



저작자표시-비영리-변경금지 2.0 대한민국

이용자는 아래의 조건을 따르는 경우에 한하여 자유롭게

- 이 저작물을 복제, 배포, 전송, 전시, 공연 및 방송할 수 있습니다.

다음과 같은 조건을 따라야 합니다:



저작자표시. 귀하는 원저작자를 표시하여야 합니다.



비영리. 귀하는 이 저작물을 영리 목적으로 이용할 수 없습니다.



변경금지. 귀하는 이 저작물을 개작, 변형 또는 가공할 수 없습니다.

- 귀하는, 이 저작물의 재이용이나 배포의 경우, 이 저작물에 적용된 이용허락조건을 명확하게 나타내어야 합니다.
- 저작권자로부터 별도의 허가를 받으면 이러한 조건들은 적용되지 않습니다.

저작권법에 따른 이용자의 권리는 위의 내용에 의하여 영향을 받지 않습니다.

이것은 [이용허락규약\(Legal Code\)](#)을 이해하기 쉽게 요약한 것입니다.

[Disclaimer](#)

**Endless Contention, Narrow Compromise:**

**Comfort Women Deal's Two-Level Game**

*위안부 운동의 전개과정과 시민사회의 역할*

*Graduate School of International Studies*

*Seoul National University*

*International Area Studies Major*

*Kim Inhyep*

*February, 2023*

# Endless Contention, Narrow Compromise: Comfort Women Deal's Two-Level Game

*위안부 운동의 전개과정과 시민사회의 역할*

박철휘

Submitting a master's thesis of  
International Studies

February, 2023

Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University  
International Area Studies Major

김인협

Confirming the master's thesis written by  
김인협

February, 2023

Chair \_\_\_\_\_(Seal)

Vice Chair \_\_\_\_\_(Seal)

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_(Seal)

## ***Abstract***

*Despite mutual benefits of cooperation, historical animosity remains as the prime obstacle for further cooperation between Korea and Japan. Amongst many historical problems, the comfort women issue remains as the center of contention where it lingers as the prime obstacle to the bilateral relationship.*

*What is so special about the comfort women issue that it persists so long? Why are people overly sensitive about the issue? And why is especially difficult to reconcile the comfort women issue? This research finds the answer to the peculiarity of the comfort women controversy in the unique development of the comfort women activism in Korea and Japan. It finds the role of civic organization as the determining factor for such peculiarity. The main argument of this research is as follows. In Korea, comfort women issue was discovered and developed not by the Korean government, but by a strong civil group, the Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (hence the Korean Council). This phenomenon has led to an over-representation of the Korean Council and mis-representation of the Korean government. The nationalistic discourse of the Korean Council has led nationalism to be the dominant voice in Korea, making comfort women issue as the symbolic representation of national suffering, while their unique redressive acts have further limited the Korean government's capacity to negotiate as it went beyond the state parameter.*

*In Japan, the Korean Council and their unique redressive acts, especially their attempts for internationalization of the issue not only failed to institutionalize apologetic discourse within Japanese society, but was actively used by the right-wing civil society as a symbolic representation of national humiliation and defamation, institutionalizing right-wing mobilization. Especially with changes in political environs and rise of conservatism, their voices grew stronger, and their own redressive acts further limited the Japanese government's capacity for negotiation. These factors will be systematically analyzed through the concept of Putnam's two-level game to highlight how these domestic ratifications influence foreign policy outcome.*

***Key Words: The Korean Council, The Japan Conference, civil organizations, comfort women issue, foreign negotiations, two-level game***

