Declining Anti-Korean Prejudice among Young Japanese: The Role of Korean Popular Culture and Political Indifference

By

Masaki Ono

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Abstract

In the early 2000s, Japanese youth robustly exhibited strong detestation and took rebellious stances towards Korea and Korean people. It is well-established that the diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan was a strong predictor of Japanese youth's anti-Korea movement in the early 2000s. However, based on a national survey conducted in 2021, present-day Japanese youth exhibit positive attitudes towards Korea. Hence, this study is designed to ascertain the factors that affect present-day Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. In order to achieve these two research objectives, the present study conducted twelve online individual interviews with Japanese youth aged 22 to 24. Then, by employing the Thematic Analysis model, the interview results indicated that the majority of interview participants did not have affective, cognitive, and behavioral prejudice towards Korea and Koreans. Also, more importantly, interviewees who consume Korean popular culture, experienced interpersonal contact with Koreans, and presented political apathy tend to be more tolerant towards Korea and Koreans. These results proved that Korean popular culture, political apathy, and social phycological factors are conceivable as explanatory factors of Japanese youth's positive and tolerant attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Whereas scholars have given ample attention to the upsurge of nationalistic disposition and anti-Korea movements among the Japanese youth around the early 200s, scant attention has been given to today's Japanese youth. Therefore, the empirical findings in this study provide a valuable insight into

ethnic prejudice, Japanese youth's nationalism, and Japanese youth's prejudice towards Korea

and Koreans.

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1. Introduction

In the early 2000s, Japanese society observed the upsurge of nationalism among Japanese youth. Here, nationalism refers to their negative attitudes towards Korea. For example, as Korean popular culture became popular in the Asian area, Japanese youth exhibited their strong rejection of the increasing popularity of Korean popular culture (Sakamoto, 2011). Also, Japanese youth, called 'Cyberspace right-winger (*Netto-uyo*),' stayed within cyberspace and enthusiastically exhibited their detestation towards Korea (Matsushima, 2017; Sakamoto, 2011). One researcher in the field of Japanese politics, Hiroshi Sasada, argues that their negative attitudes towards Korea were intensified by anti-Japanese demonstrations in Korea, which were driven by a territorial, historical, and political dispute (Sasada, 2006). For example, when former Prime Minister Koizumi visited Seoul, Korean demonstrators chanted anti-Japanese slogans, burned the Japanese flags, and exhibited their resentment towards Japan (Sasada, 2006). As this anti-Japanese sentiment intensified in Korea, so the Japanese people countered with their rebellious stances to Korea (Sakamoto, 2011). In other words, the Japanese youth's anti-Korean movement during the early 2000s was strongly influenced by intergovernmental relations between Korea and Japan.

However, according to the national survey of the Cabinet Office (2021), today, only the young generation feels positively about Korean people. That is, contemporary Japanese youth exhibit positive attitudes towards Korea, whereas the international relation between

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Korea and Japan is deteriorating more than ever. In this regard, it seems present-day Japanese youth's attitudes are independent of the Japanese administration's political stance on Korea. Then, what factors affect contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea? Through a series of semi-structured online individual interviews with Japanese youth, the present research mainly contributes to ascertaining the factors affecting contemporary Japanese youth's positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Whereas scholars have given ample attention to the upsurge of nationalistic disposition and anti-Korea movements among the Japanese youth around the early 2000s, scant attention has been given to today's Japanese youth. Also, to date, no previous study has investigated Japanese youth's anti-Korea prejudice with social psychological approaches. Therefore, the findings of this work should make an essential contribution to the study of ethnic prejudice and contemporary Japanese youth nationalism. The structure of the present study takes the form of five chapters, including theoretical framework, general background information, previous scholar's contribution, research method, and analysis of interview results. Firstly, this thesis presents theoretical frameworks which become a basis for interpreting research results. It will then go on to provide background context, previous studies about Japanese youth Nationalism and youth's anti-Korea movements. Finally, the remaining part of this paper introduces the research method and analyzes the interview results.

2. Theoretical Framework

In order to understand what factors affect contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea, we need to first understand the main theoretical frameworks. The present study relies on the guidance of two different theoretical frameworks: 1) Contact Hypothesis and 2) Soft Power Theory. These two theories are the main analytical frameworks and a basis for interpreting research results. In the following pages, this paper will introduce the two main theories and review the relevant literature on these concepts.

2.1. Intergroup Contact Hypothesis and Recent Trends

Establishing the peaceful coexistence of different social groups is one of the biggest social challenges that we face. *How can we overcome intergroup prejudice?* Social psychologists have long addressed this question, and 'intergroup contact' has long been accepted as one of the most promising strategies for reducing intergroup prejudice (Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2005). However, until Gordon Allport has advocated the Contact Hypothesis, social physiologists had been skeptical of the idea that intergroup contact can reduce intergroup prejudice (Kenworthy et al., 2005). In 1954, one American psychologist, Gordon Allport, proposed the Contact Hypothesis in his book, *The Nature of Prejudice*. In the book, he states how intergroup contact can reduce one's prejudice and promote intergroup relations:

Prejudice…may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional support, and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups. (Allport, 1954, p281).

According to Allport (1954), although intergroup contact is not automatically sufficient to establish better intergroup relations, intergroup prejudice can be reduced under the optimal conditions of contact. The optimal conditions include (a) social and institutional support; (b) perception of similarity; (c) equal status; (d) common goals. These four conditions are the basic formulaic version of intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954). Allport clarifies the specific situational conditions which are necessary for intergroup contact. Hence, his Contact Hypothesis is recognized as one of the most influential theories of prejudice reduction between groups (Kenworthy et al., 2005). Since the Contact Hypothesis was firstly introduced in the field of social psychology, a number of case studies have tested the hypothesis. As one of recent research, Pettigrew and Tropp (2005) assessed the Contact Hypothesis by conducting a statistical meta-analysis model. In their study, Pettigrew and Tropp (2005) review 515 studies dealing with Allport's Contact Hypothesis and its outcome. Finally, they conclude that "greater levels of intergroup contact are typically associated with lower levels of prejudice" (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2005, p267). That is, intergroup contact is conceivable as a strong predictor of reducing intergroup prejudice.

Since Allport's influential discussion over the elimination of intergroup prejudice, the

other scholars began to pay attention to *when* intergroup contact works most effectively. For example, researchers investigate the nature of people's cognitive representation of groups. Brew and Miller (1984) propose the *decategorization* model, which argues that reducing the use of category labels and instead interacting with outgroup members on an individual basis will effectively reduce intergroup prejudice. Also, Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, and Dovidio (1989) introduce the *recategorization* model. This model demonstrates that intergroup contact will be maximally effective when perceivers don't use "us" and "them" categories in favor of more inclusive "we" categories (Gaertner et al., 1989). These two models are derived from Allport's notion of '*perception of similarity'* and '*equal status.'* Moreover, since the early 1980s, scholars have increasingly paid attention to *how* intergroup contact can reduce prejudice. To date, a number of studies have suggested that cognitive and affective processes are potential factors for prejudice reduction (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Cognitively, it has established that even though a great amount of knowledge of outgroups has a limited impact on prejudice reduction, "the manner in which contact changed the ways people socially categorized others and perceived the relationship between these categories played a pivotal role in promoting intergroup attuites" (Dovidio et al., 2011, p150). Affectively, reducing intergroup anxiety and threat and increasing empathy for outgroup members are the crucial processes to improve intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, Christ, & Voci,

2010). Overall, multi-dimensional examinations of the Contact Hypothesis demonstrated a positive impact of interpersonal contact on one's attitudes towards outgroups and outgroup members.

In addition to the investigation into intergroup contact, a number of researchers have found the effect of an 'indirect form of contact'. For example, 'Extended Contact Hypothesis' was introduced as one of an indirect form of contact. Through experimental research, Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp (1997) have found that knowledge of ingroup members' close relation with outgroup members is more effective than the influence of direct interpersonal contact. For example, people who know an ingroup member having outgroup friends have fewer negative images and attitudes towards outgroup members (Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011). In other words, "learning of an ingroup member's close relationship with an outgroup member can lead to greater inclusiveness in one's self-concept by association: my friend's friend is my friend" (Dovidio et al., 2011, p150). Followed by Wright et al.'s argument, Dovidio, Eller, and Hewstone (2011) found that "extended contact led to lower perceived ignorance about outgroup, greater awareness of more positive outgroup behavior, greater inclusion of the other in the self, and more positive general outgroup evaluation" (p151). Therefore, the knowledge that ingroup members have close relationships with outgroup members can change the attitudes of ingroup members in more inclusive ways.

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Under the stimulus of scholars' interest in extended contact theory, 'nondirect form of contact' also got increasing attention from social psychological researchers. Mutz and Goldman (2010) emphasize the mass media's effect on one's prejudice and stereotype. Today, mass media plays an important role as a source of information for an impression that ingroup members might have of the other outgroups. In other words, the positive portrait of outgroup members in mass media leads to ingroup members' positive and inclusive attitudes towards outgroup members (Mutz & Goldman, 2010). For example, on the subject of sexuality, an empirical study has demonstrated that when gay characters are portraited as likable in a TV show, the media exposure results in viewers' more positive judgment about gay men (Gregg & Hewes, 2006). In order to further the understanding of the mass media influence, Mutz and Goldman (2010) provide an explanation about how it works from three perspectives. Firstly, they explain it from *parasocial interaction theory*: "viewers feel and react towards people and characters on television just as they do in face-to-face interaction" (Mutz and Goldman, 2010, p9). For example, if viewers like outgroup members appeared on television, the experience is equivalent to direct personal contact and positively influences viewers' attitudes. In other words, mass media encourages viewers to form an affective tie with outgroup members. As a second point, Mutz and Goldman (2010) state that views are likely to identify with ingroup members in television and vicariously take part in televised characters' experiences. For instance, if people witness a peaceful intergroup interaction on television, they emulate and follow the example

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(Mutz & Goldman, 2010). That is, mass media gives viewers opportunities to witness intergroup members' interactions and develop the same emotional response to outgroup members as ingroup members do in television. This situation is more likely to occur "when viewers are sufficiently absorbed by a narrative that they take in the perspective of a character and truly feel themselves to be personally involved" (Mutz & Goldman, 2010, p11). Finally, Mutz and Goldman (2010) claim that viewers perceive media portraits as if they are real-world observations. People cannot experience a large portion of the world first-hand. Instead, they image the world in their head based on the information obtained from mass media, especially television. Thus, insofar as people receive information from mass media, they regard media portraits as accurate depictions of the real world (Mutz & Goldman, 2010). Also, regardless of viewers' awareness, their psychological reactions to media exposure are parity with their reactions to people and events in the real world (Mutz and Goldman, 2010). For example, viewers are likely to feel attached to the person if one person appears closer and larger on a TV screen. That is because when a person physically comes closer in real life, the same reaction occurs (Mutz and Goldman, 2010). Therefore, as a nondirect form of contact, mass media is conceivable as one of the explanatory factors of one's positive/negative attitudes and perception of outgroup members.

In addition to Mutz and Goldman's examination, another researcher claims that intergroup contact via mass media is advantageous in that it can avoid the feeling of anxiety

that often features face-to-face interpersonal interaction (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The feeling of anxiety and threat is barriers to achieve the benefit of interpersonal contact. However, since mass media allows people to be exposed to outgroup members without anxiety and threat, anxiety and threat will be reduced (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). As a consequence, viewer's prejudice and stereotypes are likely to decline.

