



Nationalistic Populism in Democratic Countries of East Asia

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This paper explains the background of political situations in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. It finds out how much globalization and International structural changes after the end of the Cold War affected this region. These two elements forced these countries to change their political systems and ideologies. The '*populistic and nationalistic*' phenomenon is a result of these big changes starting in the 1990s. It is never just a temporal situation caused by some 'evil' political leaders. It is an irreversible structural change which has deep roots in fundamental changes in international society. This phenomenon is not just limited to this region, and it does not mean that peoples have given up being rationalistic about their own 'interests' by the attractive messages of the '*populistic and nationalistic*' leaders. However, under the situation where the politicians have to rely on their own popularity for support, the politics have to be short-sighted. In the globalizing world, the nationalistic messages sometimes have a bad influence on national sentiments. The influence may remain for a long time even after the people of the country forget it.

Keywords: nationalism, populism, East Asia, political leadership

I. Introduction

In East Asia, winds of nationalism seem to be strongly blowing. The Chinese and South Korean governments protest strongly against Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni 'War' Shrine. In Taiwan, President Chen's 'divisionistic' language antagonizes the Chinese government repeatedly. In South Korea, nationalistic revisionism of their national

history has been conducted by the government itself, and people look to be absorbed in it, more than a half century after the colonial rule of Japan. Governments and political leaders in this region officially criticize the behaviors and languages of their counterparts in disputes, and it seems hard to stop these vicious spirals.

However, once we turn our eyes to the languages and words of the political leaders, we can easily find that there are a lot of similarities. Especially, there are a lot of similarities among three Asian democratic nations, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. In these countries, Junichiro Koizumi, Roh Moo-Hyun and Chen Shui-Bian have sometimes been criticized not for their ‘nationalism’ but for their ‘populism’. The object of this study is to explore the ‘*populistic and nationalistic*’ phenomenon in these countries. Why do they all have similar ‘*populistic and nationalistic*’ types of leaderships? And what is behind the phenomenon?

II. Reformistic Governments by Political Leaders with Different Backgrounds

Compared with Japan or South Korea, today’s Taiwanese situation seems to be easily explained. Taiwanese President Chen Shui-Bian has a long career as an activist for Taiwanese democratization. He won his presidential seat as the candidate of the major opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party, in Taiwan. It was the first victory for the Taiwanese opposition party in national elections, and Chen Shui-Bian is the first president elected from the opposition. After Chen’s victory, he emphasized the ‘historical importance’ of defeating the opposition and the need of national compromise. In this context we can easily understand why he said in his inaugural speech in 2000 as follows:

The topmost initiatives of my promise to “rule by the clean and upright” are to eliminate “black gold” — the involvement of organized crime in politics — and to eradicate vote-buying. For a long time, the Taiwanese people have been deeply repelled by money politics and the interference of organized crime. A grassroots vote-buying culture has also robbed the

people of their right to elect the wise and the able. These have tainted the development of Taiwan's democracy.

Today, I am willing to promise hereby that the new government will eliminate vote-buying and crack down on "black gold" politics, so that Taiwan can rise above such downward sinking forces. We must give the people a clean political environment.

In the area of government reforms, we need to establish a government that is clean, efficient, far-sighted, dynamic, highly flexible and responsive, in order to ensure Taiwan's competitiveness in the face of increasingly fierce global competition. The age of "large and capable" governments has now passed, replaced by "small and effective" governments, which have established partnership relations with the people. We should accelerate the streamlining of government functions and organization and actively expand the role of public participation.

In his inaugural speech in 2000, Chen tried to bring very clear messages to Taiwanese people. Taiwan had been ruled by the same party, the National Party, since 1945. This long authoritarian regime not only granted special privilege to an elite few, it also had a close relationship with black money. As the first president from the opposition, he seems to believe that it is his role to break such corrupted oligarchy.

However, the situations of South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi are not simple like Chen Shui-Bian's. Roh Moo-Hyun started his career as a judge under the authoritarian Yushin Regime of Park Chung-hee, and gained a reputation as a 'human rights lawyer' after defending students involved in the "Burim Incident" in Busan. In 1988, He was elected to the 13th National Assembly as a candidate of an opposition party, and served as a member of the "Special Committee Investigating Political Corruptions during the Fifth Republic". After playing an important role in the successful presidential election campaign for Kim Dae-Jung in 1997, Roh was given the post of minister of maritime affairs and fisheries in 2000 under Prime Minister Park Tae-Jun. In 2002 he ran for president from Kim Dae-Jung's ruling Millennium Democratic Party, and won the election as the candidate of the ruling party. In this context, it was natural for his government to have continuity with the previous government. However, at his inauguration address in 2003, Roh also emphasized the needs of reformation as Chen Shui-Bian had. He said as follows:

Our society must remain healthy and future-oriented if we are to build a structure of peace on the Korean Peninsula and usher in the era of Northeast Asia. We must build strength and maintain vision. That requires inexorable efforts for reform and integration. Reform is a driving force behind growth, and integration is a steppingstone for a takeoff.

On the basis of reform and integration, the new Administration will pursue democracy with the people, build a society of balanced development and open an era of peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia. To achieve these goals, I have set the following tenets for the operation of the new Administration. They are principle and trust, transparency and fairness, dialogue and compromise, and decentralization and autonomy.