## Table of Contents

### Abstract

<b>Chapter I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1.</b>
1. Background.....	1.
2. Literature review.....	3.
3. Alternative Approach .....	6.
4. Theoretical Framework (Putnam’s Two-Level Game) .....	7.
4.1. Logic of Win-set .....	8.
4.2. Determinants of Win-set .....	9.
4.3 Win-sets in international negotiations.....	11.
<b>Chapter II. Initial Development of Comfort Women Issue.....</b>	<b>13.</b>
1. Early Publicization.....	13.
2. From Sympathy to Empathy and the Korean Council .....	15.
3. Initial Response from Japan.....	17.
4. Summary .....	20.
<b>Chapter III. Diverging Perception on Comfort Women Issue .....</b>	<b>21.</b>
1. Asian Women’s Fund: division between Korea and Japan.....	21.
2. Weakening of Leftist coalition in Japan.....	25.
3. Summary .....	26.
<b>Chapter IV. Right-wing resurgence in Japan .....</b>	<b>27.</b>
1. Right-wing resurgence in Japan.....	27.
1.1 Textbook controversy as a trigger for right-wing mobilization .....	27.
1.2 Changing East-Asian Dynamics .....	29.
1.3 Rise of Abe and LDP: consolidation of right-wing mobilization.....	30.
2. Role of Media .....	33.
2.1 declining legitimacy of left-wing media .....	33.
2.2 increased legitimacy of right-wing media.....	34.
2.3 diversification of media outlet and its impact.....	35.
3. Summary .....	36.
<b>Chapter V. Strengthening of Nationalistic discourse in Korea .....</b>	<b>37.</b>
1. Over-representation of the Korean Council .....	37.
2. The Korean Council’s Strong Ethnic-Nationalism .....	38.
2.1. Intersectionality of feminism and nationalism.....	38.
2.2. Nationalism as a superior voice .....	41.
2.3 Crux of Korean Council’s Nationalism .....	42.
3. The Korean Council’s redressive acts.....	44.
3.1 Wednesday Demonstration and Statue Politics .....	45.
3.2 Spatiality of the redressive site .....	46.
3.3 Civilian Participation .....	47.
3.4. Accentuation of Nationalistic Memory .....	48.

3.5. Collective memory of the redressive acts .....	50.
3.6. Internationalization of redressive acts .....	51.
4. Korean Council's Monopoly of Justice and Logic of Exclusion .....	52.
4.1 Exclusion of different victims .....	53.
4.2 Exclusion of different literatures.....	55.
5. Role of Media .....	58.
6. Summary .....	59.
<b>Chapter VI. Comfort Women as a representation of history wars.....</b>	<b>62.</b>
1. Internationalization of comfort women issue.....	62.
1.1 Phase I. Rights Revolution and Intervention from UN .....	62.
1.2 Phase II. The US House of Representative Resolution 121 .....	64.
1.3 Phase III. Statue politics and history war.....	65.
2. Right-wing redressive acts .....	67.
2.1 International counter-redressive acts.....	67.
2.2 Diversification of redressive acts.....	68.
3. Summary .....	70.
<b>Chapter VI. Comfort Women Deal's Two-Level Game.....</b>	<b>72.</b>
1. Factor I. Distribution of Power, preferences, and possible coalition .....	72.
1.1 Internationalist/isolationist (Homogeneity VS Heterogeneity).....	72.
1.2 Politicization of the issue .....	74.
2. Factor II. The Political Institutions. ....	75.
2.1 State Strength and State Autonomy .....	75.
2.2 Weak state power and Involuntary Defect .....	79.
3. Factor III. Negotiator's Strategy .....	81.
4.. Summary .....	85.
<b>Chapter VII. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Chapter VIII. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>국문초록 .....</b>	<b>98</b>

## **I. Introduction**

### **1. Background**

The neighboring countries of Republic of Korea and Japan have much commonalities. ROK and Japan are both democratic countries with capitalist open economy based on rule of law. Both ROK and Japan share US as a common ally in which both countries heavily depend on the US security umbrella. Furthermore, they have similar threat perception against the DPRK proliferation issue and against rise of China. In the economic sphere, despite recent decline in value, Japan and ROK are still major trading partners, maintaining as the top 4 trading partners respectively.<sup>1</sup> In the cultural sphere, before the escalation of historical disputes, number of Japanese visitors to South Korea increased at the fastest rate in nine years in 2018, reaching more than 2.92 million Japanese tourists in Japan. Similarly, the number of South Korean visitors to Japan came to about 7.53 million in 2018, in which the number marks the highest since Japan began releasing such data in 2003.<sup>2</sup> As seen, both Japan and ROK are much connected in the security, economic, and cultural spheres.