This mas media effect can also be considered from the perspective of *imagined contact theory*. To imagine is a powerful tool, and people can envisage themselves in any situation. 'Imagined contact' is one of the indirect forms of contact and "mental simulation of a social interaction with a member or members of an outgroup category" (Crisp & Turner, 2009, p234). Crips and Turner (2009), for instance, have demonstrated that those who imagined themselves interacting with outgroup members exhibited more positive attitudes towards outgroups. That is, mental imageries of interaction with outgroup members have a positive effect on an individual's attitudes. The benefit of imagined contact is "its ability to encourage people to seek out contact, to remove inhabitations associated with existing prejudices, and to prepare people to engage outgroups with an open mind" (Crisp & Turner, 2009, p231). Also, imagined contact provides "a road map for the use of multiple contact strategies in improving intergroup relations" (Crisp & Turner, 2009, p231). By mentally simulating positive contacts, people can reduce apprehension and anxiety about future contact with the outgroup members, and it finally

leads people to more positive assessments of the outgroup. Therefore, imagined contact is greatly effective in reconciliation and reducing prejudice.

2.2. Soft Power and Popular Culture

In 1990, the soft power theory was firstly introduced by an American political scientist, Joseph Nye. According to Nye (2004), soft power is "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments." (p1). More specifically, soft power is associated with co-optive power, which relies on the attractiveness of culture (Nye, 2004). Generally speaking, soft power is employed by the government with an aim to get significant benefits. Thus, soft power is used to get what government wants through the attraction of national culture (Nye, 2004). In contrast to the nature of soft power, hard power is "the ability to get others to act in ways that are country to their initial preferences and strategies" (Nye, 2011, p11). As concrete examples, military intervention and economic sanctions can be referred to. Even though both hard power and soft power are essential for governments to achieve their goals, Nye (2004) emphasizes that soft power is more important than hard power in the present international society. That is because soft power can change other's behavior and thoughts by using attraction, not competition or conflict. Furthermore, Nye (2004) argues that soft power is based on a nation's credibility. If the government is seen as manipulative and employs soft power as a means of propaganda, the prestige of soft power will be declined. Thus, credibility serves as a foundation for soft power, and excessive use of soft power might result in repulsion

rather than attraction (Nye, 2004). Whereas the soft power theory arose from the field of political science, the theory got attention from scholars from different study fields because of its new comprehension of the hidden part of international politics.

For example, some researchers focus on soft power and the role of popular culture. Today popular culture is seen as a tool for political persuasion, promotion of national images, and foreign policies (Kozhakhmetova, 2012; Lee, 2012). According to Nye (2004) and Lee (2012), popular culture is a major source of soft power and attraction that shapes one's attitudes towards the other social groups (Nye, 2004; Lee, 2012). In other words, popular culture has the ability to change people's thoughts and attitudes. Moreover, even though it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of popular culture, previous empirical studies demonstrated that popular culture has the ability to form people's ideas, thoughts, and identities in a positive way. For example, based on Nye's soft power theory, Kozhakhmetova (2010) conducted an interview with Japanese female fans of K-pop music and examined the relationship between Korean popular culture and their feeling towards Korea. Finally, her study found that female fans of K-pop music are likely to construct positive and attractive images of Korea (Kozhakhmetova, 2010). Given this Kozhakhmetova's research, it is reasonable to argue that people can have positive attitudes towards outgroups by consuming the popular culture.

Since the aim of this study is to seek out the factors that affect present-day Japanese youth's attitudes and prejudice towards Korea, the concepts and theories presented above can

serve as main analytical frameworks. In particular, 'soft power theory,' 'nondirect contact theory,' and 'indirect contact theory' might play a pivotal role in analyzing data. That is because present Japanese society observes the increasing popularity of Korean popular culture among the youth. Today, with a rapid spread of internet media, such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Netflix, the K-pop industry extended its fandom among young Japanese people (Ahn, Oh, & Kim, 2013; Jin and Yoon, 2016). Therefore, in particular, *soft power theory*, *indirect contact theory*, and *nondirect contact theory* may help the present research to examine the relationship between the popularity of K-pop and Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea. Let us now turn to review the general background context about Japanese nationalism in the early 2000s and previous studies on Japanese youth nationalism and the youth's anti-Korea movements in the early 2000s.

3. Background

3.1. Japanese Nationalism in the early 2000s

In 2005, thousands of anti-Japanese demonstrators marched the street in Beijing, Shanghai, and other major Chinese cities. They chanted anti-Japanese slogans and exhibited their resentment towards Japan (Sasada, 2006). A few months later, when former Prime Minister Koizumi visited Seoul, a series of anti-Japanese rallies took place in Korea. Korean demonstrators burned the Japanese flags and the pictures of Koizumi (Sasada, 2006; Honda, 2007). As this anti-Japanese sentiment intensified in China and Korea, so the Japanese countered with their nationalistic turn. Japanese people, who used to advocate traditional postwar pacifism, took nationalistic stances more than ever before (Sasada, 2006; Honda, 2007). In the early 2000s, Japanese nationalism was characterized by their growing support of hawkish national defense policies and rebellious stances on hostile neighbors, Korea and China (Sasada, 2006). During that time, the majority of Japanese people began to claim that constitutional revision is necessary to protect the nation. According to the national survey conducted by Cabinet Office in April 2006 (2006), 56 percent of respondents supported the revision of Article nine while only 15.4 percent of respondents supported the revision in 1965. Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution declares "war, as a sovereign right of the nation, and the threat or use of force, is forever abolished as a means of settling disputes with other nations" (Umeda, 2006, p7). Moreover, public approval for the Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF)

has outstandingly risen. According to a Cabinet Office survey in 2006 (2006), 84.9 percent of respondents showed their positive views on the JSDF, while only 13.2 percent supported JSDF in 1991. These national surveys revealed that an increasing number of Japanese populations supported stronger defense policies in the early 2000s.

Another outstanding feature of Japanese nationalism in the early 2000s was their rebellious stances on neighboring countries, China and Korea. In the early 2000s, Japanese society observed the stunning growth of hostility towards China. According to Cabinet Office (2006), 63.4 percent of respondents exhibited their negative views of China, while it was only 40 percent in 1990. Even though the statistical data does not prove the Japanese anti-Korean sentiment during the early 2000s, existing empirical research recognizes that the Japanese had negative attitudes towards Korea. For example, at the time, many anti-Korea demonstrations and hate speeches took place in various cities in Japan (Ito, 2014). "Trash to Trash box, Korea to Korea Peninsula!" "Korean-residence (or *Zainichi*) should serve your country. Korean men should be drafted to Korean army and women should become prostitute like comfort women!" (Ito, 2014, p435). These are the most representative remarks expressed by the anti-Korean protesters. With Japanese and military flags, the members of *Zaitoku-kai* and its sympathizers appeared onto the street and slandered Korea and Korean-residence (*Zainichi*). *Zaitoku-kai* or *Association of Citizens who do not Tolerate Privileges of Foreign Residents in Japan* is a far-right extremist political organization in Japan. This organization was established by the end of

2006, and the membership was announced to be around 13500 as of 2014 (Ito, 2014). According

to Ito (2014), Zaitoku-kai and its sympathizers defamed Korean residences from 6 points:

1. Koreans don't have to pay tax, the subscription fee of NHK (Japanese National Broadcasting), water, etc.
2. Koreans can receive 6million yen a year, so they don't have to work.
3. Koreans can use their alias to make their bank account. Hence it is easy to conduct illegal transactions.
4. Koreans are privileged because when they commit crimes, only their Japanese names are reported.
5. Koreans have a special permanent resident status that the other nationalities cannot have.
6. Korean residents increase the Japanese crime rate.

Zaitoku-kai and its allies utilize these information and knowledge to justify their harassment

and defamation, whether these information are true or not (Ito, 2014, p436). For example, on

December 4, 2009, members of *Zaitoku-kai* and its allies demonstrated against a Korean

elementary school in Kyoto, which was established to preserve Korean ethnic identity. The

school was using a public park next to the elementary school because of their limited funds and

space (Ito, 2014). *Zaitoku-kai* took this chance to blame resident Koreans for occupying the

public space illegally, and series of hate speech took place in front of the school: "This school

is training center of North Korea spies." "They are children of criminals." "Korean school

should disappear" (Ito, 2014, p438). Following this *Zaitoku-kai*'s activities, series of anti-Korea

demonstrations and hate speech acts also happened in other major cities, such as Tokyo, Osaka,

Fukuoka, Nagoya, and Sendai (Ito, 2014).

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In addition to the anti-Korean protests, the Korean wave also intensified the anti-Korean movement. The Korean wave is a phenomenon of spreading Korean popular culture in East Asia. Although the Korean wave was considered a way to overcome political and historical issues between Korea and Japan, it intensified the anti-Korea movement (Matsushima, 2017). As Korean popular culture became popular in East Asia, the Japanese stubbornly rejected the Korean wave. This anti-Korean-wave movement culminated when a Japanese actor, Takaoka Sosuke, posted his text on his Twitter that jobs for Japanese actors were reduced as Korean drama became the main subject of Japanese mass media (Kim and Lee, 2014; Kim, Song, and Jang, 2014). Given his complaints about the growing popularity of Korean popular culture, more than six thousand demonstrators protested against Fuji TV in August 2010 because Fuji TV was broadcasting many Korean dramas (Kim and Lee, 2014; Kozhakhmetova, 2012). As presented above, in the early 2000s, Japanese people robustly exhibited their detestation and rejection towards Korean and Korean popular culture through demonstrations and hate speech acts. Then, the following section reviews the previous studies on Japanese youth's nationalism and anti-Korea movements in the early 2000s.

3.2. Previous Studies on Japanese Youth Nationalism and Youth's Anti-Korea Movement

Only in the past 15 years have studies of Japanese youth nationalism directly addressed how youth nationalism is defined and distinguished from other types of nationalism (Lijun & Kia, 2009; Sasada, 2006, Honda, 2007). According to Lijun & Kia (2008), Sasada (2006), and Honda (2007), Japanese youth nationalism during the early 2000s was generally depicted in two spectrums, National Superiority Theory and detestation towards Korea and China. The former is categorized as Japonism, which refers to "a fad of the Japanese culture with particular emphasis on art and its beauty judgement" (Lijun and Kia, 2008, p78). In the early 2000s, Japonism was expressed in three ways (Lijun and Kia, 2008, Honda, 2007). Firstly, Japanese youth increasingly enjoyed the recital of Japanese poems and literary works. One book, "*Koe o Dashi Te Yomi Tai Nihongo*" (Reading the Japanese Language though Speaking Loudly), published by Saitou Takashi, sold over 1.4 million copies and became popular among Japanese youth (Lijun and Kia, 2008). Secondly, as their expression of rising nationalism, Japanese youth frequently sang the National Anthem '*Kimi Ga Yo*' with the Japanese flag on their faces at sports events such as FIFA World Cup (Lijun and Kia, 2008, Honda, 2007). The third expression of their nationalism was their participation in *Yosakoi Festival*. *Yosakoi Festival* is the traditional summer festival of Japan, and it was increasingly popular among Japanese youth. For example, two million people participated in the *Yosakoi Festival* of 2002 held in Hokkaido prefecture, and most of the participants were Japanese youth (Honda, 2007). Lijun and Kia

(2008) argue that these renaissances of traditional Japanese culture made Japanese youth rediscover their national identity and derived a parallel rise of detestation of China and Korea. Similarly, Sasada (2006) also argues that Japanese youth nationalism during the early 2000s was defined by their defiant stances towards Korea and China. According to Sasada (2006), whereas Japanese youth were sympathetic to countries that are friendly to Japan, such as the United States and Taiwan, they exhibited their strong detestation towards Korea and China. Since the emergence of the discussions over Japanese youth nationalism in the early 2000s, other scholars began to provide their particular focuses on the anti-Korea movement among Japanese youth.