We should create new driving forces for fresh growth in each sector. The various factors that caused the foreign currency crisis are still around for us to overcome. I want to make the country a favorable place to do business in and an attractive place in which to invest by reforming the markets and systems in a fair and transparent manner based on international standards.

The first order of business is to reform politics. We have to realize politics that respect our citizens as a genuine source of power. We should nurture a political climate in which the well-being of the people takes precedence over partisan interests. I hope to see the kind of political culture prevail that solves problems through dialogue and compromise, not through confrontation and conflict. I, myself, will pursue dialogue and compromise with the opposition parties.

As is well-known, this kind of aggressive attitude toward 'reformations' of Roh Moo-hyun had not changed even after starting his government. He actually seceded from the Millennium Democratic Party and made a small new party consisting of a limited number of reformists in 2003. In 2004, the members of the Millennium Democratic Party who were forced to remain in the party played a central role in the unsuccessful trial for Roh's impeachment.

Koizumi's situation is more complicated. Junichi Koizumi was born as a son of a family of conservative politicians in Yokosuka, Kanagawa, and has been a parliament member of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party since 1972. In the Liberal Democratic Party, he belongs to one of the most influential factions, the Fukuda Faction. Koizumi successively held minister positions and other important posts in the Liberal Democratic

Party for decades. Under the previous Mori government, he played a central role in support of Prime Minister Mori as the president of the Mori Faction. In spite of his popularity with his 'unique' personality, it is no doubt that he has put himself in a position of insider as part of the ruling party during his entire career.

However, like Chen Shui-Bian and Roh Moo-Hyun, Koizumi also stressed needs of 'ceaseless reforms'. In 2001, he said at his first cabinet meeting as follows:

On the occasion of the first meeting of the new Cabinet, I would like to explain my policy agenda and ask for the valued cooperation of the members of the Cabinet.

1. In order to restore the faith of the people of Japan in politics, I will advance political structural reform based on my view that "without structural reform there can be no economic recovery." I am resolved to make this Cabinet the "Ceaseless Reform Cabinet," that will boldly undertake reforms in Japan's social and economic structures.

2. The top priority for this Cabinet is to revive the Japanese economy. I ask you to make every effort to implement swiftly the recently announced Emergency Economic Package, beginning with efforts to dispose of non-performing loans. Moreover, in order to stimulate new industries and expand employment opportunities, with an eye to economic structural reform, I ask you to revise the regulations under your jurisdiction, returning to the starting point. Moreover, in order to promote greater investment in the research and development of new science and technology areas, which underpin the industrial competitiveness of our nation, I ask for every Cabinet member concerned to endeavor with all their might towards the realization of the Basic Plan for Science and Technology (Koizumi 2006).

The question here is, of course, why reformistic governments of this kind were born almost at the same time in East Asia. We can easily find a hint from their speeches. These three leaders apparently share the same understanding that under strong pressure of globalization, it is inescapable for their country to make reforms of their politics and economy. In these three countries, the governments have been believed to have played very important roles to lead their economies, and their previous governments' legitimacies had relied on the performance of their economies.

However, in the 1990s, with the globalization of world economies, the governments gradually lost their control over their economy, and the rates of their economic growth

slowed. In Taiwan, it simply made the number of votes for the opposition increase and finally the Democratic Progressive Party won the presidential election in 2000. Chen Shui-Bian explains it as follows:

In the area of government reforms, we need to establish a government that is clean, efficient, far-sighted, dynamic, highly flexible and responsive, in order to ensure Taiwan's competitiveness in the face of increasingly fierce global competition. The age of "large and capable" governments has now passed, replaced by "small and effective" governments, which have established partnership relations with the people. We should accelerate the streamlining of government functions and organization and actively expand the role of public participation (Chen 2000).

The same thing had happened more dramatically in South Korea in 1997, not in 2002, during the financial crisis. In both countries, there are oppositions which are strong enough to win the election, and people tried to give chances to the opposition to make reforms within their societies.

However, the same thing did not happen in Japan, and did not repeat in South Korea in 2002. Japanese people did not regard the opposition as the party which had enough power to carry out the reformations. Japanese people clearly view Koizumi as an alternative to the opposition for their reformation. With his famous but contradictory slogan, "Smash the Liberal Democratic Party" by the leader of the party itself, Japanese people selected Koizumi as a leader of their reformation, who they believe to be strong enough to complete the reformations.

In 2002, under the two-party system of the ruling Millennium Democratic Party and the Grand National Party, South Korean people had no choice without selecting reformistic Roh Moo-Hyun of the ruling party rather than conservative Lee Hoi-chang of the opposition, to continue the reformations. In this context, Roh Moo-Hyun was given his position to play the same role as Koizumi to smash his own party. The difference is just that while Koizumi smashed just the inner system of factions in his party, Roh actually smashed the Millennium Democratic Party itself.

III. Collapse of Trust in Politics — Background of ‘Populistic and Nationalistic’ Leadership

Behind the birth of these reformistic governments in East Asia, we cannot overlook a phenomenon that the reputations of political powers, which once sustained their economic developments, were lost in their economic slumps. Table 1 show the over-all situation about politicians in these countries.

For politics and other public institutions in Japan and South Korea, we can get more detailed data about trust. For example, Table 2 is the data one year after the financial crisis started in South Korea.¹⁾ It is clear that South Korean people regarded the government and politics as having the greatest responsibility for the financial crisis.