Thus, it is quite puzzling why these commonalities and mutual connectedness have not stopped them from reconciling the past nor building concrete trust building mechanisms. Despite patterns of cooperation, ROK-Japan relations are still being obstructed by the political disputes, much driven by the legacy of historical memory. Randall Schriver, former assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs articulated, “it is remarkable how quickly political disputes can push aside discussion of our cooperation and our future progress that our countries seek to accomplish.”<sup>3</sup> In recent years, historical contention has escalated to the point where “hot economics” relationship, which remained unharmed by “cold politics” has been impaired by the historical disputes, creating an enduring damage to the bilateral relations. A Yomiuri Shimbun and Korea Times

---

<sup>1</sup> OECD South Korea Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners

<sup>2</sup>The Korean Herald. “No. Of Japanese Visitors to Korea Jumps More Than 28% in 2018

<sup>3</sup>He was interviewed by Victor Cha at CSIS “. “The Importance of U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateral Defense Cooperation.”

joint poll in June 2020 highlights that Korea and Japan are in the worst relations since the survey began in 1995 where 84% percent of Japanese and 91% of Koreans think that the bilateral relationship is in bad shape<sup>4</sup> mainly due to historical disputes. In similar vein, a survey conducted by the Korean Press Foundation in the same year considered historical disputes as the single most important factor that hinders Korea-Japan relations. Interestingly, historical disputes were considered to be of bigger factor than territorial disputes which is considered to the basis of state sovereignty. This illuminates how much historical memory activates as a core factor in hampering the bilateral ties.

Among many historical disputes such as the treatments of Zainichi Koreans and forced labor issue, comfort women issue gets the most spotlight. The same survey by the Korean Press Foundation has put the strongest emphasis on comfort women issue by labeling historical dispute section as comfort women and “other disputes”<sup>5</sup>. Genron NPO’s Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll in 2019 also shows that in regards to the perception of historical issues that needs to be resolved, the Korean side’s top priority continues to be the comfort women issue, selected by more than 70% of the respondents while more than 40% of Japanese selected comfort women issue, second to anti-Japan education and behavior.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, The Korea Times has labeled comfort women issue as the “biggest diplomatic dispute”<sup>7</sup> while BBC highlighted that the “issue of comfort women remains particularly contentious”.<sup>8</sup>

Why has comfort women issue, among other disputes, been the center of contention where it still lingers as the prime obstacle to the bilateral relationship? What is so special about the comfort women issue that it persists so long? Why are people overly sensitive about the issue? And why is it especially difficult to reconcile the comfort women issue between the two countries despite many

---

<sup>4</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun, Joint Japan-Korea opinion survey, 9 June 2020. Pulls were conducted from 22 to 24 May 2020

<sup>5</sup> 미디어이슈 6권 4호\_한·일 갈등에 대한 양국시민인식조사 2020

<sup>6</sup> The Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll 2019.” The Genron NPO.

<sup>7</sup>“Talks on Sexual Slavery.” Korea Times, April 20, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> “South Korea and Japan's Feud Explained.” BBC News. BBC, December 2, 2019



previous attempts? In other words, what is so peculiar about the comfort women issue?

This paper is an attempt to address this puzzle. It finds the answer in the unique development of comfort women activism in Korea and Japan. It finds the role of civic movement as the determining factor for such peculiarity. The development of comfort women discourses by the civil societies in both countries have instigated strong nationalism, making the issue highly sensitive while their unique redressive acts limited government's capacity for negotiation.

## 2. Literature Review

Many scholarships have already investigated the comfort women issue from many diverse angles. First, many literatures tried to analyze the comfort women issue through investigating the international factors such as the alliance dynamics, and the role of US pressure. Mostly driven by neorealism, these literatures stress the external pressure as the driving force of the comfort women issue. For example, in analyzing the reason for a rapid signing of the 2015 agreement, Son Yul argues that continued U.S. government's pressure was the determinant factor. By referring to the Hague trilateral summit in which the US directly intervened in history for the first time, he argues that U.S. efforts to minimize the historical tension has had an immense impact on the comfort women agreement.<sup>9</sup> In similar vein, Lee stresses the need for US to be the mediator to "exert more vigor and political leadership in brining South Korea and Japan together".<sup>10</sup> These literatures fall within a broader theoretical framework of Victor Cha's quasi-alliance model to address patterns of conflict and cooperation in ROK-Japan relations. They view comfort women from a broader lens of international politics in which alliance dynamics and external factors coordinate the issue. These literatures are significant in showing how external factors influence foreign policy outcome.