Among the scholars who investigated early 2000s Japanese youth nationalism, Sakamoto (2011) and Maslow (2011) claim the rise of Internet (cyber) nationalism. In the early 2000s, cyberspace was the most popular playground for Japanese youth to exhibit their xenophobia towards Korea. According to Sakamoto (2011), internet nationalism does not mean long-distance nationalism or online nationalism, enabling on-street nationalistic demonstrations. In the case of Japan, internet nationalism was confined only to cyberspace and rarely spilled out onto the street. Japanese youth, called 'Cyberspace right-winger (Netto-uyo)', stayed within the Internet and enthusiastically expressed xenophobic remarks about Korea (Sakamoto, 2011; Maslow, 2011). In the words of Sakamoto (2011), the Japanese youth's internet nationalism was "single-niche colonies of people who share intolerance" (p10). They gathered on specific

online websites and reinforced their views by interacting with others of the same persuasion.

Among many internet websites, the online forum site' *2 Channel* (2-chan) was the most popular

playground for the young Japanese. The site registers 2.7 million posts every day throughout

more than 800 active boards comprising thousands of threads, and the site does not require user

registrations or email verifications (Sakamoto, 2011). Thus, it allowed more than 9.9 million

users to access the site in 2005 and served as a public sphere for free speech and political

discussion (Maslow, 2011). Most 2-chan users were comprised of youth (Sakamoto, 2011).

They supported the revision of Article Nine of the Japanese constitution and political leaders'

official warship at Yasukuni Shrine, where 14 Japanese wartime leaders and war dead are

honored (Sakamoto, 2011). Moreover, given the lack of regulations on the website, Japanese

youth slandered Korea and Koreans with extreme tone: "Koreans are cancer of Japan and should

leave Japan" "Koreans are the world's shame" (Sakamoto, 2011, p6). Japanese youth often

portraited Koreans as violent, unethical, emotional, and irrational people, while they depicted

themselves as moral, rational, polite, and tolerant people (Sakamoto, 2011). According to

Sakamoto (2011), the xenophobic verbal abuse of Korean people "served as triggers for

invoking and repeating a clear and antagonistic us/them relationship" (p6). In other words,

Japanese youth attempted to reinforce the ingroup identity by excluding Korean as 'Other.'

Finally, Sakamoto (2011) concludes that the xenophobic internet nationalism was "a product of

a group polarization, which refers to pattern where discussion among people who share similar

views tend to radicalize each individual's original position, leading the group as a whole to think the same thoughts in a more extreme fashion" (p10). In the early 2000s, technological development and the accessibility to the Internet promoted politically right-leaning trends and the anti-Korean discourse among Japanese youth.

Given the rise of the anti-Korean movement among Japanese youth in the early 2000s, numerous studies have attempted to ascertain the factors causing the Japanese youth's negative attitudes towards Korea. For example, some scholars focus on comic books. In the early 2000s, an increasing number of comic books that carry nationalistic messages have been published, and they became quite popular among the Japanese youth. One of the most notable comic books was *Kenkanryu* [Hating Korean Wave]. This comic book essentially reiterates conservative scholars' argument that appeals to readers' national pride (Matsushima, 2017). Finally, this comic book went into its fourth volume and sold over a million copies (Raddatz, 2012). Matsushima (2017) and Raddatz (2012) then investigate the role of this nationalist manga, *Kenkanryu*. According to Matsushima (2017), *Kenkanryu* provided a basic condition for prejudice towards Korean and Korean residents in Japan. With careful investigations into the visual representation of Koreans in the comic book, Matsushima (2017) claims that *Kenkanryu* promoted the antagonistic relationship between Korea and Japan and induced youth's hatred towards Korea. Similarly, Raddatz (2012) stresses the graphic representation of the characters of *Kenkanryu*. According to Raddatz (2012), Koreans are portraited as loud,

rowdy, and irrational, while Japanese characters are presented as rational and calm. For example, Japanese are drawn with big round eyes, while Korean characters are depicted with extremely narrow eyes (Raddatz, 2012). Also, Korean characters often "lose their temper, leading to profuse sweating and the utterance of incomprehensible animal-like babble which Yamamoto (the author of *Kenkanryu*) employs as a stylistic device to underline Korean inferiority" (Raddatz, 2012, p223).

In addition to the visual representation, Raddatz (2012) points out the story of *Kenkanryu*. According to Raddatz (2012), *Kenkanryu* predominantly provided a distorted and "candy-coated" perception of Japanese-Korean history (p217). *Kenkanryu* talks about Japanese-Korean history in line with Japanese revisionists' and nationalists' ideas, which affirm past Japan's aggressive actions during the Wartime (Raddatz, 2012). For instance, the story tells that the Japanese government's colonization of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945 was only for defensive measures against the expansion of the Western imperialists (Raddatz, 2012). Moreover, *Kenkanryu* took a style where fact and fiction are blurred. *Kenkanryu* rearranged historical facts and concealed the important information, and simultaneously stressed minor details to portray Korea negatively (Raddatz, 2012). Therefore, those who were unaware of Japanese history accepted the story as truth and, at the same time, harbored negativities towards Korea. Overall, Matsushima (2017) and Raddatz (2012) provide important insights into the role

of nationalistic manga, *Kenkanryu*, and how the comic book aroused Japanese youth's enmity towards Korea in the early 2000s.

Furthermore, Lijun & Kia (2008) and Sakamoto (2011) focus on the domestic situation surrounding Japanese youth in the early 2000s. According to these scholars, the emergence of anti-Korea prejudice among the Japanese youth coincided with the social problems of Japanese youth. For instance, Lijun & Kia (2008) and Sakamoto (2011) argue that Japanese youth's verbal abuse of Korean was the expression of social anxiety of the Japanese youth. Due to the early 2000s economic recession, the Japanese youth failed to obtain stable jobs, so they had to establish a new lower-class sector (Sakamoto, 2011). According to Sakamoto (2011), "under such circumstances, constructing and attaching the external enemy figure in cyberspace seems to offer one way of dealing with social frustration and anxiety" (p5). In other words, Japanese youth's insecurity with their daily life encouraged them to defame Korea as an outlet for their frustration. However, Sakamoto (2011) states that the early 2000s Japanese economic situation was not only the explanatory factor of youth's detestation towards Korea, but their ideologies were discursively constructed.

While scholars gave ample attention to the factors affecting Japanese youth's antipathy towards Korea during the early 2000s, a great deal of previous studies indicate that political events were the strong driving factors of Japanese youth's anti-Korea movements in the early 2000s (Sakamoto, 2011; Sasada, 2006; Maslow, 2011; Matsushima, 2017). According to

Sasada (2006), the anti-Japanese demonstrations in Korea, driven by a territorial dispute over *Takeshima* and historical dispute, intensified Japanese youth's hostility towards Korea. Since the end of WW2, Japan and Korea have claimed their sovereignty over the tiny island called *Takeshima* (*Dokdo* in Korean). However, the Japanese assembly voted to set February 22nd to commemorate *Takeshima* island as a Japanese territory (Sasada, 2006). This Japanese assembly voting was abrasive for the Korean people and invoked their wrath. For historical disputes, Korea strongly objected to the former Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine for worship (Sasada, 2006). This shrine honors Japanese Class-A wartime criminals and war dead, so this shrine symbolizes Japan's past aggression during WW2 from a Korean standpoint (Sasada,2006; Maslow; 2011). Also, the Korean government alleged that Japanese historical textbooks glorified Japanese history by downplaying Japan's past aggression during WW2 (Sasada,2006; Maslow; 2011). Given these political and historical disputes between the Korean and Japanese governments, a series of massive demonstrations took place in Korea. Korean demonstrators chanted anti-Japanese slogans, burned the Japanese flags, and exhibited their resentment towards Japan (Sasada, 2006). According to Sasada (2006), as a response to the growing anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea, Japanese youth countered with their anti-Korea movement. Moreover, with respect to territorial disputes, Sakamoto (2011) and Matsushima (2017) point out the *Tsushima* island territorial issue. *Tsushima* island (*Deamado* in Korea) is located between Kyusyu Island of Japan and Korea. Japanese and

Korean government also have asserted their sovereignty over this tiny island. This island was the source of the tense and disturbing atmosphere because of the growing presence of Korean tourists on the island (Sakamoto, 2011). Japanese nationalists organized demonstration to demand that Koreans leave the island with the Japanese flag and shouting: "Go home Koreans!" and "We won't allow a Korean Invasion!" (Sakamoto, 2011, p1). This nationalists' demonstration was reported and circulated on the internet. As a result, nationalists' massages reached Japanese youth and induced their wrath against Korea. Based on the argument given by Sasada (2006), Sakamoto (2011), Maslow (2011), and Matsushima (2017), in early 2000s Japanese youth's anti-Korea sentiment was heavily influenced by intergovernmental relations between Korea and Japan.

The purpose of this literature review was to view the trends in the study of Japanese youth nationalism and the hate-Korea movement within the past 15 years. The studies presented thus far provide an important insight into Japanese youth nationalism and its unique characteristics. It is clear from the research reviewed that Japanese youth nationalism was characterized by their pride in Japanese culture and rebellious stances towards Korea and China. Along with this, it is also clear that, in the early 2000s, the diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan was a strong predictor of Japanese youth's anti-Korea movement. However, whereas scholars have given ample attention to the upsurge of nationalistic disposition among the Japanese youth around the early 2000s, scant attention has been given to present-day

Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Koreans in the light of social psychological perspectives. Therefore, the importance and originality of this study are that it explores present Japanese youth nationalism, their attitudes towards Korea and Koreans, and factors that affect contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. In the following chapter, this thesis presents the hypotheses and the main research questions while introducing contemporary Japanese youth's trends and characteristics.

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

Whereas Japanese youth typically took rebellious stances towards Korea in the early 2000s, contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes are entirely different from those of the early 2000s. Today, Japanese youth tend to have positive and tolerant attitudes towards Korea. According to the NHK Broadcasting Cultural research institution (2020), around 83 percent of Japanese youth aged 18 to 29 showed a strong desire to interact with foreigners, including Korean people. Moreover, today Korean popular music (K-pop) is the most popular genre among Japanese youth (The Asahi Shinbun Globe, 2019). Given these two points, it is reasonable to think that contemporary Japanese youth are more tolerant towards Korea than those of youth in the early 2000s. However, Japanese youth's tolerant attitudes do not necessarily mean Korea and Japan have improved their diplomatic relations. Rather, we can find a worsened international relationship than those of the early 2000s.

In terms of historical dispute, the Korean government critically reacted to the 2020 former Prime minister Abe's visit to the controversial war memorial, Yasukuni shrine, for the war dead (BBC News, 2020). Also, the dispute over the Korean comfort women in WWII is still a significant historical issue. Korean feminists and human rights activists demonstrated on the street and set up a comfort women statue with a Korean government backup (Hu, 2017: O'dwyer 2019). For political disputes, a new wave of boycotts started in South Korea due to the Japan and Korea trade disputes. Koreans boycotted Japanese products and services, canceled their trip

to Japan, and refused to watch Japanese films (Denyer, 2019). Given this mass anti-Japanese demonstration in South Korea, The Washington Post reported that the diplomatic Korea-Japan relation is the worst in five decades (Denyer, 2019). Today, the bilateral relationship between the Japanese and Korean governments is deteriorating in inverse proportion to the Japanese youth's tolerant attitudes towards Korea. In other words, it seems that young Japanese people's attitudes towards Korea are independent of the Japanese administration's political stance on Korea.