Table 1. Public Trust of Politicians

	2000	Rank (of 59)	2002	Rank (of 80)	2004	Rank (of 104)
Japan	2.9	34	2.0	50	3.1	37
S. Korea	2.3	44	2.3	39	1.7	85
Taiwan	2.9	35	3.2	30	3.3	32
U.S.	3.7	20	4.3	15	3.9	20
U.K.	4.1	17	3.9	20	4.4	14
France	3.4	23	2.3	40	3.0	43
Italy	2.4	43	2.7	34	2.0	70
Germany	3.1	31	3.6	26	3.8	21
Canada	4.6	12	4.5	11	3.0	41
Singapore	6.5	1	6.4	1	6.5	1
Hong Kong	5.5	7	5.2	5	4.6	11
China	3.0	32	4.4	12	4.1	18
Russia	1.9	54	1.9	56	1.8	76

Source: World Economic Forum, *The global competitiveness report*, 2000-2001, 2002-2003, 2004.

1) In South Korea, it is well-known that the trust in politics was originally low. However, it does not mean that the level was the same (Lee 2003).

Table 2. Major Cause of Financial crisis, %

Failure of Kim Young-Sam Government	33.0
Cozy Relationship of Politics and Economy	27.1
Over-consumption of People	21.7
Insincere Management of Chaebols	16.5

Note: The other categories were excluded

Source: *Donga-Ilbo*, November 2, 1998, p. 1.

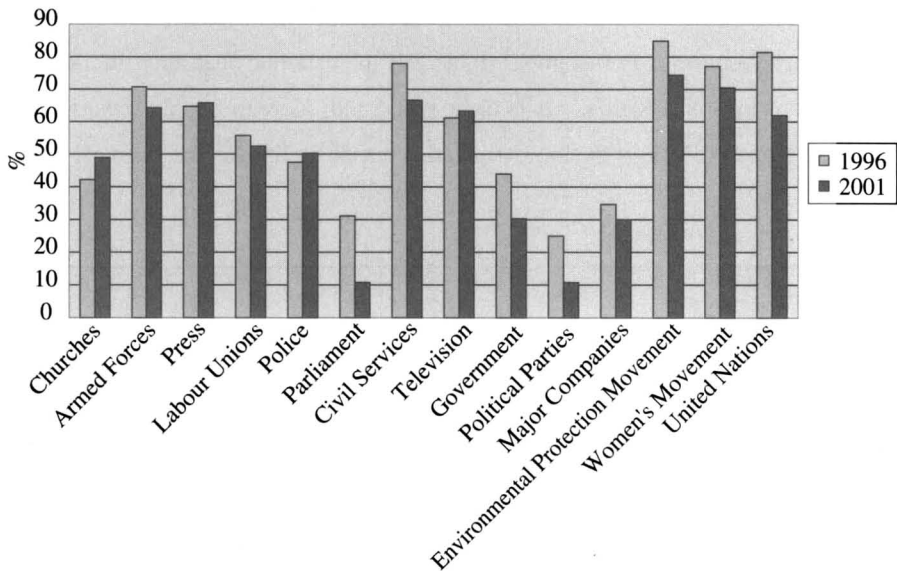


Figure 1. Confidence in Institution and Organization (S. Korea)

Source: World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

They also believed that reformations of their political economic system were definitely needed to recover from the crisis. Figure 1 and 2 show that South Korean and Japanese people had little faith in parliament and political parties prior to 1996 and by 2001 that small amount of trust had become even drastically lower. According to the World Values Survey, the level of trust in parliament and political parties in South Korea was almost worst in the world.

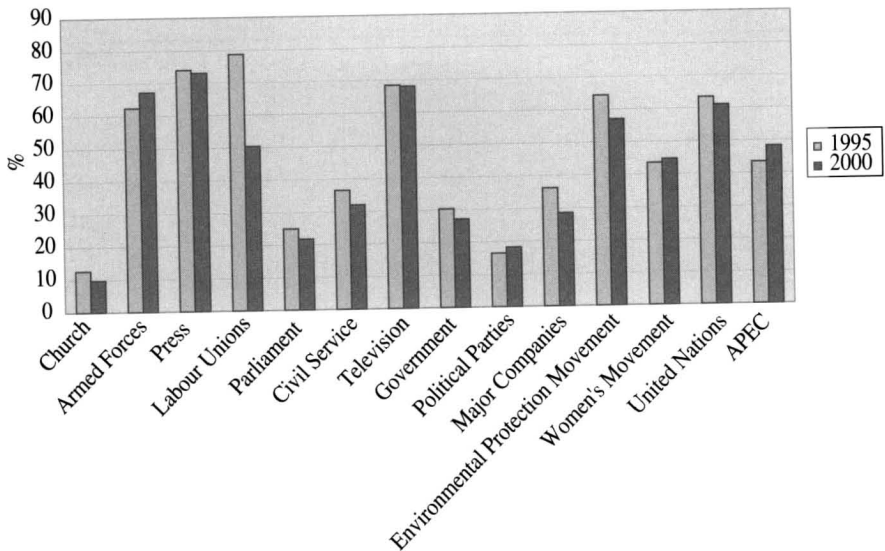


Figure 2. Confidence in Institution and Organization (Japan)

Source: World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (last visited May 11, 2006).