Some scholarships have tried to analyze comfort women issue as a bilateral conflict, stressing

---

<sup>9</sup> 손열, "위안부 합의의 국제정치 정체성-안보-경제 넥서스와 박근혜 정부의 대일 외교"

<sup>10</sup>Seong-hyon Lee, "Where Is Washington? The Missing Mediator between Seoul and Tokyo,"

more on the domestic politics, and less on external factors. For example, Kim Ho-Sup highlights the role of leadership and personal traits in explaining the patterns of conflict and cooperation in the bilateral relations. For example, by outlining the Kim-Obuchi declaration, Kim argues that political leadership, rather than structural variables determine the foreign policy outcome.<sup>11</sup> In similar vein, in addressing the seemingly puzzling question of why 2015 agreement on comfort women was finalized, despite the longstanding disagreements and public opposition, Lee's research explains that this agreement is a manifestation of Park Geun-hye's unique leadership. Drawing parallel between Park Geun-hye and her father Park Chung-Hee, he argues that the agreement was a byproduct of the environs created by her father.<sup>12</sup> These scholarships well capture the importance of leadership and government coalitions.

Some literatures tend to investigate the content of the government agreement. For example, many researches critique the 2015 comfort women agreement, criticizing it as a diplomatic act with no purpose or legal basis on which grounds the victim's right to participate and on what grounds the Japanese government felt responsible for<sup>13</sup> calling it as a "retreat" from the past,<sup>14</sup> while some study evaluates the positive aspects where the agreement has brought Japanese government's recognition of responsibility to a certain extent.<sup>15</sup> The literatures that fall in this category tend to examine the political, and legal implications for the comfort women issue. These literatures are significant in illuminating the content of the agreements.

---

<sup>11</sup> 김호섭(2009). "한일관계 형성에 있어서 정치 리더십의 역할."

<sup>12</sup> Lee, Kangkyu, "The Comfort Women Agreement: An Analysis of the Motivation that led to Park Geun-Hye's Acquiescence"

<sup>13</sup> 양현아. 2016. "2015년 한-일 위안부 합의의 법적 문제: 2015년 한일외교장관의 '위안부' 문제 합의에서 피해자는 어디에 있었(었)나?: 그 내용과 절차."

<sup>14</sup> 김창록. 2016. "2015년 한, 일 위안부 합의의 법적 문제: 법적 관점에서 본 [2015 한 일 외교장관 합의]." 『민주법학』,

<sup>15</sup> 정재민. 2016. "일본군 '위안부' 관련 2011년 헌법재판소 결정과 2015년 한일정부 간 합의의 관계: 외교적 보호권의 관점에서."

Other literatures tend to view comfort women from a constructivist view of how memory and identity coordinates the comfort women issue. Snyder and Glosserman approach the issue through the lens of identity. By outlining the identity clash between Japan and Korea in which Japan perceives itself as “peace-loving country” while “growing confidence” of Korean has stirred up strong nationalism, their book argues that perception gap has been formulated in regards to each other, and to the past.<sup>16</sup> In similar vein, Tom and David’s research also highlights the perception gap in which Japanese people view themselves as also the victims of war<sup>17</sup> while the Korean people perceive Japan as the offenders. Others stress the importance of colonial memory and the power of nationalism in constructing collective actions.<sup>18</sup> Many Korean literatures that fall in this category of comfort women as identity/memory are critical study on the cognitive reconstruction of the comfort women by historical revisionists. For example, much scholarships criticize “Comfort Women of the Empire” by Park Yu-Ha, and Ramseyer’s research, calling it a serious methodological error<sup>19</sup> and cultural denial<sup>20</sup>. Overall, these literatures investigate the constructivist aspect of the comfort women issue. These literatures well capture how the psychological dimensions of memory and identity activates as a strong mechanism for perception gap.

Lastly, some literatures have studied comfort women issue as part of civil activism. Jeong’s research identifies the contribution of Christianity, how Christian women were the subject and companion of comfort women movement, whereby Christianity was the driving force for the testimonies.<sup>21</sup> Some studied the dynamic activism of civil movements outside of Korea. Lee studied Zainichi Korean’s comfort women movement in which their identity went beyond discrimination and

---

<sup>16</sup> Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder. 2015. “*The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States.*”

<sup>17</sup> *75 Years Later, Japan and South Korea Have Yet to Fully Reconcile Their Wartime and Colonial History.*” The Washington Post.

<sup>18</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” 2004.

<sup>19</sup> 이현미. 2017. “[제국의 위안부]와 기억의 정치학.”

