Introduction & Aim

Nationalism is once again gaining momentum in East Asia. Not only do the political leaders of China, Korea, and Japan explicitly claim their own nations’ legitimate rights based on national sentiment, but the mass citizens of each nation seem to give zealous support to the leaders that do make a nationalist stance. Today we are aware of the anti-Japanese, popular nationalism rising in China; nationalism based on pro-Japanese stance and its history gaining force in Japan as well. Public mass protests, internet forum discussions, and political position based on the rising nationalism are day by day prevailing in China and Japan. But then in order to properly understand its political implications, we must ask ourselves the question: “precisely what is the nationalism in China and Japan, and how does this popular social phenomenon affect political policies?” For political scientists, it is never sufficient to just know that nationalism is a social trend present within a state system, but what is critical is to offer in insights by trying to analyze and understand these phenomena scientifically. I wish to offer a scientific analysis and insight on the rise of nationalism in China and Japan, and how it transfers to the political domain in terms of political actions including governmental stance and policies.

Hypotheses

H1) the rise of popular nationalism will emerge from the masses, from the bottom up,
H2) the popular nationalism will have enormous implications for politics, and acting accordingly, political leaders and state functions will carry out policies or certain acts that will exploit this popular trend, thereby forming a relation between popular and state nationalism which will have consequences for the Sino-Japanese relations.

Research Design

Qualitative Study
Media sources for observations & evidence
Processing tracing of nationalism in China and Japan
Four segments:
1. Historical Nationalism,
2. Contemporary Nationalism,
3. How Nationalism Becomes State Policy / Action
4. The Operation of Nationalism in Two Different Political Systems

Flow Chart

Consequences for Sino-Japanese Relations

State Nationalism

Chinese Popular Nationalism

Japanese Popular Nationalism

Results & Findings

Testing the Hypotheses:

2005 Anti-Japanese Demonstrations:
China; H1 = Valid, H2 = Valid
Japan H1 = Invalid, H2 = Somewhat Valid

2012 Diaoyu / Senkaku Islands Dispute:
China, H1 = Valid, H2 = Valid
Japan, H1 = Valid, H2 = Valid

Defining Characteristics of Chinese State Nationalism:
- Very close relationship between the popular and state nationalism
- A greater willingness to demonstrate resolve if more public opinion supports it

Defining Characteristics of Japanese State Nationalism:
- Distant relationship between the popular and state nationalism
- A greater willingness to demonstrate resolve if more public opinion supports it

Observations

Contemporary Nationalism
Cases:
- 2005 Anti-Japanese Demonstrations
- 2012 Diaoyu / Senkaku Islands Dispute

Issues at Dispute:
- Yasukuni Shrine
- Historical Issues – Lack of sincere Remorse
- Japanese Textbook, Chinese Textbook
- Japan’s bid in the UN Security Council
- Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands

Defining Characteristics of Chinese Popular Nationalism:
- Massive-scale grassroots mobilization
- Autocracy control over nationalism
- Three usual stages in popular nationalism, 1. internet petitions, 2. street petitions, 3. street protests
- Multiple issues raised, demand to the government

Defining Characteristics of Japanese Popular Nationalism:
- Very little mobilization
- Public opinion, more accurate sense of grassroots nationalism
- No initiative, response against the anti-Japanese protests
- Territory sensitive

Conclusions

Both Chinese and Japanese governments are very publicly aware
Political moves based on nationalism
Nationalism is oftentimes defined by a common enemy
Autocracy & democracy matters in popular nationalism, not state nationalism
Gradual accumulation of hostile nationalism in East Asia

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Reference

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