Table 3. Trust in Institution

	Present Trust (1-5)	Trust Change in 10 years (1-5)	Estimation of Trust in International Society (1-5)	Institutions to be reformed, % (Three Choices)
Parliament	2.2	2.3	2.7	77
Bureaucrats	2.2	2.2	2.7	42
Judges	3.3	2.8	3.2	8
Journalism	2.6	2.5	2.9	17
Banks	2.7	2.3	2.9	23
Major Companies	2.8	2.5	3.0	7
Hospitals	3.1	2.6	3.2	34
Police	2.3	2.0	2.9	75
Armed Forces	3.0	2.8	3.1	3

Source: Giin, Kanryo, Daikigyo, Keisatsu tou no Shinraikan Chosa, Chuo Chosa Sha, 2000.

In Japan, we can use the data to show how trust in governments and politics has changed since 1990. Table 3 shows the subjective understanding of the Japanese people, and Table 4 shows the change since 2000. It clearly shows that trust in government

Table 4. Trust Changes of Japanese Public Institutions

	2000/03	2001/12	2004/05	Change 2001-2004
Armed Forces	3	3.3	3.3	0
Judges	3.3	3.3	3.2	-0.1
Hospitals	3.1	3.2	2.9	-0.3
Banks	2.7	2.8	2.9	0.1
School Teachers	-	3.0	2.8	-0.2
Police	2.3	3.0	2.8	-0.2
Major Companies	2.7	2.8	2.8	0
Journalism	2.6	2.6	2.8	0.2
Parliament	2.2	2.4	2.0	-0.4
Bureaucrats	2.2	2.2	2.0	-0.2

Source: Giin, Kanryo, Daikigyo, Keisatsu tou no Shinraikan Chosa, Chuo-Chosa Sha, 2004.

sectors were more seriously damaged than those of private sectors in this 'lost' decade for Japan.²⁾

Of course, the decline of trust in the government of this kind is a world phenomenon³⁾ not limited to East Asia. However it is also very significant that the phenomenon typically appeared in this region. As Tables 1, 5 and 6 show, today, people's confidence in governments and political parties in Japan and South Korea are almost lowest in the world.

Another point here is that in these countries, this phenomenon appears not just as the decline of trust in the government, but also as the decline of trust in political parties. Decline of trust in political parties and politicians has affected the way political leaders in Japan and South Korea have had to operate because it has made the leaders unable to rely on organized support from their party or party members. As a result, without their

2) This difference between Japan and South Korea on the trust in major companies may explain the difference of the 'reforms' by Koizumi and Roh. For Koizumi, the business sectors are not major targets of his reformation, but Roh regards the major conglomerates as major his targets of reformations.

3) World Economic Forum. "Trust in Governments" (<http://www.weforum.org>, last visited May 11, 2006).

Table 5. Confidence in Government

1	Vietnam [2001]	97.9
2	China [2001]	96.7
3	Bangladesh [2002]	87.3
4	Jordan [2001]	84.3
5	Tanzania. United Republic Of [2001]	82.9
6	Uganda [2001]	77.8
7	Iran (Islamic Republic of) [2000]	68.5
8	South Africa [2001]	60.8
9	Egypt [2000]	60.8
10	Morocco [2001]	60.7
11	Albania [2002]	58.0
12	Chile [2000]	57.6
13	India [2001]	56.2
14	Venezuela [2000]	56.0
15	Morocco [2001]	55.7
16	Algeria [2002]	54.0
17	Indonesia [2001]	52.4
18	Philippines [2001]	51.0
19	Nigeria [2000]	48.1
20	Turkey [2001]	46.4
21	Puerto Rico [2001]	44.5
22	Spain [2000]	44.2
23	Canada [2000]	42.3
24	Iraq [2004]	39.7
25	Pakistan [2001]	39.0
26	United States [1999]	37.8
27	Republic of Moldova [2002]	37.5
28	Mexico [2000]	37.1
29	Kyrgyzstan [2003]	35.1
30	Montenegro [2001]	34.0
31	Serbia [2001]	31.3
32	Republic of Korea [2001]	30.3
33	Bosnia and Herzegovina [2001]	29.5
34	Japan [2000]	27.1
35	Peru [2001]	19.5
36	Argentina [1999]	19.4
37	Macedonia. Republic of [2001]	10.9

Source: World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (last visited Oct. 03, 2007).

Table 6. Confidence in Political Parties

1	China [2001]	92.8
2	Vietnam [2001]	91.6
3	Bangladesh [2002]	79.0
4	Tanzania, United Republic of [2001]	59.3
5	Egypt [2000]	50.7
6	Philippines [2001]	45.8
7	Nigeria [2000]	44.2
8	South Africa [2001]	44.2
9	Uganda [2001]	40.9
10	Iran, Islamic Republic of [2000]	34.4
11	India [2001]	33.5
12	Indonesia [2001]	33.1
13	Albania [2002]	29.4
14	Turkey [2001]	29.1
15	Jordan [2001]	28.4
16	Pakistan [2001]	27.9
17	Chile [2000]	27.7
18	Spain [2000]	27.3
19	Montenegro [2001]	25.9
20	Kyrgyzstan [2003]	25.7
21	Mexico [2000]	24.6
22	Republic of Moldova [2002]	24.0
23	Canada [2000]	23.1
24	United States [1999]	22.6
25	Venezuela [2000]	20.1
26	Puerto Rico [2001]	19.8
27	Morocco [2001]	19.6
28	Algeria [2002]	19.0
29	Japan [2000]	18.2
30	Morocco [2001]	18.0
31	Serbia [2001]	14.6
32	Bosnia and Herzegovina [2001]	14.5
33	Republic of Korea [2001]	10.8
34	Macedonia, Republic of [2001]	9.5
35	Peru [2001]	7.9
36	Argentina [1999]	7.3

