pachinko on the popular online BBS 2channel, he recalled, “I didn’t know why but somehow I was directed to Zaitokukai’s videos.” By watching the videos, he learned that the money he spent was used to support the North Korean government. As he puts it, “I didn’t know. I didn’t know that money [profits of the Pachinko industry] was transferred to North Korea. Nobody knew this.” Pachinko has been considered one of the niche markets for Koreans in Japan. In the 1990s, two-thirds of nearly 18,000 Pachinko parlors in Japan were said to have been owned by Korean descendants, which produced total sales of 30 trillion yen (about 2.7 billion US dollars) a year, roughly equivalent to South Korea’s GDP at the time (Nomura, 1996, p. 130). Takuya was referring to the rumor that a part of this industry’s huge profit has been transmitted to North Korea through Chōsen Sōren, the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

Zaitokukai’s videos also activated what he called the “sense of atonement for his sins (*shokuzai no kimochi*).” “North Korean abductees came back in 2003, right? Back then, I worked with one of the family members of an abductee. I can’t say who but I could not say anything back then. So I have a sense of atonement about that.” Hence, the new information about North Korea outraged him. It caused him to see the world in a different light. Ignited interest made him immerse himself in the right-wing online community, where he expanded his interest from North Korea to “anti-Japan factions” including China, South Korea, and the left-wing in Japan.

The majority of the interviewees (34 out of 46) found their way to activism through the internet. Although earlier studies of the right in Japan see connections with existing members as an important recruiting method (Hori, 1993; Oguma & Ueno, 2003), the importance of the internet has grown dramatically since these studies were conducted. While personal ties still matter, in today’s right-wing world, the exchange of information often takes place online. Right-wing citizens find information that they had not known on the Internet, which arouses them.

Their initial interests were complex, but it was often the case that at the early stages they felt that “something was wrong.” Then, they noticed that their sense of discomfort was linked to larger social and historical problems. As Higuchi (2014) argues, there is a macro-structural basis underlying political conversion to the right. A combination of longstanding racial prejudice and globalization forces facilitated a context which evoked anger against Chinese and Koreans.

Interviewees’ narratives about the early stage of political conversion tended to focus on reflex emotions such as “fear, anger, joy, surprise, disgust, shock” (Jasper, 2011, p. 287) that arose suddenly as a response to changes in circumstances or exposure to new information. The experiences of moral shock made interviewees in this study look for more information about the world of right-wing citizens online. These short-run emotions come to be normalized through their commitment to their activism.

## Doing activism and acquiring feeling rules

Individuals seek a clear sense of who is the enemy and what has to be done. David Snow and Robert Benford argued that the external construction of internal reality by social movement organizations serves this purpose (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). Via what Benford and Snow called diagnostic framing, movement leaders identified Koreans and Chinese in Japan as the targets, which was not an arbitrary decision but their strategy. Depending on the organization to which one belongs, the main target differs. While the leading organization Zaitokukai's main focus is Korean, other organizations such as the Nativist-Society (Haigai-Sha) and Society for Restoring Sovereignty (Shuken Kaifuku wo Mezasu Kai) target Chinese.

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. Activist-Conservative organizations have held many protests against Koreans and Chinese in predominantly Korean or Chinese neighborhoods such as Okubo and Ikebukuro in Tokyo and Tsuruhashi in Osaka. They have also targeted Korean ethnic schools. Direct action surprised many viewers who watched through online media, and this functioned as the first step toward participation for many members. It can be argued that their prognosis worked to a certain degree to mobilize those who would not have been mobilized in other ways. However, it is through *doing* activism online and on the street that individuals are taken in by the views presented by movement leaders.

People whom I met at events often sent me numerous links to articles or YouTube videos that I should watch, since I was younger than most of the people I met and did not even know taken-for-granted information in the world of right-wing citizens. Takuya asked me to watch all the dozens of videos they had uploaded on YouTube that documented their attacks on the office of the local communist party branch and politicians whom they thought were pro-Korea or pro-China. As I kept watching these videos and reading comments on online communities, I noticed certain rules through which I intuitively understood how I was supposed to feel about these issues.

For instance, there is one incident called the Calderon Affair. In 2009, the parents of a Filipino family who had overstayed their visa were arrested, and the immigration bureau decided to deport them to the Philippines. This case caused a controversy because their daughter, Noriko, was born, raised, and educated in Japan. The mass media reported the incident sympathetically by dramatizing it as a tragic story in globalizing Japan. However, as one right-wing citizen wondered, "what is sad about all this?" (Higuchi, 2012a, p. 156). The correct emotional response according to the right-wing feeling rules is anger against the family who overstayed in Japan for a long time, and their claim that they have a legitimate right to stay.