In this sense, when we look at the contemporary Japanese youth's trends and characteristics, the popularity of Korean popular culture and their political indifference are conceivable as predictors of their tolerant attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Today, Japanese society observes the youth's political apathy. As the progression of aging society with the declining birthrate, the elderly significantly impacts the election (Yakushiji, 2016). Voters aged 60 and up comprise 53 percent of the electorates, and voters in twenties constitute only about a third of Japan's total population (Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2017). Thus, the young do not appear to be a high priority for Japanese politicians (Yakushiji, 2016; Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2017). Under this '*silver democracy system*' focusing on the elderly's public opinion, the young voters are unlikely to impact domestic policies, and it induces the contemporary young generation's political indifference and reluctance to vote. The other feature of contemporary Japanese youth is the growing popularity

of Korean popular culture. Since Japan had opened its gate to Korean pop culture in 1988, South Korea exported cultural content to Japan, and the market rapidly grew over the past ten years (Min-sik, 2019). According to The Korea Herald (2019), the Korean music industry's annual export to Japan recorded $320 million in 2017, accounting for 62.5 percent of music exports. In terms of all cultural content, Korea exported $1.38 billion worth of content to Japan in 2016 (Min-sik, 2019). Today, Korean pop culture overtakes the Japanese music industry and becomes the most popular genre among contemporary Japanese youth. Given this contemporary youth's dispositions, the present research hypothesizes that Korean popular culture and their political apathy synergistically led Japanese youth to tolerant attitudes towards Korea.

Based on the discussion I made in this section, the present research focuses on three research questions: 1) Does present-day Japanese youth have positive or negative attitudes towards Korea and Koreans? and; 2) What factors affect contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes towards South Korea and Koreans?; 3) To what extent, Korean popular culture and political apathy contribute to young Japanese' attitudes towards Korea and Koreans? In the following session, I introduce the research method to answer these three research questions.

5. Research Method

5.1. Methodological Framework

As the present study aims to investigate present-day Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Koreans and clarify the impact of political apathy and Korean pop culture on youth's attitudes, this study has relied on the qualitative approach. Generally speaking, qualitative research methods have been employed to understand social structures, behaviors, and cultures (Ritchie, 2003). By adapting qualitative research, researchers can ascertain the participants' thinking and understanding of social phenomena (Ritchie, 2003; Bryman, 2008). In other words, qualitative methods play a crucial role in identifying the factors or the motivations that underlie a participants' interpretation of specific social phenomena. Therefore, by adopting the qualitative research method, this study can unpack how Japanese youth constructed their images of Korea and Korean people (Bryman, 2008).

Moreover, in applying the qualitative approach, the present research attempted to gather participants' subjective data such as their feelings, opinions, and experiences on a specific issue. Hence, among various qualitative approaches, this study relied on individual online interviews with Japanese youth. By conducting individual interviews, one can understand the deeply rooted and delicate social phenomena because of a detailed investigation of participants' personal perspectives (Ritchie, 2003). Additionally, while there are various ways to conduct an interview, such as unstructured, semi-structured, and highly-structured, data were collected

using semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008). Considering the peculiarities that Japanese youth's prejudice and attitude towards Korea are discursively constructed, semi-structured interviews seem like an appropriate method because it allows participants to feel free to touch upon topics that have not been covered in the questions (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions that cover several topics.

The interview started with more general topics and gradually approached to main issues. Moreover, in order to ascertain how Japanese youth interpret their experiences, I often asked "What," "How," and "Why" questions (Adams, 2015, p493). For example, I started the interview by asking: "How do you spend your days?; What kind of music do you often listen to?" Then I narrow down my questions to a sensitive topic such as their prejudice towards Korea and Koreans (See the full interview guideline in Appendix2). However, I did not always follow the interview guideline because it was a semi-structured interview. Thus, when the new topics came up, I asked further questions related to research topics.
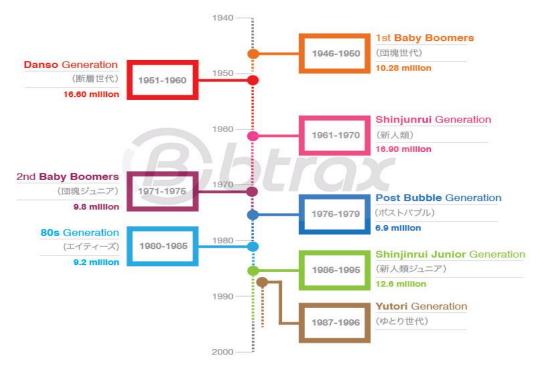
5.2. Focused Population

The present research defines the Japanese youth as the so-called '*Satori Generation*,' a cluster of individuals born from around 1996 to 2005. In Japan, as Figure 1 shows below, the generation is more specifically linked to changes of macro-economic trends, and the ideologies are different depending on the generations (Francis, 2019). This *Satori generation* is less likely to have strong political stances and to protest against social issues. They are open to diversity

and comfortable with fluidity (Francis, 2019). Therefore, I firmly believed that they would

present indifference to political disputes and exhibit positive attitudes towards Korea and

Koreans. Regarding sample strategies, I have already conducted pilot interviews, so this was

the starting point of collecting the sample. Then, I used a snowball sampling method. The table

below shows the basic demographic data of interview participants.

Figure 1

A Quick Guide to Japan's Generation Cohorts

Note. By Wong, K, 2016, A Quick Guide to Japan's Generation Cohorts, Freshtrax, Retrieved from
https://blog.btrax.com/gen-x-millennials-a-quick-guide-to-japans-generation-cohorts/ (Accessed: 1/3/2021).

5.3. Population Units

As one of the objectives, this research aims to determine the impact of Korean pop culture and political indifference on Japanese youth's attitudes to Korea and Koreans. Hence, I planned to have a gender-balanced sample. As a reason for this sampling categorization, it was assumed that a different gender would indicate a different level of political interests, preferences of Korean pop culture, and prejudice towards Korea (Steel, 2004; LINE cooperation, 2021; Cox and Schehr, 1992; Lester, 1994).

5.3.1. Political Behavior and Gender in Japan.

The different social gender structure leads to the different political behavior between men and women. Steel (2004) found a gender difference in terms of electrical behavior and political interest in Japan. Using data from the *Society for Promotion of Clean Elections Lower House Election Surveys,* he discovers that women are less likely than men to vote in Lower House Elections and participate in political activities. His findings indicate that Japanese women are more indifferent to political discussion.

5.3.2. Gender and Consumption Korean Pop Culture

In 2020, LINE cooperation (2020) collected a large amount of survey data about the cultural trend among the young Japanese population. The survey revealed that there was a

difference in terms of the popularity of Korean pop culture between men and women: Japanese

women consume K-pop music more than Japanese men. Given this survey result, the present

research assumes that Japanese women would present a stronger preference for Korean popular

culture than men.

5.3.3. Gender and Prejudice

Several scholars contributed to investigating the role of gender in prejudice. Cox and

Schehr (1992) argue that female college students are less prejudiced than males. Also, Lester's

(1994) investigation of white college students reveals that women have less ethnic prejudice

than men on the social distance scale. Therefore, based on the previous research findings, it

could predict that Japanese women have less prejudice towards Korea and Koreans than men.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Interview Participants

Participants	Code	Age	Gender	Educational Background	Current Status
Participants 1	P1	22	FEMALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 2	P2	24	FEMALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 3	P3	24	FEMALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 4	P4	24	FEMALE	Vocational School Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 5	P5	24	FEMALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 6	P6	24	FEMALE	University Graduated	Out of Work
Participants 7	P7	24	FEMALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 8	P8	22	MALE	University Graduated	Schedule to Enter Graduate School
Participants 9	P9	23	MALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 10	P10	24	MALE	University Graduated	Employed for wages
Participants 11	P11	24	MALE	University Graduated	Graduate Student
Participants 12	P12	24	MALE	University Graduated	Self Employed

5.4. Measures

5.4.1. Interest in Korean Popular Culture

So as to capture interviewees' interest in Korean popular culture, I asked: "What kind of music you listen to?" "Do you listened to K-pop music?; What kinds of images or impressions do you have for K-pop music?" Then, I asked about a scandal about BTS, a seven-member Korean pop group. In 2018, one of the BTS members, *Jimin*, wore a T-shirt depicting the US atomic bomb mushroom clouds over Hiroshima. It stirred anger among Japanese BTS fans, and their TV show was canceled (BBC News, 2018). Given this controversy, I showed participants the picture of the T-shirt and asked: "Do you know that there was a controversy that one of the BTS members wore a T-shirt depicting the US atomic bomb mushroom clouds over Hiroshima; How do you personally feel about this controversy and image to BTS?; After you know this scandal, your image towards BTS has changed?"

5.4.2. Political Apathy

In order to capture the participants' interest in political events, I started asking general questions: "What do you think which countries have a good/bad relationship with Japan?" Then I asked participants about ongoing political and historical disputes between the Japanese and Korean governments: "How much do you know and care about ongoing Korean comfort women dispute between the Korean and Japanese government?; How much do you know about anti-Japanese protest which has been taking place in Korea since 2019?" Subsequently, to

measure participants' interest in domestic political discussion, I asked one question: "Do you

go to vote?" Finally, I asked about participants' interest in political news: "Do you feel you are

keeping up with current domestic political news?" When the answer was "Yes," I proceeded

with: "Why do you care about political news?" When the answer was "No," interviewees were

asked: "Why don't you care about political news?" From here, questions were explored to

measure how much distance participants feel between political events and themselves.

5.4.3. Prejudice towards Korea and Korea People

According to Brown (2010) and Varadi (2014), prejudice is distinguished by three

components: affective, cognitive, behavioral component. The cognitive component refers to an

individual's knowledge about the outgroup, the affective component to the feelings towards

outgroup members, and finally, the behavioral components refer to "the possible actions one

takes when coming into contact with the outgroup members" (Varadi, 2014, p98). In the present

research, I defined anti-Korea prejudice by these three components and measured them by

different items. For example, the affective component of prejudice was measured by the social

distance scale (Varadi, 2014; Geisinger, 2010). According to Geisinger (2010), the social

distance scale is a psychological testing scale to measure people's willingness to participate in

social contacts of varying degrees of closeness with outgroup members. The stronger individual

has prejudice towards outgroup members, the less the person will wish to interact with the

outgroup members. Using this social distance scale, I asked interviewees: "How would you feel

having Korean people as your marriage partner, your close friends, colleagues at work, and citizens of Japan?" For the measurement of the cognitive part of prejudice, I asked interviewees about their image of Korea and Koreans: "What kind of images comes to your mind when you hear the word Korea?; Could you list up your image of Korean people as many as you can?: Where do your images of Korea/ Korean come from?" Finally, the behavioral dimension of prejudice was measured by testing "discriminative intention" against Korea (Varadi, 2014, p102). For this, I asked: "What if the Japanese government decides to accept twice as many Korean immigrants as last year. Some of your friends or family members decide to protest against this government immigration policy. How would you react?" The full interview guideline is available in Appendix2.

5.5. Data Collection and Data Analysis

In total, twelve Japanese young people were interviewed for this research: seven women and five men. Three participants are someone I know personally. Although I am aware of the risk that interviewing participants are someone I personally know, it was valuable data to obtain their subjective perspectives.

The collection of data was conducted from March to the second half of April over Zoom. All participants were approached with the agreement that the data collected is to be used merely for academic purposes and that their personal information is anonymized. While the interviews were conducting, I have recorded the interviews with participants' consent. After

the interview was completed, I transcribed the recorded video and managed to capture only the essential data related to research questions with the Thematic Analysis model (Gavin, 2008). Firstly, I classified interview data into three thematic categories: participants' images towards Korea and Koreans, interest in Korean popular culture, and interest in political news and political participation. Then, I evaluated whether their utterances were spoken negatively or positively. As a general overview of the data collection, all interview participants were motivated by discussion topics and openly shared their individual experiences and even their stories of family. The conversation lasted 45 to 60 minutes, and most of the time was used for participants to speak freely.