Source: World Values Survey, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

own popularity among the people, which is not dependent on party organization, it is very hard for politicians to get higher posts. Apparently this is the reason why the Liberal Democratic Party had to select Koizumi as their leader. Roh Moo-Hyun also has the same kind of background. With his long career as a lawyer fighting for democratization, Roh had his own popularity not in the traditional support base of the ruling Millennium Democratic Party but in the civil societies. Decline of trust of politicians and parties made it easy for the leaders with their own popularity to overwhelm their rivals in their own party.

As a result, in Japan and South Korea, the new type of so-called '*populistic*' political leadership was born. There, political leaders are not dependent on the 'traditional' political base, such as the party organizations or the party ideologies, but on their direct messages to the people.

As Chih-Cheng Lo emphasizes, 'lack of trust and confidence by the Taiwan public towards political parties' shades a long shadow on Taiwanese politics too (Lo 2006). However, in Taiwan, a similar situation was also given by the weak party organization of the Democratic Progressive Party. Different from previous presidents supported by the strong organization of the National Party, Chen Shui-Bian could not be dependent on such organized support. This situation made his leadership '*populistic*' too.

IV. Why Nationalism against Their Neighbor Countries?

The situations around political leaders in East Asia can partly explain why they must be nationalistic in their words and language because the weak party organization made them rely more on their personal messages. Here, nationalism can be an easy choice for them to attract people's attention to their messages.

However once we turn our eyes again to their exact words and language, we can find that their nationalistic messages are not simple products of their opportunities. For example, Japanese Koizumi and South Korean Roh's nationalistic messages are clearly related to their reformistic criticism against bureaucracies. In Japan, we need to

remember the fact that one of the major targets of Koizumi's reformations, in the beginning of his term, was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Roh also has repeatedly criticized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. A typical example was the replacement of the Minister, Yoon Young-Kwan, in January 2004. Yoon's removal was understood as a result of a conflict between the "pro-U.S. diplomacy" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the "independent diplomacy" of the National Security Council (NSC).

In the background of these criticisms against the ministries in Japan and South Korea, we can see two things. The first one is a part of the criticism against the entire bureaucratic system of these countries, as we saw in the previous chapter. Especially for Koizumi, the reformation of the ministry of Foreign Affairs apparently was an important part of his administrative reforms.

The second thing we can see may be more important. Since the end of the Cold War, international structures in East Asia have changed dramatically. Under the system of the Cold War, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan were forced to play their fixed international roles given by the structure. They were given their ally, their hypothetical enemies and even their national identities. The United States was the ally for all of them, and the Soviet Union, North Korea, and China were the hypothetical enemies for Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Japan was reborn as a 'peaceful nation' after the defeat in World War II. South Korea had to be a 'shield of anti-communism,' and Taiwan was forced to play its role as 'Free China.'

However, governments and nations in this region are now seeking new positions in the international society, in a new international situation. As a consequence, the ministries having jurisdiction over their diplomacy under the Cold War are facing strong criticism against their traditional policies. The ministries were selected as the major targets of Koizumi and Roh's '*populistic and nationalistic*' reforms. The reason why just the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan escaped major criticisms may be explained by the same structural changes. Taiwan already experienced major international structural changes in the 1970s, and their major hypothetical enemy, China, has not changed in the process.

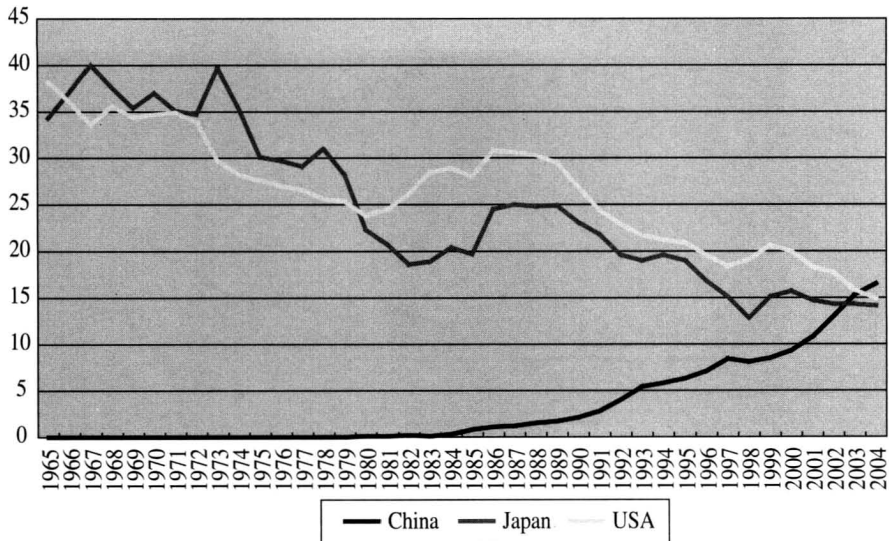


Figure 3. Share in S. Korean Trade

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, <http://www.nso.go.kr/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