Right-wing citizens soon uploaded a video of them marching around the house of the Calderon family and the middle school the daughter was attending in a quiet suburban town near Tokyo, chanting "immediately kick out the illegally-staying-and-employed Calderon family from Japan!" (Yasuda, 2012, p. 64). By watching these videos, one acquires a sense of what is right to feel in a given social context. For Yohei, a man in his 40s working for the mass media, watching this video "was shocking because nobody has ever said something as radical as he [the president of Zaitokukai] said. That was the reason I joined Zaitokukai."

As Yohei became familiar with Zaitokukai's videos, he became less surprised by them. He recalled the time he watched their infamous protest in front of a Korean ethnic school in Kyoto, which resulted in the Japanese Supreme Court's ruling that Zaitokukai had to pay about US \$120,000 as compensation to the victims. "I knew, I knew that they [the Korean school] manipulated the information. And they claimed that they were sad because they have suffered this and that. Always the same pattern [...] I don't like that the Korean school acted like a victim."

The internet, unlike magazines and newspapers, is an interactive media, which allows citizens to participate instead of being mere receivers of information. Typically, they leave comments on news media websites or other people's SNS accounts such as on Twitter. Leaving comments on these threads can strengthen practical understanding of feeling rules. Some, although not all participants, went one step further and used the Internet not only as a tool to communicate with fellow right-wing citizens but also as an instrument to attack others.

One form of such attack is what they call *Totsu*, meaning *totsugeki* (assault), conducted over the internet based on the online network. Individuals collectively embarrass targeted institutions like the embassies of China, South or North Korea, liberal newspapers, or a branch of the communist party, or against individuals by sending a massive number of emails. Telephone-assault uses telephones in the same sort of collective effort. For example, Yukari, a freelance writer in her 40s, was proud of how she and hundreds of allies flooded the phone lines of NHK in response to their broadcasting performances by the Korean girl pop groups in their annual end of the year music show. However, she recalled that she had thought about quitting this activity earlier.

It is a shame to say this but I am not a strong-willed person. Initially, I couldn't speak well [over the phone]. My inability to speak became traumatic so I vomited because of that. I thought about quitting "telephone-assault" because I couldn't talk properly and people would hang up the phone, laughing contemptuously. But now I am not shaken at all as I have already made about 3,000 calls.

Through doing this activity, Yukari overcame her fear and shame associated with it.

Through such commitment to various right-wing online communities and activities, they come to know other anonymous right-wing citizens, and more importantly, the rules about how they should feel and react when they encounter certain information. Their individualistic emotions are translated into the ones that accord to feeling rules. It is not achieved solely by the efforts of powerful actors like social movement leaders to frame reality, but "by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control and discourse" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 60). Once feeling rules are acquired, they also become a resource that directs their action, which can be considered a form of habitus, an embodied sense of the social world that is produced by social structure but also produces social structure.

At this stage, interviewees tended to be interested in street demonstrations and other activities of right-wing groups. Atsuko recounts that "I had an impression that I can also do something. I thought that I should join if I had a chance." Ikumi, a housewife in her 30s, could not suppress her anger. "I even expressed my anger to the television by myself. I was very angry, seriously, to the extent I expressed it by myself. So I really wanted to speak out and express my thoughts on the street."

Yukari started joining right-wing activism out of curiosity. “The information I saw online contradicted that of mass media outlets. I started researching to see which side makes false claims.” She recalled that at first, “I didn’t know anything so I attended all kinds of study groups. I even went to the one organized by the left-wing . . . huhuhuhu.” Although we can infer that not too many people actually take to the street, when they do, participation in the activities that take place on the street tend to solidify their feeling rules.

Hiroki, a young right-wing citizen working for an international trade company, knew Zaitokukai and similar organizations through the Internet. But the idea of participating in political activities had never occurred to him. One day, he was on his way home and passed by the intersection in front of the Yasukuni Shrine (in Kudanshita, Tokyo), where war dead including Class-A war criminals are enshrined. This is a known ritualized site of contention between the left and the right in Japan. There, he happened to encounter an anti-emperor protest by the leftist group Han-Tenren (Anti-Emperor Association) and the counter-protest organized by Zaitokukai and other right-wing groups.