One of the major criticisms for qualitative research methods is that finings might not be generalized on the specific topic and not be able to apply to a broader population (Hancock, 2002). In the same way, the main weakness of the present research was the paucity of a wide range of data in terms of educational qualifications. Therefore, considerably further work will need to be done to validate this study hypothesis.

6. Data Presentation and Analysis

In the present chapter, Japanese youth's prejudice against Korea and Koreans and factors affecting their attitudes towards Korea and Koreans will be investigated by analyzing the data gathered from the individual interviews. As discussed before, prejudice consists of three components: affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Varadi, 2014; Brown, 2010). Hence, this chapter is composed of four themed sections. In the first analysis, the participants' affective prejudice is explored by reviewing their social distance from Korean people. Then, this chapter goes on to examine the cognitive component of prejudice and analyze how interviewees' images of Korea and Koreas are constructed. And the third section is concerned with the interviewees' behavioral component of prejudice and investigates how behavioral prejudice is related to participants' political apathy. Finally, using theories introduced in chapter 2, the fourth section explains the main findings that emerge from the analysis.

6.1. Affective Prejudice and Social Distance from Korean People

In this section, the interviewees' affective component of prejudice will be assessed. As discussed in chapter 5.4.3, the feeling of social distance from outgroup members points to the affective prejudice towards the outgroup members. For example, if one person has negative prejudice towards outgroup members, she/he would not accept personal interactions with the outgroup members (Geisinger, 2010). Hence, to assess what proximity of social interaction interview participants can accept with Koreans, I first asked participants, "How would you feel

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having a Korean as your marriage partner?" Subsequently, the questions such as "How would you feel having the Koreans as your close personal friends/ colleagues at work/ immigrants to Japan?" were followed. Overall, all participants suggested tolerant attitudes towards Koreans regardless of their gender, educational qualifications, occupation, residential area, and birthplace. For example, one male participant (P8) stated:

> I will never reject Korean women as my marriage partner. Personally, I don't want to judge people by their race or nationalities. It does not matter which country one is from. Nationality is not information to evaluate one's personality. Therefore, I don't have any negative feelings about accepting the Korean people as my close friends, colleagues at work, and immigrants to Japan. (P8, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

From the quote above, P8 stated even if one is a member of a specific nation, his/her nationality would not be counted as information to evaluate the person. Thus, he did not indicate a negative attitude to accept a Korean as a marriage partner, close friend, colleague at work, an immigrant to Japan. Similarly, the other participants indicated tolerant attitudes. For instance, P4 said, "Personally speaking, having a Korean man as my marriage partner is totally fine, and I would not have any hesitations. Their nationality is not the reason for my decision" (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021). Similarly, P11 said:

> I wouldn't feel any negative sentiment to have a Korean woman as my marriage partner. Moreover, if someone objected to having a Korean as my wife, I would get angry at them. Thus, there is no problem to have Koreans as my friends, colleagues at work, and immigrants to Japan (P11, personal communication, April 14, 2021).

Overall, not only the participants presented above but also all interviewees stated that they would not feel any negative sentiment in accepting Korean people as their marriage partner, close friends, colleagues at work, and immigrants to Japan. Given these interviewees' responses, it is reasonable to argue that interview participants are free of affective prejudice and have tolerant attitudes towards Koreans.

However, it should be empathized that interviewees are not unaware of anti-Korean prejudice, which is shared within Japanese society. In other words, whereas they recognize the existing negative stereotypes of Koreans, they still have tolerant attitudes towards Koreans. One female participant (P1), for instance, expressed her apprehension about how her grandmother would react if she got married to a Korean. She said:

> I am an open person, so it is totally fine to have a Korean as my marriage partner, and nationality doesn't really matter. However, I guess my grandmother would care about it, but personally, I don't care which countries my partner is from (P1, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

From the quote above, it is obvious that she has a tolerant attitude towards Koreans. At the same time, her remarks lead to our presumption that she is aware of her grandmother's negative stereotypes of Koreans. Thus, she said, her positive attitude to Koreans is a personal opinion. Similar opinions and attitudes were observed from the other participants. P2, P4, and P5 touched upon their parents' negative stereotypes of Koreans. One female participant (P2) stated as follows:

I wouldn't feel any negative sentiment to have a Korean person as my marriage partner, close friend, a colleague at work, and immigrant to Japan. But I worry about how my parents would feel if I had a Korean as my marriage partner because my father hates Korea so much. I had a house rule that we had to eat dinner together with family members at around 7 o'clock every day and watched NHK TV (Japan Broadcasting cooperation supported by the government). At the time, my father unilaterally told negative stories of Korea to me even though I did not want to hear them (P2, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

P4 and P5 also said:

You know… plenty of Korean residences live in my hometown, so I often listened to my parents' and grandmother's intense discriminatory remarks against Koreans. One day, when I told my father that I want to work at a barbecue restaurant, he told me not to work there because barbecue restaurants are always owned by *Zainichi* (Korean residences in Japan). And he objected to my Korean trip as well. He hated Korea. That is why he has been warning me that he would cut my ties with family if I married a Korean. Personally speaking, discrimination is out of fashion. I have hardly seen anyone from my generation defaming Korean people. That is old fashion (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

In my opinion, I don't have any negative sentiment to accept a Korean as my marriage partner, but I can't marry them because of my father. Actually, my father has strong anti-Korean prejudice. In his head, Korea is translated into immoral existence. Hence, when I was a university student, he strongly opposed my Korean trip and insisted that Korea is a country with the highest sexual crime rates in the world. One day when I came back home from university, he left several articles about sexual assault cases in Korea on my desk to discourage me from traveling to Korea. But I could hardly understand his opinion because his argument was based on emotions, not on facts (P5, personal communication, April 4, 2021).

Interestingly, although P4 and P5 have a family member who possesses a strong anti-Korean sentiment, their attitudes are not influenced by their parents, and they exhibited positive attitudes towards Koreans. In addition to their family story, the other participant (P7) encountered negative stereotypes of Koreans at her workplace. She said:

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I remember that when I worked at a Japanese restaurant, my manager made a negative statement towards a Korean tourist group. It was the first time that I encountered those who have anti-Korean sentiments. Then I realized that anti-Korean prejudice really exists in Japanese society (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

Overall, we can clearly observe the interview participants' openness to have a close relationship with Korean people. Moreover, the striking observation that emerged from the interviews was that most participants were aware of the existing anti-Korean prejudice. In other words, participants' tolerant attitudes are immune to the widespread anti-Korean prejudice in Japan. Now, it is possible to explore why their positive attitudes are not swayed by negative stereotypes about Koreans. The following part of this chapter thus moves on to illuminates the factors affecting interview participants' tolerant attitudes towards Korea and the Koreans.

6.2. Cognitive Prejudice and Image of Korea and Koreans

6.2.1. Image of Korea and Korean Popular Culture

This sub-chapter will present the participants' cognitive dimension of prejudice and analyze how interviewees' images of Korea and Korean people are constructed. As discussed in chapter 5.4.3, the knowledge related to the outgroups contributes to one's constructions of prejudice (Varadi, 2014; Brown, 2010). Hence, in the present research, when assessing interviewees' knowledge of Korea, the interview began by asking a general question: "What kind of images comes to your mind when you hear the word Korea?" The most common images listed up by

participants were 1) Korean food, 2) K-pop music, 3) Korean drama, and 4) cosmetics. Although male participants were less likely to consume Korean popular culture than female participants, they often referred to Korean drama and K-pop music as their primary images of Korea. Furthermore, more importantly, all participants regard these images as positive portrayals of Korea. For example, two male participants (P10, P12) mentioned K-pop and Korean food as their images of Korea, and they stated as follows:

> I often watch cooking videos of Korean food and go to Korean restaurants. For K-pop music, I often see K-pop idols on TV and YouTube, and the opportunities to listen to K-pop music have increased on a daily basis. I perceive K-pop as more cheerful and energetic than J-pop and have a quite positive impression (P10, personal communication, April 13, 2021).

> Korea and Japan maintain a good relationship with each other, don't they? For that reason, I feel Korean popular culture is quite popular, especially among Japanese youth. Personally, I don't listen to K-pop music quite often, but I have an interest in K-pop (P12, personal communication, April 17, 2021).

Similar to the statements above, the other female participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7) also expressed their positive impressions of Korean popular culture. A female participant (P4) who graduated from vocational school referred to Korean drama, K-pop, and cosmetics as her images of Korea. Interestingly, her positive attitude is heavily influenced by Korean popular culture. This is what she explained about how those images came up:

> My close friends are big fans of Korean popular culture, such as K-pop and Korean drama. Every time I went to their houses, K-pop songs were always playing. And they (K-pop music) are so catchy and fascinating that I get absorbed in K-Pop music. Their dancing and singing are at another level. So, since I've started listening to K-pop music, I couldn't

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find J-pop music attractive anymore. For Korean drama, one social media influencer introduced a Korean drama on Netflix. That was the reason that I came to have an interest in Korean drama. All actors who appeared in Korean dramas look so handsome and beautiful that I follow their social media accounts such as Instagram and Twitter. Also, Korean women actors have very clear and smooth skin. So Korean cosmetics come up in my mind as an image of Korea. For these reasons, I have a positive impression of Korean popular culture and Korea as a country, too (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

She clearly stated that her positive impression of Korean comes from Korean popular culture. From her perspective, Korea is represented by Korean popular culture. Thus, the positive portrait of Korean popular culture leads her to a positive attitude. In other words, Korean popular culture is an explanatory factor of her positive attitude towards Korea. A similar case also emerged from another female participant (P3). She stated:

When I heard Korea, Korean food, cosmetics, and Korean popular culture come up in my mind. For Korean popular culture, since my friends recommended K-pop artist groups, such as Niziu, I began to listen to K-pop music. Every K-pop idol is so pretty. I feel the opportunities to listen to K-pop music increased with the spread of smartphones and social media such as Instagram and YouTube (P3, personal communication, March 28, 2021).

Since she mentioned Korean popular culture, I followed up with a question, "What is your image of Korean people?" to measure its impact on her attitude towards Koreans. Then, she replied as follows:

Korean people are good-looking. As I said before, K-pop idols look pretty and have flawless skin. All Korean actors who appeared in Korean drama are beautiful and handsome. Also, as I watch Korean dramas on Internet, I recognized that Korean people are more Western-like. That means Koreans are outspoken people and speak up their feeling openly without any hesitation. Thus, they are my role models, and I wish I could be like Koreans. And as I watch Korean drama, I began to have an affectionate bound with

cast members on drama for some reason. Also, Korean cuisine shown up in drama looks so good that I was encouraged to make a trip to Korea. Overall, Korean drama positively depicts Korea, so I spontaneously got a positive image of Korea and Korean people (P3, personal communication, March 28, 2021).

From the quote above, two interesting points stand out. Firstly, her image of Korea and even the general portrait of Koreans are largely influenced by Korean popular culture. Second, more importantly, although she has never interacted with Koreans in a face-to-face situation, she feels an affinity and admiration for the Korean people because of K-pop and Korean drama. This point is clearly in line with Mutz and Goldman's argument. As introduced in chapter 2.1, Mutz and Goldman (2010) claim that mass media encourages viewers to form an affective tie with outgroup members who appeared in mass media. For example, if viewers like outgroup members appeared on television, the experience is equivalent to direct personal contact and positively influences viewers' attitudes. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that P3's positive image of Korea and the Koreans are primarily constructed by Korean popular culture. In other words, Korean popular culture has a significant impact on one's positive image-building of Korea as a country and Koreans.