While the end of the Cold War has led Japan, South Korea and Taiwan to seek new positions in the international society, it cannot solely explain why their nationalistic messages have targeted their neighbors. Here, Figure 3 may give us one explanation. The important thing is that under globalization, and in the age after the end of Cold War, their 'geographic neighbors' do not have the same importance as which they had during the Cold War. For South Korea, for example, which had been forced to have a friendship with Japan and the United States under the threat from the North, there was little room for them to make claims about the historical issues against Japan formally, because Japan was too important for them to do so. However, Japan no longer has the same level of importance now. While the volume of trade and investment between Japan and South Korea is increasing, the Japanese share of South Korean trade is steadily decreasing. This is simply because the volume with other countries is more rapidly increasing. Japan was the only major economic power in this region during the Cold War, but now it is just one of them.

Addition to that, in the globalizing world, neighbor countries can not enjoy their

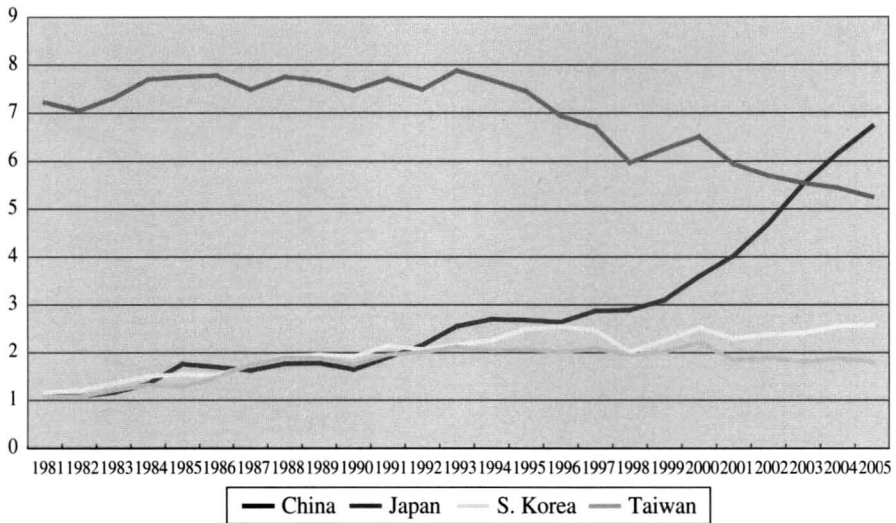


Figure 4. Share in World Trade

Source: International trade statistics, http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/statis_e.htm (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

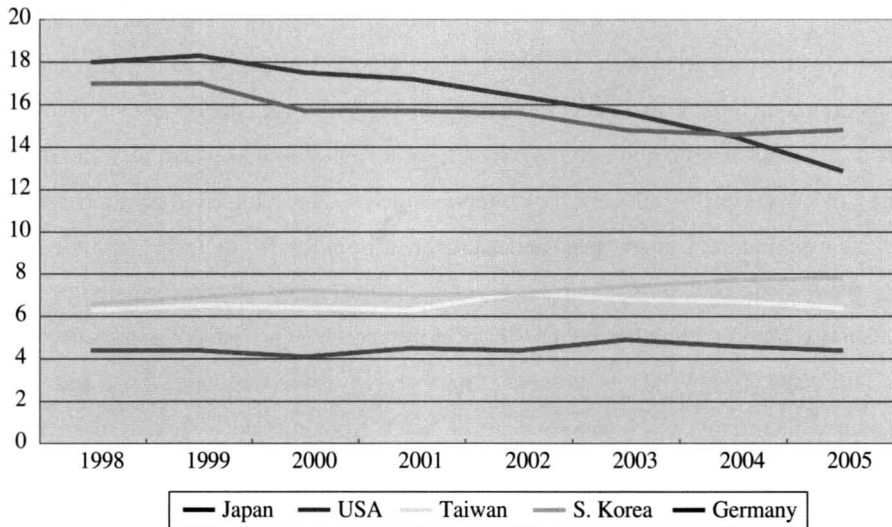


Figure 5. Share in Chinese Trade

Source: Korea National Statistical Office, <http://www.nso.go.kr/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

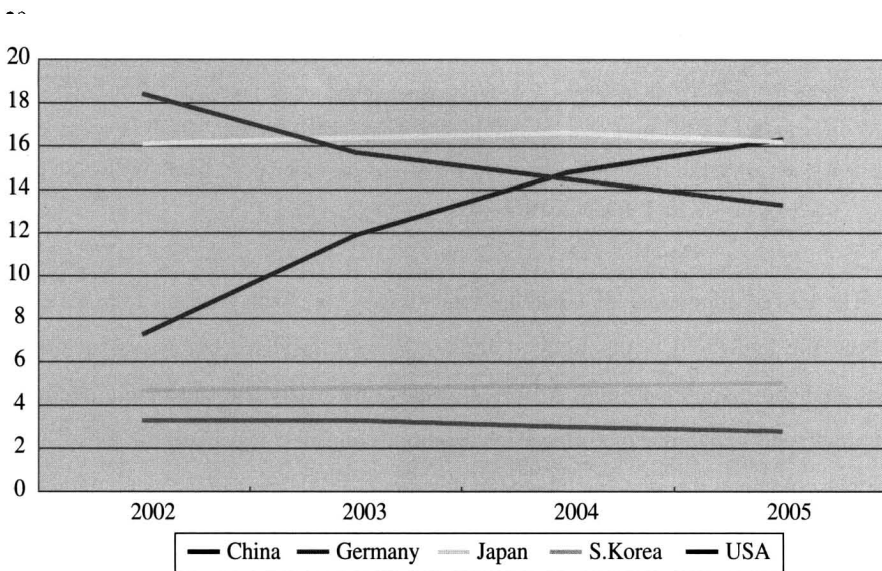


Figure 6. Share in Taiwanese Trade

Source: Taiwan Custom Statistics, <http://203.66.210.47/stap/main.asp?lang=1> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