<sup>20</sup> 김명희. 2017. “일본군 ‘위안부’ 문제와 부인(denial)의 정치학: [제국의 위안부] 사태’ 다시 읽기.”

<sup>21</sup> 정희성. 2019. “일본군 ‘위안부’ 운동과 기독교 여성의 공헌.”

victimization into social justice and solidarity<sup>22</sup> while Kim studied the social activism in the United States.<sup>23</sup> While others concentrated on the transnational network of comfort women activism by civil societies which has had a success in brining transnational advocacy network, allowing not just comfort women issue but serious women's rights to be heard and represented in the international society.<sup>24</sup> These literatures explain comfort women from a broader theme of contentious politics and civil activism. These literatures have shown the significance of contentious politics in revealing the tragic past and also elevating the comfort women issue as an international human rights issue.

### 3. Alternative Approach

All of the above literatures highlight diverse dimensions of the comfort women issue and pose highly important questions to consider. However, these literatures do not address the particularity of the comfort women issue. They do not address why the comfort women issue is particularly enduring, sensitive, and hard to negotiate. This paper attempts to address this puzzle and to contribute to the broad theme of comfort women literatures. This research attempts to address this question through investigating the unique historical development of comfort women activism in both countries.

The main argument of this research is as follows. In Korea, comfort women issue was discovered and developed not by the Korean government, but by a strong civil group, the Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (hence the Korean Council). This phenomenon has led to an over-representation of the Korean Council and misrepresentation of the Korean government. The nationalistic discourse of the Korean Council has led nationalism to be the dominant voice in Korea, making comfort women issue as the symbolic representation of national suffering, while their unique redressive acts have further limited the Korean

---

<sup>22</sup> 이지영. 2020. “샌프란시스코 일본군 ‘위안부’ 기림비 건립 운동과 자이니치코리안 의 정체성 정치.”

<sup>23</sup> 김지민. 2021. “미국 시민사회의 일본군 ‘위안부’ 문제 인식과 랩지어 논문을 둘러싼 논란.”

<sup>24</sup> 정미애(2011), “한일관계에서 시민사회의 역할과 뉴거버넌스”

government's capacity to negotiate as it went beyond the state parameter. In Japan, the Korean Council and their unique redressive acts, especially their attempts for internationalization of the issue not only failed to institutionalize apologetic discourse within Japanese society, but was actively used by the right-wing civil society as a symbolic representation of national humiliation and defamation, institutionalizing right-wing mobilization. Especially with changes in political environs and rise of conservatism, their voices grew stronger, and their own redressive acts further limited the Japanese government's capacity for negotiation. These factors allowed comfort women issue to be highly sensitive, enduring, and hard to negotiate.

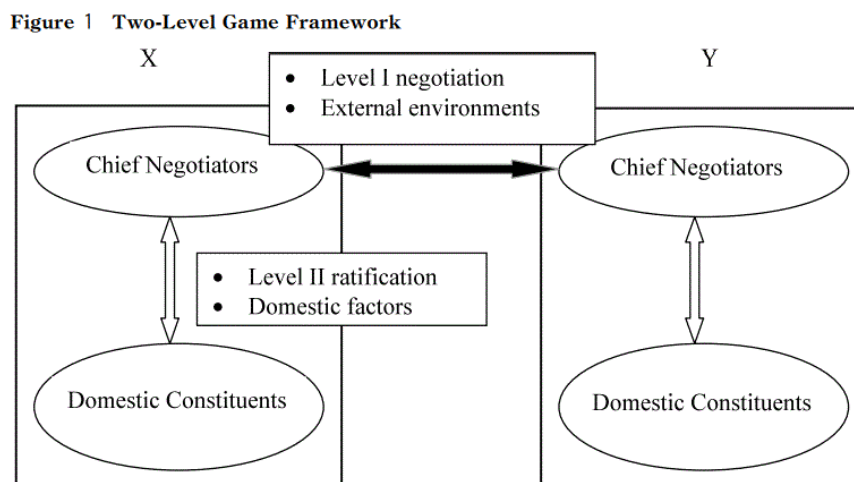
#### **4. Theoretical Framework: Robert Putnam's Two-Level Game**

Robert Putnam, in explaining the domestic-international interaction in the foreign policy outcome, forged the concept of two-level game. He argued that any international negotiations are the result of simultaneous bargaining at the international and domestic level. Level 1 refers to bargaining between state-to-state negotiators, leading to a tentative agreement. Level 2 refers to separate bargaining within the domestic constituents about whether to ratify the international agreement. This interaction can be summarized by the following: "At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and the politicians seek power by constructing coalition among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressure, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither games can be ignored by the central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain interdependent, yet sovereign."<sup>25</sup> This dual-level concept well captures the areas of entanglement between domestic and international spheres. Figure 1 illustrates the two-level game framework.