Additionally, a similar case was also identified through the interview with a female participant (P7). According to her, the more she consumes Korean popular culture, the more she gets attracted to everything about Korea. Our conversation was started with my question, "What are your images of Korea?" She referred to Korean food, K-pop idols, and cosmetics as her images of Korea. Then she continued:

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I follow K-pop idols and actors' accounts on social media, such as Instagram and Twitter, and often watch music videos on YouTube. They (K-pop idols) are quite pretty, good at dancing and performing, and above all, their visuals are really good! Also, under the pandemic situation, we are asked to refrain from going outside. That is why the amount of free time to watch Korean drama on Netflix increased. All Korean actors in drama also are good-looking. Korean female actors and K-pop idols are people I admire (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

Then, she indicated the impact of Korean drama on her image of Korea and the Koreans as follow:

I found Korean men gentlemanly because they are depicted as ladies first in Korean drama. For Korean women, I think they have a better sense of aesthetics because women actors in drama have clear and smooth skin. That is why I have a very positive image of Korean and Korea as a country (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

P7's statement reinforced the findings that emerged from the interview with P3. They share certain similarities that Korean popular culture promoted their images of Korea and Koreans. These interview results provided further support for the hypothesis that the increasing popularity of Korean popular culture leads contemporary Japanese youth to tolerant attitudes towards Korea. Also, as I will argue in the last section, this result might be explained by the discussion over the soft power theory, nondirect contact theory, and indirect contact theory.

Furthermore, concerning participants' positive images of Korean popular culture, another significant aspect emerged from an interview with a female interviewee (P2). She mentioned K-pop, Korean drama, and Korean food as images of Korea. Then, she continued:

Since my friends have recommended Korean music groups, such as BTS and Niziu, and Korean dramas, I have started to consume Korean popular culture on the Internet, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Apple Music. Since then, I get absorbed in Korean popular culture. Especially for Korean drama, the actors who appear in the drama are very handsome, and the story is exciting. That is why I am following Korean celebrities' accounts on social media. For K-pop music, I feel the opportunities to listen to K-pop music have recently increased on a daily basis. K-pop idols often appear on TV shows, and K-pop songs are playing everywhere I go in Tokyo (P2, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

Since she mentioned a specific K-pop group, BTS, I followed up with questions about the BTS scandal (see chapter 5.4.1 for detailed information): "How do you personally feel about this scandal?; After you got to know this scandal, has your image of BTS changed?" She answered my question as follow:

I slightly remember the scandal. I feel unpleasant about the scandal because the atomic bomb was not a happy event for the Japanese people. He was not supposed to wear the T-shirt. However, even after knowing the news, I did not stop listening to their music because their song is catchy and fascinating. The scandal cannot be any reason to hate BTS. It's a different story (P2, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

Here, given the quote above, it is reasonable to think that P2's positive image of BTS is rarely interrupted by negative events related to a Japanese historical event. This stance is not peculiar only to P2. The other interviewees also took similar attitudes. Following lines of the other participants (P7, P10, P11), they don't find the BTS scandal a serious problem:

I am a big fan of BTS, so I know well about the scandal. To be honest, I don't care about the T-Shirt design that one of the BTS members wore. It was just a design. It is not a big deal. I wonder why people made a great fuss about the scandal. For this reason, my positive image of BTS didn't change even after the scandal (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

I slightly remember the scandal. I cannot understand why people criticized the T-shirt depicting the US atomic bomb mushroom clouds over Hiroshima. If I had an atomic bomb victim in my family, I might understand their criticism. But I don't feel any negative sentiment about the T-shirt design and BTS (p10, personal communication, April 13, 2021).

I didn't know the scandal. However, even after knowing the scandal, it does not negatively influence my image of BTS. They (BTS) should be evaluated by their music and songs, not by the T-shirt design. Historical dispute and an image of BTS are whole another story. I don't want people to lump them together (P11, personal communication, April 14, 2021).

Overall, when asked about BTS's scandal, all participants but P1 were unanimous in the view that their positive image of BTS would not be influenced by the scandal and the other historical dispute between Korea and Japan. Hence, what is significant in this part is that their positive images of Korean popular culture are independent of the other negative political and historical disputes between Korea and Japan.

In conclusion, this section presented a general overview of participants' knowledge and images of Korea. Results of the analysis clearly showed that interview participants' images of Korea and Korean people are heavily influenced by Korean popular culture. In other words, a positive impression of Korean popular culture leads interviewees to positive images of Korea and Koreans. Also, it needs to be noted that participants consume K-pop and Korean drama on the Internet media, such as Netflix, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. As I will explain in the last section of this chapter, this result may be explained by Mutz and Goldman's discussion over mass media's effect on one's prejudice and attitudes towards outgroup members.

Furthermore, given the interview result presented in chapters 6.1 and 6.2.1, it becomes clearer that interviewees' positive images of Korea are independent of Japanese negative historical and political events. These results allow us to partly figure out what factors are affecting contemporary Japanese youth's positive attitudes towards Korea.

However, one unexpected finding emerged from the interviews with P5, P6, and P9. That is, these participants stated that they have a favorable impression only on Korean people but the Korean government. That means they consider the Korean government and Koreans separately. Then, in the following session, with direct quotes, the present research clarifies why they have positive images only towards Korean people.

6.2.2. Separate Image: Korean Government and Korean People

This subchapter will focus on three participants who have different impressions between the Korean government and Korean people. Unlike the participants mentioned in the previous section, these three participants showed positive attitudes only towards Korean people but the Korean government. Hence, as the main purpose, this section will ascertain what factors induced their negative images of the Korean government. Interestingly, they share a certain similarity that they perceive the negative impression of the Korean government from TV news and internet news articles. Following sentences are what one female participant (P5) answered to my question, "What is your image of Korea?":

It is a tricky question to answer because I have separate impressions between the Korean government and the Korean people. Although I cannot remember the specific topic, I often receive a negative impression of the Korean government from TV news and internet news articles. That leads me to have a negative image of the Korean government. However, I believe not all Korean citizens empathize with the Korean government's standpoint. I'm the same too. I am Japanese, but I cannot be proud of the Japanese government. The government's political stances do not always reflect public opinions. So, I am not prejudiced against Korean people just because they are Koreans (P5, personal communication, April 4, 2021).

According to the quote above, P5 vaguely has an unpleasant feeling for the Korean government. In other words, she doesn't have either a strong political opinion or intense aversion to the Korean government but a negative impression. In the same way, the other participants (P6, P9) also expressed their indescribable feelings of displeasure towards the Korean government:

I would say my negative feeling is directing at the Korean government. The Korean government is always negatively depicted on the TV news. I cannot mention specific events, but I have a negative impression. However, every Korean I have met is very kind to me, so I still have a positive impression of Korean people (P6, personal communication, April 12, 2021).

Talking about my images of Korea, I would like to think separately between Korean people and political discussion. For political topics, I cannot perceive the Korean government in a positive way because negative news often appears on TV, such as anti-Japanese protests. However, I think only a few Koreans have anti-Japanese sentiment. Thus, I do not have any negative impressions of Korean people (P9, personal communication, April 3, 2021).

These three interviewees (P5, P6, P9) see Korea from two different angles, the people and the government of Korea. Firstly, three participants stated that negative reports of the Korean government resulted in their negative impressions of the Korean government. This result may be explained by Mutz and Goldman's discussion. Mutz and Goldman (2010) reported that mass

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media plays an important role as a source of information for an impression that ingroup members might have of the other outgroups. In other words, negative portraits of the Korean government promoted the three interviewees' negative impressions of the Korean government. Secondly, for Korean people, the theme of 'interpersonal contact' was expressed. The three participants mentioned their interpersonal contact, such as travel and Korean friends, effectively promoted their positive attitudes towards Korean people. Similarly, the other participants (P1, P4, P7) also stated their interpersonal contact with the Koreans promoted their tolerant attitudes. Then, let us now turn to the next topic about interpersonal contact. The following section will present how interpersonal contact with Korean people influenced interviewees' attitudes towards Korea.

6.2.3. Interpersonal Contact and Attitudes towards Korea and Korean

This sub-chapter presents participants' experience of interpersonal contact with Korean people and how their interaction with the Koreans helped to construct positive images of the Koreans. As a number of previous studies have demonstrated, interpersonal contact can reduce one's prejudice and promote positive attitudes towards outgroup members. As with the previous studies, the majority of participants (P1, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9) also stated that interpersonal contact with Koreans reduced their negative images and promoted tolerant attitudes towards Koreans. For instance, one female interviewee (P1) shared her experience as follows:

They (Koreans) are really intelligent. I guess the language education in Korea is excellent. All Koreans I have met were better at English than Japanese people. I think intelligent Korean people would be problem solvers. If they work in Japan and contribute to Japanese society, our (Japanese) society would be more open to Korean people than ever (P1, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

According to the quote above, through interpersonal contact with Korean people, P1 got a positive impression and simultaneously established her tolerant attitude. Similar experiences were observed from the other participants. P4 and P7 reported that their negative prejudices were reduced through interpersonal contact with Korean people and improved their positive images. They stated:

I have been told detestation and negative stereotypes from my parents and grandmother, such as "Koreans are rapists" and "Koreans regard Japanese with hostility." However, I understood those negative stereotypes are wrong after I visited Korea. Surprisingly, they (Korean people) were all kind to me, and I wasn't discriminated against. So, now I have a positive impression of Korea and Koreans (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

My image of Korean people has completely changed after I traveled to Korea. Whereas Korea is always portraited negatively in Japan, all Koreans I have met during travel were very kind. Then, I realized there is a gap between Koreans depicted in Japanese media and actual Korean people (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

Here, a similarity that P4 and P7 share is that their interpersonal contact with Korean people reduced negative images and promoted their positive images of Korean and Korea as a country.

However, as I argued in the previous section, interpersonal contact does not always lead to a positive impression of Korea as a country. For instance, P6 and P9 said:

Actually, I used to have a negative attitude towards Korea and Korean people because of media influence. But, when I traveled to Korea, Koreans were very kind to me. When I

asked for direction, every Korean kindly guided us to our destination. Then, I understood they are different from the media portrayal of Korean people. So, currently, I have a favorable impression only to Korean people but not Korea as a country (P6, personal communication, April 12, 2021).

I personally believe Koreans are altruistic people. They really concern for the well-being of others, put others first, and care about the people around them. When I was backpacking across western Europe, I have met Koreans. They were really kind to me and helped me when I had trouble. So, I have a favorable impression only on the Korean people but the Korean government (P9, personal communication, April 3, 2021).

What is significant in P6 and P9's argument is that their interpersonal contact with Korean people established a positive impression only on the Koreans but not Korea as a country. A similar experience was expressed by a female interviewee (P5):

Based on my personal experiences, such as travel and studying abroad, I don't have any feeling of rejection towards Korean people. Every Korean person I have met did not have any negative feelings towards the Japanese. They were all kind and friendly. Through these experiences, I found Korean people are different from the Korean government. Whereas I still have a negative impression on the Korean government, I don't feel any hostility against the Korean people (P5, personal communication, April 4, 2021).

Given the participants' interview results, the interpersonal contact in itself is not enough to promote the image of Korea as a country. However, interview participants admittedly shared a similarity that their interpersonal contact with Koreans positively changed their image of Koreans. Therefore, the most prominent finding to emerge from the interview results is that participants' interpersonal contact with Korean people promoted their positive images and attitudes towards Koreans. In other words, interpersonal contact is conceivable as one predictor of interviewees' positive attitudes towards Korean people.