geographic advantages as they once could. Thus, in the process, they are inevitably relativized (Figures 4, 5, and 6) each other.

So, In March 2005, Roh Moo-Hyun explained his policy change towards Japan as follows:

Japan is proceeding with lively discussions about rearmament, after laying the legal foundation for overseas deployment of the Self-defense Forces. All of this reminds us of our painful past and causes us anguish about the future.

When Japan offered apologies in the past, we accepted them and pledged a partnership; at that time we did so because we thought it might be hard for the Japanese people to understand us if we denied them recognition of their country as an ordinary nation state. Based on such a judgment, we have held our tongues, repressing our worries — all for the sake of the future of Korea-Japan relations.

Given that an apology presupposes sincere reflection and corresponding actions, Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Shinto shrine undermine the sincerity of reflection and apologies made by former Japanese leaders.

Nevertheless, the Korean Government went no further than implicitly urging him to refrain from the visits, without raising any direct diplomatic issue or taking countermeasures. That was indeed for the sake of a forward-looking bilateral relationship, which Japanese leaders had always urged repeatedly. However, we have come to the point where we can no longer overlook the situation in silence (Roh 2005).

The loss of importance of Japan has made it easy for South Koreans to make claims about the historical issues against Japan. Accordingly, we may say that today's nationalistic disputes around 'historical issues' are partly a result of the decline of strategic and economic importance of neighbor countries, especially of Japan, in the globalization and the strategic change in this region.⁴⁾ We can say the same thing about

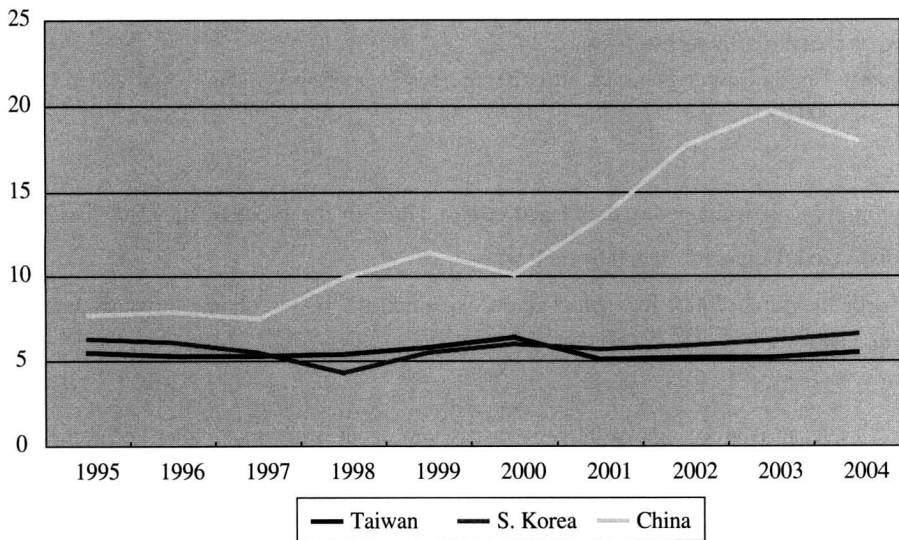


Figure 7, Share in Japanese Trade

Source: Japanese Trade and Investment Statistics, <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/stats/statistics/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

4) Strategically, the importance of the neighbor countries in this region has been seriously lost since the end of the Cold War in this region. For example, in the 1970s, the relationship with South Korea and China has strategic importance for Japanese security against the Soviet Union, but it does not have such a strategic importance now.

South Korea and Taiwan. While the volume of their trade with their neighbor countries is increasing, the growth has been drowned out by those of other countries (Figures 4 and 7). East Asia is not in the situation where the growth of the regional economy gives a base for regional cooperation. On the contrary, a loss of needs of strategic cooperation after the end of Cold War tends to invite them to use nationalistic rhetoric targeting on their neighbor countries in order to rebuild their wounded national identities in the 1990s by calling on old memories of 'history.'

The important thing here is that East Asian countries today are now in the process of making changes to their international positions, and these changes inevitably make the countries rewrite their national identity. Unfortunately they seem to need new hypothetical enemies for these new identities and are finding them in their neighbors. Figure 8 shows how Japanese people found China to be their new hypothetical enemy after the end of the Cold War. The same phenomenon can be found in South Korea more typically as shown in Figure 9.