---

<sup>25</sup> Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." P.434

Figure 1. Two-Level Game Framework<sup>26</sup>



#### 4. 1. Logic of win-sets

The need to gain domestic ratification has led to formation of win-sets which represents the set of all possible international agreements at level 1 which would also gain domestic ratification at level 2. This has a significant implication in regards to international negotiations. Previously, agreements were perceived to be a unilateral agreement between two governments. Two governments with their own range of positions would spend time engaging in trade-offs to reach an agreement where the range of their preferred position overlaps which is labeled as an agreement set. In this paradigm, success of international agreement depends on finding the areas of overlap of national interests. This is illustrated by diagram 1. Yet, the need for domestic approval by domestic interest groups could pressure the government to adopt different position. Thus, the range of agreement set possible at the international level might be limited by domestic pressure. If the domestic actors do not agree to the full range of international agreement sets, it could lead to narrower agreement set as seen by diagram 2. This illustrates that even when national interests overlap in principle, agreements might fail due to domestic

<sup>26</sup> Figure drawn from Toshiya Nakamura's "Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach" p.166

disapproval.

**Diagram 1**

X range of position	Agreement set	Y range of position
---------------------	---------------	---------------------

**Diagram 2**

X Win-Set	Agreement Set	Y Win-Set
-----------	---------------	-----------

Win-sets have very important implications. First, larger win-sets make level 1 agreement more likely. International agreement is possible when win-sets overlap which implies that the larger the win-set, the more likely they are to overlap. In averse, smaller win-sets create greater risk for the failure of international agreements. Second, win-sets enabled understanding of “involuntary defection”. Robert Putnam differentiates voluntary and involuntary defection. Voluntary defection refers to voluntary cancellation of an agreement based on egoism in the absence of enforceable contracts whereas involuntary defection reflects the behavior of an agent who is unable to deliver on a promise because of failed ratification. While previously, failed international agreements were perceived through the lens of voluntary defection, through the concept of win-sets, Robert Putnam has illustrated the “deliverability” aspect whereby negotiation fails not because states have intention to cheat, but because they failed to keep the promise due to lack of deliverability. As Putnam illustrated through the Bonn negotiation, governments have to be “careful not to promise more than they can deliver”.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, a government with smaller win-sets could actually have stronger bargaining power at the international negotiations while a government with bigger win-sets can be “bullied around”.

#### **4.2. Determinants of Win-Sets**

There are three main determinants of win-sets. First determinant of win-set is related to

---

<sup>27</sup> Putnam, Robert D. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” P.439

distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among level II constituents.<sup>28</sup> Size of win-set is much influenced by the type of conflict at the domestic level. Domestic perception in regards to international negotiation can be either homogeneous or heterogenous. When the conflict is homogenous, the negotiator strives to earn as much as consensus as possible at level I, sometimes utilizing the “hawks to maximize the gains”<sup>29</sup> at level I. On the other hand, heterogenous conflict is more complicated. Diverging views and perspectives provide opposite signals which could carve up the size of win-set. Moreover, the lower the cost of no-agreement to constituents, the smaller the win-set.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes, no-agreement or status quo might be better for the constituents in which international ratification fails while high risk of no-agreement leads to more success of ratification. Lastly, politicization of the issue influences the win-set size. Politicization often “activates groups who are less worried about the cost of no-agreement, thus reducing the effective win-set”.<sup>31</sup> It highlights how “secrecy” can be an important element to successful negotiations.

Second determinant of win-set size is the political institutions. If the government has greater autonomy from the domestic pressure, there will be weaker relative bargaining power internationally. Yet, greater autonomy would create larger win-set and greater the likelihood of achieving an agreement at level I. Democratization and rise of contentious politics, with more influence of domestic interest groups in foreign policy formation would lessen the win-set size as the government would lose autonomy.