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6.3. Political Apathy and Behavioral Prejudice

The previous sections have shown that how Korean popular culture and interpersonal contact contribute to the emergence of positive attitudes towards Korea and Korean people. However, there is another point that we need to clarify, which is an interconnection between participants' prejudice and Japan's international relations with Korea. In the early 2000s, Japanese youth's negativity towards Korea was largely determined by the inter-governmental relations between Korea and Japan (Sasada, 2006; Sakamoto, 2011; Maslow, 2011). However, as observed in previous sections, interview participants presented positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans despite the deteriorating inter-governmental relations between Korea and Japan. In other words, contemporary Japanese youth's attitudes are independent of the Japanese administration's political stance on Korea. Therefore, the specific objective of this section is to investigate participants' level of interest in politics and how it contributes to the construction of positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. First, this section will begin by presenting interview results of behavioral prejudice. It will then go on to disclose the interview results of participants' political apathy and explain how the behavioral component of prejudice is related to participants' political apathy.

6.3.1. Behavioral Prejudice

As introduced in chapter 5.4.3, participants' behavioral component of prejudice was captured by asking them to imagine one situation: "What if the Japanese government decides to accept twice as many Korean immigrants as last year. Some of your friends or family members decide to protest against this government immigration policy. How would you react?" One female participant (P1), for instance, answered as follow:

> As I mentioned before, I don't have any hatred towards Korean people. So, I would ask protesters for a reason why they are against the influx of Korean immigrants. But even after talking to them and they decide to keep doing protest, I would be back off and not join the protest (P1, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

Since she didn't indicate affective and cognitive prejudice towards Korea and Koreans, behavioral prejudice was not observed either. Furthermore, another significant aspect is that she didn't exhibit a strong adverse reaction to the anti-Korean immigrant protest. Her attitude resembles the other participants' attitudes. For instance, two male participants (P8, P12) expressed their weak disagreement with the protest. P8 said, "In my personal opinion, I agree to accept Korean immigrants. So, I would wonder why protesters are against accepting Korean immigrants" (P8, personal communication, March 26, 2021). Similarly, P12 stated:

> I don't have any negative prejudice against Korean people. So, I would think protesters are foolish. Why do they oppose Korean immigrants' influx? It doesn't make any sense. So, I would not join the protest and keep a distance from the anti-Korean immigrant protest (P12, personal communication, April 17, 2021).

As with participants above, some of the interviewees (P1, P2, P7, P8, P9, P12) answered they

would disagree with the anti-Korean immigrant movement. However, they also didn't exhibit a

strong aversion towards the anti-Korean immigrant protest. This trend appeared more obviously

among other participants (P3, P4, P5, P6, P10, P11). These participants said that they are neither

for nor against the protest. For example, a male participant (P10) said, "I want to hear why they

are protesting against Korean immigration. But I don't want to interfere and join the protest.

Just let them do what they want to do" (P10, personal communication, April 13, 2021). P11

also expressed a similar opinion:

> Of course, I would not join the protest because I agree to accept Korean immigrants. I am
> neither for nor against the protest. I just want to keep a distance from these kinds of
> political movements. So, I would hand off the protest (P11, personal communication, April
> 14, 2021).

Similar attitudes also emerged from other female participants. P3 and P6 stated:

> I would disagree with the protest, but I want to keep a distance from such a troublesome
> event. The anti-Korean movement seems bothersome, doesn't it? I don't have strong
> prejudice against Korean immigrants, but I just don't want to get into any trouble (P3,
> personal communication, March 28, 2021).

> I would not interfere in the protest against Korean immigrants' influx. I mean, I don't want
> to get into any trouble. I am neither for nor against the protest. So, I just want to keep a
> distance from such a movement (P6, personal communication, April 12, 2021).

In summary, the interview results indicated two main points. First, in terms of the behavioral

component of prejudice, interviewees did not indicate negativities towards Korean people.

Second, more importantly, they exhibit neither aversion nor compassion with the anti-Korean immigrant protest. Rather, it seemed they are indifferent to such political movement. This political apathy more clearly appeared when participants were asked about their interest in political affairs. Thus, the following section will closely focus on interviewees' political apathy and its relevance to their prejudice and attitudes towards Korea and Koreans.

6.3.2. Political Apathy

This section will present the results about interviewees' interest in politics and examine its relevance to their attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of participants' interest in politics, the structure of this section takes the form of four parts, including interviewees' interest in Japanese diplomatic relations, intergovernmental relations between Korea and Japan, domestic political affairs, and political participation.

Firstly, to catch up with the level of participants' political interest, the interview began by asking general questions about Japanese diplomatic relations: "What do you think which countries have a good/bad relationship with Japan?" One interesting point observed is that although they could list up the counties which have good/bad relationship with Japan, they could not mention the specific reasons for their answers. For example, three female participants (P2, P6, P7) answered as follow:

> I guess America and Taiwan have good relations with Japan. I cannot explain why, but I thought like that for some reasons. On the other hand, Korea, China, and Russia do not

maintain a good relationship with Japan. I cannot explain the specific reasons, but I feel so (P2, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

I don't know the definite reasons, but probably America and Taiwan have good relations with Japan, right? For the countries which have bad relations with Japan are Korea and China, but I cannot explain why these two countries maintain bad relations with Japan (P6, personal communication, April 12, 2021).

I heard Taiwan and Bhutan are pro-Japanese countries. So, I guess these two countries maintain good relations with Japan. However, Korea has bad relations with Japan because of some political issues, even though I cannot remember the concrete examples of political issues (P7, personal communication, April 16, 2021).

From the quote above, although participants are vaguely aware of the current Japanese diplomatic relations, they could not provide detailed explanations for their answers. Similar attitudes were observed from the other male participants. For instance, P11 said, "I don't know well, but America gets along well with the Japanese government, maybe? And I guess Korea also maintains good relations with Japan" (P11, personal communication, April 14, 2021). Similarly, P9 stated:

I guess Taiwan maintains good relations with Japan because I heard from my friends that the Taiwanese are pro-Japanese. On the other hand, China and Korea have bad relations with Japan, don't they? I roughly recognize historical and political disputes which impede bilateral relations, but I don't know the detailed stories (P9, personal communication, April 3, 2021).

Overall, interviewees roughly recognize Japanese diplomatic relations. All participants answered a question with uncertain expressions, such as "*I guess*" and "*maybe*," and could not

give a detailed explanation for their answers. These findings, therefore, indicate participants'

feelings of disinterest in and apathy towards Japanese diplomatic relations.

Secondly, the present research evaluated participants' interest in the inter-

governmental relations between Korea and Japan through several questions: "How much do

you know about political and historical disputes between Korea and Japan?; How much do you

know and care about ongoing Korean comfort women disputes between the Korean and

Japanese governments?; How much do you know and care about anti-Japanese protest which

has been taking place in Korea since 2019?" Here, the single striking point to emerge from the

interviews was that while some participants were vaguely aware of the historical and political

disputes, they did not follow the latest situation of the bilateral relations between Korea and

Japan. For example, one male university graduate participant (P12) clearly indicated his

disinterest and apathy towards Japan-Korea relations. He stated:

> What are comfort women's issues? I never heard of such issues. Probably I have learned
> at high school, but I don't remember anything. So, I don't feel anything towards comfort
> women issues. And I don't even know anti-Japanese protest has been taking place in Korea.
> I have no interest in these political topics at all because it does not have anything to do
> with my life (P12, personal communication, April 17, 2021).

A similar opinion was expressed by the other male postgraduate student (P11):

> I heard Japan has historical issues with Korea, such as comfort women issues. But I don't
> have any deep knowledge of such historical issues. For the ongoing anti-Japanese protest
> in Korea, I didn't know until you mentioned it. Actually, I don't care about such historical
> and political disputes because they don't directly affect my daily life (P11, personal
> communication, April 14, 2021).

A female participant who graduated vocational school (P4) also expressed a similar viewpoint:

> I was vaguely aware of historical issues, but I didn't believe such issues really exist until I started watching Korean drama. In drama, historical issues, such as a comfort women issue, were depicted from Korean perspectives. Then, I realized historical issues really matter. However, even if I understand these political and historical issues, I don't care too much because I am not interested. So, I didn't know and care about the ongoing anti-Japanese protest in Korea (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

Overall, even though participants mostly recognize political and historical disputes between Korea and Japan, they could not provide detailed explanations. More importantly, participants didn't show interest in Korea-Japan international disputes on the ground that such political and historical issues are not directly related to their daily lives. Overall, what is significant in this part is that interviewees exhibited apathy towards the intergovernmental relations between Korea and Japan.

Finally, in order to assess participants' interest in domestic politics and political participation, interviewees were asked two questions: "Do you go to vote?; Do you feel you are keeping up with current political news?" In response to the first question, participants reported that they had voted more than once before, and other participants answered they have never voted. However, all participants share a similarity in that they feel a distance from political matters. For instance, P4, P6, and P12 stated as follow:

> I have never been to a political election. I think I'm not ready enough to vote because I don't know about politics. So, there is no meaning to go voting. On top of that, even if I cast my ballot for one political party, our society would not be changed. Nothing can be changed by one vote (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

I have never been to vote before. I know I have to go, but I don't want to because I am not interested in political matters at all. Political affairs don't have anything to do with my life, and I feel a distance from politics (P6, personal communication, April 12, 2021).

I have never voted before. For that reason, I have been feeling a great distance between me and political matters. I am not feeling close to the government and politics. So, I am not interested in political news and political participation (P12, personal communication, April 17, 2021).

These attitudes resemble the attitudes of participants who have voted before. Additionally, these participants often expressed their sense of powerlessness as a reason for political apathy. For example, P3, P8, and P11 said:

I go to vote because my parents tell me to do so. But, I am not actually interested in political matters and don't have much motivation for voting. It is difficult for me to differentiate each political party, and my vote cannot change society (P3, personal communication, March 28, 2021).

I have only voted once before. Actually, I am not motivated to vote because I think nothing would change whether I vote or not. My opinion is unlikely to be reflected in politics. So, there is no meaning to vote (P8, personal communication, March 26, 2021).

I usually go voting because I feel I have to. However, I don't think my opinion is reflected in domestic politics, and I feel a distance between the government and myself. That is why I am not interested in political matters and don't have much motivation for political participation (P11, personal communication, April 14, 2021).

Here, it is important to emphasize that whether participants go voting or not, they don't take strong interests in domestic politics and political participation because of their feeling of political powerlessness and distance from politics. Therefore, they exhibited indifference to domestic politics and political participation.

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This disposition was also clearly observed from the response to the question: "Do you feel you are keeping up with current political news?" In response to the second question, participants indicated their indifference to political news regardless of their gender and educational qualifications. For instance, one female participant who graduated vocational school (P4) showed her uninterested attitude towards political news as follows:

> I don't think I am catching up on the latest political news. For that reason, I am not interested in political news, and I feel political events don't have any influence on my life. Moreover, all TV news today draws attention only to Covid-19. They are so boring that I stopped watching TV news. Instead, I spend much time on social media. As a result, I got more interest in entertainment news than political news (P4, personal communication, March 29, 2021).

Similar attitudes were observed from other participants who graduated from university. P2 and P9, for instance, said:

> Even if I have time, I wound not watch political news. I know I have to, but I don't want to. Because I don't find them interesting and fascinating, and I don't feel political news is close to me. Especially for international affairs, I feel there is a distance between political events and me and have nothing to do with my life. That is why I am not really interested in political news and events (P2, personal communication, March 21, 2021).

> I don't watch political news. I know I have to understand current political news and international affairs, but I am not motivated to know about them. That is because I feel a distance from political matters, and they are unrelated to my life. If I had time to watch political news on TV, I would use the time for social media and internet surfing (P9, personal communication, April 3, 2021).