I recognized noisy groups. I found the banner of Zaitokukai and I thought, oh, this is Zaitokukai that I saw on the Internet. It was the first time I actually saw them. I knew them from videos they uploaded on YouTube. So I had a rough idea of what they were claiming. But actually seeing them in the site (*genba*) was a totally different experience from watching their videos online. I felt the tense atmosphere of the place. I also saw Han-Tenren for the first time, you know, a left-wing group. These guys were walking with a skull mimicking Emperor Showa. Is it possible not to be outraged by seeing such a thing? So, by actually seeing the left-wing group, I felt it should not be tolerated. It was also surprising to know that someone was protesting and raising their voice. You know, I learned that there are people who can claim that the wrong thing is wrong.

The tense atmosphere of *genba* not only surprised but also outraged him. Seeing and feeling the enemy was a transformative experience for many, which was critical in the process of their political conversion. Hiroki soon started joining the demonstrations himself. The first one he joined was a counter-protest against anti-nuclear groups in Shinjuku. Hiroki thought that “counter-protest against the left is something that really gives me the sense of participation, you know, because we raise the voices of protest together directly against them.”

Confrontations on the street have a ritualistic character that provokes strong emotions. On August 15th, the day Japan had surrendered to the allied forces, right-wing citizens confront the left-wing activists who criticize the Showa emperor’s responsibilities for war crimes and call for the abolishment of Japan’s imperial family system at the intersection near the Yasukuni Shrine. When I observed this event in 2012, a large crowd of right-wing citizens lined up on the sidewalk and confronted more than 200 riot police officers across the barricade they made in between the sidewalk and road. Protected by the police, left-wing groups marched on the street while right-wing citizens hurled insults at them. One member even got arrested by the police after climbing up a utility pole and waving the Japanese flag at the top in excitement.

The event performatively symbolized the line between “us” and “them.” It was provocative because left-wing groups that are disrespectful to the emperor were protected by the police, symbolically representing the state. Not all the events are as dramatic as this one. However, participants actively created dramas in all the activities I observed even when there was no immediate need for confrontations. Quarrels that

sometimes involved physical confrontations between right-wing citizens and others such as left-wing activists, police officers, and bystanders were a part of their activities.

In late September 2012, Zaitokukai hosted an anti-China demonstration in a large commercial district of Tokyo. At least 150 participants were there although the president of Zaitokukai announced that 300 people joined in this protest. Protesters made a long line and marched through the city. The slogans for this particular event were printed on a piece of paper and participants took turns to read them aloud using portable speakers. Participants shouted that China is a “murderer-state, violent-state, and crazy-state!”

Several reporters and journalists including the crews from a Chinese media outlet were there to report this event. When a few participants found out that the production crews who make a program for what they consider to be a liberal broadcasting station had not received the shooting permission from the PR person of the movement, the first quarrel erupted. Several participants surrounded the crews and threw such words as “hey, these guys are from TV-XXX,” and “you guys should go bankrupt.” Soon after, another quarrel occurred. An elderly man on the sidewalk told the group that they were noisy. The man shouted at the right-wing citizens, “Please do it in China!” This triggered a fight between the man and protesters, which looked as if it could come to blows although the police intervened soon after. At the same time, at this demonstration I saw at least three people on the sidewalk who cheered on the protestors by clapping their hands or saying “Do it! Do it!” Only five minutes later, there was another quarrel between a young Chinese woman interviewed by the Chinese reporter and several group members.

After the president of Zaitokukai concluded the demonstration with a speech in which he claimed that “we will erase all Chinese from this city,” about 100 participants followed the president’s “patrol mission” to another part of town, which the president claimed to host “400 Chinese mafia members.” As soon as they got there, they almost blocked the road in front of a building, which looked like an ordinary ethnic supermarket but the president and his followers believed that it was the bastion of a Chinese mafia group. Because they completely blocked the entrance of a Pachinko parlor across the street, an employee requested them to clear the way, which ended up triggering another big quarrel.

Then, the group started walking around this neighborhood where there are many cheap bars and Chinese restaurants. The president insisted to one of the restaurant owners that their signboard on the street violated regulations. Participants chanted and demanded the owner to remove the signboard. According to the president, “it is the conservative’s duty to make slow and steady efforts such as removing illegal signboards.”

During this single protest, I observed more than a handful of fights and quarrels. Some of them happened spontaneously but others were of their own making and appeared to have little to do with their political claims. Emotions produced by these actions – similar to what Emile Durkheim (1912) called “collective effervescence” – is crucial in solidifying the sense of collective identity. Randall Collins expands the Durkheimian concept of collective effervescence and argues that it produces “other sorts of emotions as outcomes (especially moral solidarity, but also sometimes aggressive emotions such as anger)” (2004, p. 105). Through ritualistic confrontations individuals start to feel to be part of a larger group.