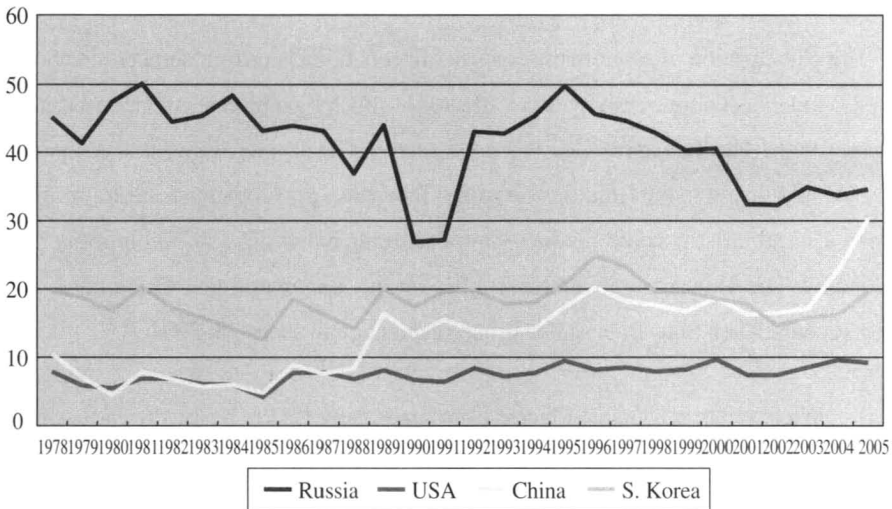


Figure 8. Strongly Disliked Country (Japan)

Source: Naikaku Daijin Kanbo Seifu Koho Shitsu, 'Gaiko ni Kansuru Yoronchosa', October 2005, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h17/h17-gaikou/index.html> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

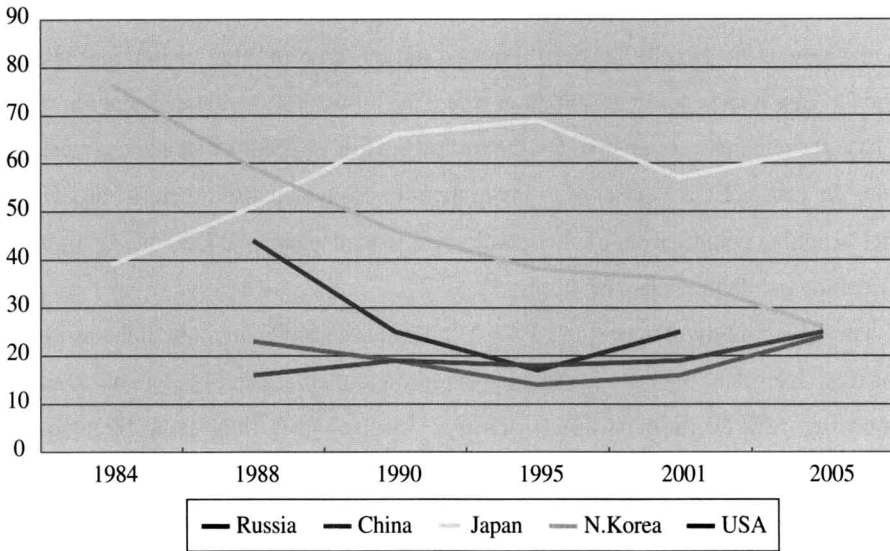


Figure 9. Disliked Country (S. Korea)

Source: Donga-Ilbo, from Korea Press Foundation, <http://www.kinds.or.kr/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007), Asahi Shimbun, <http://database.asahi.com/> (last visited Oct. 3, 2007).

The globalization of economies seems to affect nationalism from another direction as well. Modern economic activity is not affected as much by diplomatic relations as it was in the 1960s. The Taiwanese case is a good example. Today, the Taiwanese economy is inseparably linked to the Chinese one so the Taiwanese government seems to be able to raise a nationalistic voice against China without worrying too much about their economy. The Taiwanese government relies on the assumption that China needs their investments. Chen Shui-Bian said at his second inaugural speech in 2004:

We have taken note that Chinese Communist Party leaders repeatedly emphasize the importance of steady development for the welfare of Mainland China's 1.3 billion people, hence, the espousal of "peaceful emergence" as its tone for developing international relations. We have no doubt the Beijing authorities recognize that maintaining the peaceful status quo in the Taiwan Strait is of vital importance to sustainable development for our respective sides and for the stability of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole (Chen 2005).

V. Conclusion

Up to this point, this paper has explained the background of political situations in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. We have found out how much globalization and the end of the Cold War affected this region. These two elements forced these countries to change their political systems and ideologies. The '*populistic and nationalistic*' phenomenon is a result of these big changes starting in the 1990s. We need to understand that this is never just a temporal situation caused by some 'evil' political leaders. It is an irreversible structural change which has deep roots in fundamental changes in international society.

As mentioned, this phenomenon is not just limited to this region, and it does not mean that peoples have given up being rationalistic about their own 'interests' by the attractive messages of the '*populistic and nationalistic*' leaders (Hirano, 2005). However, under the situation where the politicians have to rely on their own popularity for support, the politics have to be short-sighted. In the globalizing world, the nationalistic messages sometimes have a bad influence on national sentiments. The influence may remain for a long time even after the people of the country forget it.

Winds of nationalism are still strongly blowing in this region. Of course, this situation in East Asia can not be perfectly attributed to the fundamental changes this paper has introduced. However, if this fundamental situation is not redressed, it may be hard for us to escape from the vicious spirals of the '*populistic and nationalistic*' phenomenon.

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