Lastly, negotiator’s strategy heavily affects the size of win-set. As the only “formal” link between the two levels, the chief negotiator can take diverse strategies which affects the foreign policy outcome. Chief negotiator can either expand or constrict the win-set size. The strategy of “cutting slack”

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid page 442

<sup>29</sup> Ibid page 444

<sup>30</sup> Ibid page 436

<sup>31</sup> Ibid page 437



is aimed to expand the domestic win-set through accommodating an international agreement that might otherwise be rejected by enlarging the win-set sizes. On contrary, the strategy of tying-hands intends to constrict it which deliberately shrinks his own win-sets, inducing the opposing chief negotiator to compromise at a point closer to his own domestic win-sets.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4.3 Win-sets in international negotiation

**Table 1. Win-sets and international negotiation outcome<sup>33</sup>**

Country X/ Country Y	Large win-set	Small win-set
Large win-set	<p><b>Process: cooperative</b></p> <p><b>Result: Equal distribution of interest</b></p>	<p><b>Process: relatively moderate</b></p> <p><b>Result: result more advantageous to Country Y</b></p>
Small win-set	<p><b>Process: relatively moderate</b></p> <p><b>Result: result more advantageous to Country X</b></p>	<p><b>Process: conflictual</b></p> <p><b>Result: failed negotiation</b></p>

<Table 1> shows the size of each country's win-set and the consequent results of international negotiations. If both countries A and B have a large win-set, the process of international cooperation is cooperative and the possibility of reaching an international agreement increases. On the other hand, if a country has a small win-set and the other country has a large win-set, that is, if country A has a large win-set and country B has a small win-set, then cooperation can be achieved through moderate negotiations. In the case of negotiations with such an asymmetric win-set, a country with a small win-set can obtain favorable negotiation results. In addition, if both countries have small-sized win-sets, the

<sup>32</sup> Toshiya Nakamura's "Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach" p.174

<sup>33</sup> "양면게임이론으로 분석해 본 한일 과거사 문제: 2005년 역사교과서 파동을 중심으로" p.152

negotiation process is controversial due to the low possibility of overlapping win-sets, so the result is also likely to end up as a failure of cooperation.<sup>34</sup>

The theoretical framework of two-level game has much implications to the comfort women issue and Korea-Japan bilateral relations. This paper attempts to utilize this dual-level concept to answer the seemingly puzzling question of why reconciliatory negotiation in regards to comfort women issue between the two governments are so difficult to resolve despite much attempts. This paper attempts to illustrate how important elements of two-level game such as win-set and involuntary defection are played out in the negotiation process.

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid page 152

## II. Initial development of comfort women issue

### 1. Early publicization

The existence of comfort women has been covered by literatures as early as 1946, one year after the liberation from Japan's annexation. Eom Heung-Seop's "Return Diary", released in 1946 highlights Young-Hee and Soon-I's stories, who went to Japan as comfort women and got pregnant.<sup>35</sup> Although in the 1950s, comfort women issue has not appeared much, in the 1960s, through movies and literatures, comfort women issue has been much exposed. Through movies and literatures such as Okamoto Giichi's Blood and Sand (1965), Kim Seung-Jong's Eyes of Dawn (1977), and Yoon Jung-Mo's Emy name was Josenpi (1982), comfort women issue has been portrayed in popular novels and movies which portrayed comfort women as the subject of sexual violence.<sup>36</sup>

In a form of reportage, comfort women issue was first published by a Japanese journalist Senda Gako in 1973 under the name of "The Complaints of 80,000 unvoiced Comfort Women of the Army". In addition, Kim Il-Myeon published a special edition of comfort women in the Magazine Gyegan Madang in 1974 which was further published as a book titled, "The Imperial Army and the Korean Japanese Military Sexual Slavery" in 1976. Stories of comfort women were also published in Japan as early as 1975 on Kochi Newspaper which published the story of Bae Bong-Ki, a comfort women victim who lived in Okinawa. Interview of the comfort women victim were also presented as early as 1979.<sup>37</sup>

Even before the testimony of Kim Hak-Soon in 1991, Bae Bong-Ki in 1982, Lee Nam-im 1982, and Noh Soo-Bok in 1984 revealed that they were the comfort women of the Japanese military.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>허윤, "일본군 위안부 재현과 진정성의 곤경. 소녀와 할머니 표상을 중심으로".