The displayed emotions become a marker of boundaries between them and their “others.” On the one hand, those who were present at the demonstration shared the same emotions and distinguished themselves from others who did not display similar emotions. Because their demonstrations are broadcasted in real time on the Internet and

remain available there after the event finishes, there are hundreds of thousands of possible supporters who could be aroused and share the same emotions in front of their computer screens.

### Long-run emotions: Justifying the boundary and moral emotions

Long-run emotions help individuals learn about symbolic boundaries but individuals also use emotions to represent others and justify their collective identification. Yoko, an interior designer in her late 30s, experienced a strong emotional response when she first took to the street. It was a demonstration against the Japanese government requesting them to negotiate with the North Korean government to release Japanese abductees who are said to have been kidnapped from Japan in the 1970s.

I was almost crying. The families of abductees happened to be there. They were elderly people walking with canes and couldn't stand up straight. I didn't recognize them at first, but they walked with us earnestly. It was winter, and we walked a long distance so I asked them if they were okay. I almost shed tears as they told me that they were so happy to know there were so many of us not forgetting [about abductees] and supporting them. Meanwhile, bystanders on the sidewalk, who looked happy as it was the New Years' holiday, showed indifferent attitudes and some even told us that we were noisy. When I was watching videos online, only those who were interested in the issue left comments, and people shared the same ideas. But once I came to the street, people on the sidewalk were very cold to us. I was so shocked that I almost burst into tears at the gap between them and the families of the abductees.

With resentment, Yoko described bystanders on the sidewalk as people who were concerned only with their own interests. In this context, her emotions provide discursive resources to justify the demarcation between "us" and "them." The street works as a place where right-wing citizens feel and embody the distinction between right and wrong, and between friends and foes.

People often attempt to affirm their self-worth by drawing a moral boundary (Lamont, 1992). Right-wing citizens do this as well. At times, their sense of crisis was taken as dogmatic. In response, they drew a boundary through which they defined themselves as the ones who care about society while seeing the others as being blind to reality and only concerned with self-interest. Right-wing citizens often referred to these others as *ohana-batake*. Its literal meaning is "flower field," but they use the term to describe the mental world of those people who do not share their values, which for them is like a flower field: they can only imagine a rosy picture. When I asked Masashi, a man in his 60s, who he thinks is his enemy, he replied: "Ah, it is so-called *ohana-batake*. [...] You know there are super happy-go-lucky people who think we will not be invaded if we do not have a military." Oftentimes, right-wing citizens describe "the public" as happy people, referring to those who do not share the sense of anger, fear and sorrow as expressed by Yoko and Masashi.

Some right-wing citizens found people around them like family members, friends, partners, and colleagues who were sympathetic to them. However, in a society where political activities such as street demonstrations are considered deviant and managed as "a remote, preferably invisible, activity of people who are stigmatized and marginalized [...] and from which the general public needs to be protected" (Steinhoff, 2006, p. 393), many of them also faced the rejection of the new values they embodied from people around them.

For example, one right-wing citizen Higuchi interviewed recounted: “My girlfriend left me when I started this activism. [She said] she can’t get along with a guy who is doing such a thing. Even though we had been together for more than 6 years” (Higuchi, 2012b, p. 72).

Some of those who were working for companies also had to risk their employment. Some right-wing citizens wore surgical masks and sunglasses to conceal their identity when they participated in activities of right-wing groups. That was the concern Yoko had: “our information is collected by the security police so that’s why I always wear a mask. Also left-wing people come to us as a spy.” Similar to the analysis of supporters of political prisoners by Steinhoff in this issue, I found that the fear of disapproval from others can lead to different consequences depending on specific situations in which individuals are embedded.

Sometimes the denial they experienced discouraged them from maintaining their moral selfhood, although it could also exacerbate their sense of crisis and obligation. Takuya insisted that his passion was driven by this sense of crisis, especially because only a few people cared about the issues that concerned him. “You are saying that we are enthusiastic, but I do this because of urgent necessity; we are not volunteers who act hypocritically; I am doing all of this out of urgent necessity. This is not another committee meeting of the PTA.”

Others like Yukari and Yoko also felt there were not too many people who cared about important political issues. It made them think that it was their responsibility for the future generations to solve the perceived problems existing between Japan and other countries in East Asia; as Yukari puts it: “I have three nephews and I hope that they can live a peaceful adolescence. Although it is not possible to change the situation right now, we have to keep the base of our resistance.”

They reject the views presented by journalists that see right-wing citizens as self-interested individuals releasing their frustrations by attacking minorities in society. From their point of view, it is not themselves but the general public who is irresponsible and self-centered. One right-wing citizen in his 30s criticizes those who “think only about themselves.”