In addition to P2 and P9, a male participant who is a postgraduate student (P11) indicated a similar attitude:

I don't know the current domestic political news, and I think I don't need to know. That is because I am not interested in domestic politics. I don't feel I am involved in politics. I mean, my daily life has nothing to do with political affairs. That is why I don't have any interest in Japanese politics and international affairs (P11, personal communication, April 14, 2021).

Surprisingly, in terms of political apathy, no real differences were found between the participants. All participants indicated their feeling of disinterest and apathy towards domestic politics and political participation regardless of their gender and educational qualifications. Moreover, interviewees' disinterest towards politics was ascribed to their feeling of political powerlessness and distancing from political affairs.

Overall, the interview results in this section provide an important insight into the participants' political apathy and attitudes towards Korea. As discussed in previous chapters, contemporary Japanese youth harbor positivity towards Korea and Koreans in spite of the worsened diplomatic relations. In other words, they are independent of the Japanese administration's political stance on Korea. Then, through the interviews with Japanese youth, the present research found that political apathy makes them independent of political affairs. Hence, participants did not indicate their behavioral component of prejudice against Korean people. In other words, contrary to the Japanese youth in the early 2000s, interviewees' attitudes towards Korea are impervious to current intensifying diplomatic issues between Korea and Japan because of their political apathy. Therefore, as we found in chapter 6.2.1, their positive images of Korean popular culture are independent of the other negative political and historical

disputes between Korea and Japan. However, it should be noted that although interviewees'

political apathy helps them to construct positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans, it does

not directly relate to interviewees' positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Therefore,

this finding partly supports this study's hypothesis that contemporary Japanese youth's political

apathy led them to tolerant attitudes towards Korea.

6.4. Discussion and Limitations

In this chapter, interviewees' prejudice against Korea and Koreans and factors affecting

their attitudes towards Korea and Koreans were examined by analyzing the data collected from

individual interviews with Japanese youth. The important finding to emerge from the analysis

is that although interviewees are aware of the existing anti-Korean prejudice in Japan, they did

not indicate affective, cognitive, and behavioral prejudice towards Korea and Koreans. Also,

the level of positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans were not determined by participants'

gender, educational qualifications, occupation, residential area, and birthplace.

However, surprisingly, some participants expressed that they have different

impressions between the Korean government and Korean people. This finding was unexpected

and suggested that interpersonal contact is one of the strong predictors of interviewees' positive

attitudes towards Koreans. This positive influence of interpersonal contact with Korean people

may be explained by the Contact Hypothesis, which was firstly introduced by Allport. As

introduced in chapter 2.1, a number of previous studies have demonstrated that interpersonal

contact with outgroup members can reduce one's prejudice and positively influence one's attitudes towards outgroup members. Therefore, the finding of the positive effect of interpersonal contact further supports the idea of the Contact Hypothesis.

Moreover, the most important clinically related finding was that Korean popular culture and interviewees' apathy towards politics helps to construct positive images and attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Even though the relationship between political apathy and one's prejudice towards outgroup members has not previously been described, the influence of Korean popular culture seems to be consistent with previous research, which found a positive influence of popular culture on one's attitude. For example, as mentioned in chapter 2.2, Kozhakhmetova (2012), Lee (2012), and Nye (2004) have demonstrated that popular culture is a major source of soft power and has an ability to form the people's ideas, thoughts, and identities in a positive way.

In addition to the soft power theory, social psychological approaches also help to understand the relationship between interviewees' consumption of Korean popular culture and their positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. According to the interview results, a number of interviewees consume Korean popular culture on the Internet media, such as Netflix, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter. And, more importantly, interviewees argued that the positive portrait of Korean popular culture leads them to positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. These results may be explained by the 'indirect form of contact hypothesis.' For example, Mutz

and Goldman (2010) argue that, as an indirect form of contact, mass media is conceivable as one of the explanatory factors of one's positive/negative attitudes and perception of outgroup members. That is, the positive portrait of outgroup members in mass media leads to ingroup members' positive and inclusive attitudes towards outgroup members. Thus, given the argument of Mutz and Goldman (2010), we can conclude that positive portraits of Korean people on internet media promoted interviewees' positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Furthermore, 'imagined contact theory' also helps us to understand the findings. Crips and Turner (2009) have demonstrated that those who imagined themselves interacting with outgroup members exhibited more positive attitudes towards outgroups. That is, mental imageries of interaction with outgroup members have a positive effect on an individual's attitudes. Therefore, it can be presumed that, by consuming Korean popular culture on the internet media, interviewees experienced imagined contact with Koreans who are appeared in internet media. As a result, these experiences led them to positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans.

Overall, the Korean popular culture, political apathy, and social phycological factors proved to be important predictors of interview participants' positive and tolerant attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Contact with Korean people, including indirect contact, proved to reduce anti-Korean prejudice and construct positive attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Interviewees' apathy towards politics was also found to help interviewees construct positive

attitudes and images of Korea and Koreans. Moreover, Korean popular culture was found as a strong predictor of interviewees' positive and tolerant attitudes. Therefore, those who consume Korean popular culture, experienced interpersonal contact with Koreans, and presented political apathy tend to be more tolerant towards Korea and Koreans. These findings support the hypothesis that Korean popular culture and their political apathy synergistically led Japanese youth to tolerant attitudes towards Korea and Koreans.

However, the interview results and findings presented above must be interpreted with caution because the majority of interviewees were highly educated: eleven of twelve interviewees were university graduate or postgraduate students. According to the Ministry of education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (2020), around forty percent of Japanese people graduated vocational school or high school. Moreover, according to Stephan & Stephan (1996) and Cavacho et al. (2013), educational background is one of the predictors of prejudice towards other social and ethnic groups. For example, lower educational background is associated with higher prejudice towards outgroups and outgroup members. Therefore, this study was not able to assess the prejudice among low-educated people, and further investigations into low-educated Japanese youth's prejudice towards Korea and Koreans need to be done.

7. Conclusion

In reviewing the literature, whereas a number of previous studies have shown that Japanese youth had strong anti-Korean sentiment around the early 2000s, scant attention has been given to the present-day Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Hence, through a series of semi-structured online individual interviews with Japanese youth, the present study was designed 1) to investigate current Japanese youth's prejudice towards Korea and Koreans and 2) to ascertain the factors that affect present-day Japanese youth's attitudes towards Korea and Korean. Then, one of the significant findings to emerge from this study is that interview participants did not indicate affective, cognitive, and behavioral prejudice towards Korea and Koreans. Also, more importantly, interviewees who consume Korean popular culture, experienced interpersonal contact with Koreans, and presented political apathy tend to be more tolerant towards Korea and Koreans. Overall, these results suggest that Korean popular culture, political apathy, and social phycological factors are conceivable as strong explanatory factors of interviewees' positive and tolerant attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. However, the major limitation of this study is the paucity of data from people with lower education. Hence, further works need to be done to ascertain whether low-educated Japanese youth harbor positivity towards Korea and Koreans and what factors affect their attitudes towards Korea and Koreans. Notwithstanding the relatively limited sample, the empirical

findings in this study provide valuable insight into ethnic prejudice, Japanese youth's

nationalism, and Japanese youth's prejudice towards Korea and Koreans.

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Appendix 1:
Questionnaire and Consent Form

Project Name: Public Opining among Contemporary Japanese Youth

Principal Investigator:

Masaki Ono,

MA student, Nationalism Studies Program, Central European University

(Contact: ono_masaki@student.ceu.edu, +436766356593)

Supervisor:

Luca Váradi,

Nationalism Studies Program, Central European University

(Contact: VaradiL@ceu.edu)

Questionnaire:

1. Gender

□ Male   □ Female   □ Other

2. Birthday (Year/ Month) _____

3. Academic History _____

4. Employment Status
   □ Employed for wages
   □ Out of work and looking for work
   □ Homemaker
   □ Student
   □ Other

5. Residential Area (Prefecture / City) _____

Consent and Condition of Consent:

Thank you for participating in my academic research project. This interview will last from 30 minutes to 1 hour. All information provided will be anonymized and treated confidentially.

6. Condition of Consent

□ I have received information about this research project and understand my role in it.

□ My participation as an interviewee in this project is completely voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion to participate.

□ I understand that even if I agree to participate, I have a right to withdraw from the interview whenever I feel uncomfortable during the interview session.

□ The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. I allow to researcher(s) to take a note during the interview. I also may allow the recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue. it is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview and dialogue to be recorded.

□ I understand that the transcript and recorded interview will be analyzed by Masaki Ono and Luca Váradi as research investigation.

□ I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I voluntarily agree to participate in a research project conducted by Masaki Ono and Professor Luca Váradi from Central European University. Please enter your name/ date below if you agree with the above statement.

    Date_____   **Name**_____

Appendix 2:
General questions for guidance

1. Introduction
- The researcher introduces to the participants and vice versa.
- The researcher introduces the concept of research and discussion flow.
- The researcher reconfirms the consent term.

2. Warm Up
- During the interview, you don't have to be nervus. Just be relax and talk anything related to the questions. I don't care no matter how much you talk. You can talk however much you want to.
- How have you been lately?
- How is the situation concerning corona virus in Japan?
- How do you spend your days lately?

3. Core Points
3.1 Participants' Interest in Popular Culture

A) What kind of music do you often listen to?
B) What do you think are the latest music trends among Japanese youth?
C) Do you listen to K-pop music?
D) How do you like and feel about K-pop and Korean popular culture?
E) What kind of impression do you have of Korean popular culture?
F) What made you start listening to consume Korean popular culture?
G) - Do you know that there was a controversy that one of the BTS members wore a T-shirt depicting the US atomic bombing clouds over Hiroshima?
   - How do you personally feel about this controversy and image to BTS?
   - After you know this scandal, your image towards BTS has changed?

3.2: Participants' Political Apathy

A) What do you think which countries have a good/bad relationship with Japan?
B) How do you think about the latest international relationship between Korea and Japan?
C) How much do you know and care about the ongoing Korean comfort women dispute between the Korean and Japanese government?
D) How much do you know about the anti-Japanese protest which has been taking place in Korea since 2019?
E) Do you know that, in January 2021, the Korean court ordered Japan to pay compensation for wartime sexual slavery? How do you care about this anti-Japanese protest in Korea?
F) Are you interested in participating political campaign?
G) Do you feel you are keeping up with current domestic political news?
   (if yes) Why do you care about political news?
   (If no) Why don't you care about political news?

H) Do you feel you are keeping up with current domestic political news?
(if yes) Why do you care about political news?
(If no) Why don't you care about political news?

3.3: Contact Hypothesis

A) Do you have Korean friends?
B) Have you ever met and talked to Korean people before?

3.4: Prejudice against Korea

3.4.1 Affective Prejudice
A) How would you feel having Korean people as your marriage partner, your close friends, colleagues at work, and citizens of Japan?

3.4.2 Cognitive Prejudice

A) What kind of images come up when you hear the word Korea?
B) Could you list up your images of Korean as many as you can?
  - Where do the images of Korea/Koreans come from?
  - Are the images negative or positive?
C) Do you know negative stereotypes and prejudice exist within Japanese society?
  - Could you list up some examples?
  - Do you agree with those prejudice and stereotypes?
  - How did you know the negative stereotypes and prejudice?

3.4.3 Behavioral Prejudice

A) What if the Japanese government decides to accept twice as many Korean immigrants as last year. Some of your friends or family members decide to protest against this government immigration policy. How would you react?

4. Cool Down
- Is there anything you wanted to share but couldn't?
- If you find any problems with this interview, please contact me anytime.