We cannot continue this if it were only for venting our frustrations. I cannot continue just for venting our frustrations. In the end, this is about anger. Anger against those who do wrong things. I am also angry against the Japanese citizens who don’t understand us. This is the time our nation is collapsing. They cannot just be easy-going and think only about themselves. Too many people take peace for granted (*heiwa-boke*). I want them to become aware of this situation at any cost. It is wrong to think only about themselves like, although it might be a bit weird to call them self-centered, at a time our nation is about to collapse from its core (Higuchi, 2012c, p. 80).

Thus, certain long-run emotions become a discursive tool which helps them to make sense of why they are different from others who look happy and self-interested. At this point, their feelings are akin to what scholars call moral emotions. Moral emotions refer to self-recognition that they are doing the right thing based on the feeling rules they had learned, which gives them the sense of affirmation. It is experienced and expressed only through the presence of others. Furthermore, interviewees pointed to the sense of obligation as a reason for their continued commitments to the activism.

After participating in some activities of right-wing groups, even Hiroki, a man in his 30s who used to have “no interest in politics at all” identified himself as a right-wing citizen, although many people still rejected to be labeled as far-right or extreme right activists. Hiroki explains that “when it comes to the anti-Japan states, I think my idea is



close to that of the far-right. But I do not have the same idea for all foreigners. I don't think like "fuck Americans" so I think I am not exactly the far-right."

They have embodied feeling rules that fit the right-wing self, with its own values and standards of good and bad, worthy and unworthy, and right and wrong. Through practicing various right-wing movement activities, they master the feeling rules, which also redefine their relationship with others. Now they interpret themselves as morally superior beings as opposed to those who have rejected or neglected their moral judgment. They have become right-wing citizens.

## Conclusion

Globalization and economic changes have given a new twist to resilient prejudices in Japan against people and societies of East Asia, and have also refueled nationalism. In this context, some individuals perceived threats, and came to develop strong hostility against these others. Focusing on such dimensions of practices as online activities, street demonstrations, and rejection from people around them, my analysis unpacked the process through which individuals convert their political views and redefine their boundaries between them and their "others" in contemporary Japan.

By employing a micro-sociological approach, this empirical inquiry provides rare insights into the emerging literature on right-wing politics in Japan. In particular, this article shows the utility of claiming a more central role for emotions in studies of right-wing politics. The current studies of the right have too often left emotions of right-wing citizens unquestioned (Hochschild, 2016; Virchow, 2007). In Japan, the existing literature emphasizes cognitive aspects and privileges mind over emotions. By employing sensitivity to emotional dynamics in social interaction, I was able to reconstruct the process of becoming right-wing citizens without reducing individuals to either overly socialized cultural dupes or rational calculators.

While cognition is central in the process of political conversion, it is also through *doing* and *feeling* that individuals are taken in by a particular worldview presented by social movement organizations. This article concretely shows that while short-run emotions motivate individuals to take part in political activism, it is through their commitment to activism that they learn about feeling rules. These emotions make it easier for individuals to adapt to and justify symbolic boundaries between "us" and "them." In this process, anger and outrage are transformed into long-lasting emotions such as the sense of obligation many interviewees shared. Such feelings as shock, fear, anger, outrage, shame, sorrow, and affective bonds shape the mechanism of political conversion along with the cognitive process and ideological socialization.

From a theoretical perspective, this article shows how short-run emotions such as anger and fear were transformed into long-run emotions through their commitment to right-wing activism. A question concerning the sequential relationship between different emotions remains relatively unexplored in the sociology of emotion. Thus, one contribution of this research is that it has showed how practices of street demonstrations, online activism, and interactions with friends and family members transformed reflex emotions into stable and long-lasting ones that also function as dispositions in the particular setting that they are embedded.

Although this research provides an answer to a question concerning the relationship between political conversion to the right and emotions, it remains unclear how particular

emotions discourage individuals from becoming right-wing citizens or encourage leaving this collective identity that they once found deeply meaningful. This lacuna in research arises from the difficulty of reaching those who decided not to participate or stopped joining right-wing activities. However, a recent study in the US has addressed the question of disengagement using a unique set of interview data (Simi, Blee, DeMichele, & Windisch, 2017). Just as it is important to understand the reasons for political conversion to the right, we also need to understand why some people in Japan *do not* become right-wing citizens, and the roles that cognitive processes, ideological socialization, and emotion play in this complex phenomenon.

## Acknowledgments

I am thankful for Patricia Steinhoff for multiple readings of this essay, and for insightful suggestions. I also wish to thank the anonymous reviewers and Isaac Gagné for helpful comments on previous drafts. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the EAJS conference in Lisbon, Portugal in 2017.

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