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup>이현미, "한일 위안부 외교의 역사와 쟁점"

<sup>38</sup>이권희 (2020) "일본군 위안부의 '주체화'에 관한 고찰",

Especially noteworthy is the case of Noh Soo-Bok. While early testimonies of comfort women victims were neither published by their own intent, nor publicized actively, Noh Soo-Bok's case was initiated by her own will while also getting much public attention through active publicization of Joongang Ilbo. Joongang Ilbo dispatched a correspondent to the local area and published her life 11 times as a series. Yet, there was no hard effort to actively solve this problem. People sympathized with her yet it was recognized as an individual problem of Roh Soo-Bok, therefore the solution was also presented at a very personal level.<sup>39</sup> In other words, stories of comfort women victims stimulated anger about Japan's colonial rule and the damage caused by the war, but the Korean society had no systematic ways to institutionalize these feelings to bring about national-level actions.

Not limited to the lack of collective action, the lack of empathy towards women in a patriarchal society coerced silence among the victims. Kim Yoon Shim, one of the victims testified that she was unable to go back to her house after being released from Japan due to the fear that her father would be angry to let her in after such a humiliating incident. Therefore, she was sent to her cousin's house. Likewise, many victims testified that their experience as a comfort woman were kept a secret due to fear that they will be abandoned by their families as well as the fear of social prejudice. Kim Jung-Rang describes this as the problem of social and structural level not being recognized, while victims of this structure become a subject of responsibility and criticism.<sup>40</sup>

This social atmosphere however, started to change in the 1990s. The emergence of democracy after 1985, advent of civil societies, and crave for rights of marginalized people, and feminist movement has instigated much more attention to the comfort women issue. More importantly, the creation of a strong civil group, the Korean Council which utilized this social atmosphere and institutionalized collective action has become a strong support group for the comfort women which allowed Kim Hak-

---

<sup>39</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” P. 47

<sup>40</sup> Ibid P. 52

Soon's testimony to be represented as more than a victim's personal narrative but amplified into a national shame.<sup>41</sup>

## 2. From sympathy to empathy and the Korean Council

The Korean Council was not an organization that was created immediately. Long before its establishments, there were grassroots movements that became the basis for the creation of the Korean Council. Among the most important movements were the Korea Church Women United (KCWU) which was established in 1967 to criticize sex tourism. KCWU first mentioned comfort women issue on August of 1984 when president Chun Doo-Hwan's plan to visit Japan was announced. KCWU suggested that the issue of comfort women as well as the issue of Sakhalin Koreans be resolved as soon as possible to clear up Japanese colonial legacy and establish a friendly relationship.<sup>42</sup> Yet, after 1984 up until 1987, the KCWU turned their focus on anti-dictatorship movement in which comfort women issue were put aside. Comfort women issue reemerged as an issue for KCWU when they met professor Yoon Jong-ok in 1987. Professor Yoon, known as the most important figure to address the issue of comfort women, encountered the comfort women issue as early as 1970s when she read a newspaper article about the victims of comfort women. She then began her study on the issue in 1980, when she went to Okinawa to meet the victims and collected testimonies. Based on her study, she published the unfortunate lives of the victims as a comfort woman at Hankook Ilbo (Korean Daily) under the name, "Taken Away".<sup>43</sup> Yet, both professor Yoon and KCWU's attempt to politicize the comfort women issue were met with cold reactions from the Korean government as well as the ordinary citizens. Comfort women issue were considered as a shameful history in Korea where women's chastity was emphasized under the Confucian and patriarchal society. For these reasons, the subject of comfort women was

---

<sup>41</sup> 이권희 (2020) “일본군 위안부의 ‘주체화’에 관한 고찰”, p. 168

<sup>42</sup> 이현숙 한국교회여성연합회 25년사

<sup>43</sup> 이권희 (2020) “일본군 위안부의 ‘주체화’에 관한 고찰”, p171

shunned from being a subject of study.<sup>44</sup>

However, the social atmosphere changed in the 1990s. In 1990 during President Roh Tae-Woo's visit to Japan, KCWU, Women's student representative, and Women's Association held a press conference whereby they urged that comfort women could no longer be buried in history. This was the first systematic public action of the women's organization to deal with the comfort women issue. Defining comfort women issue not as an individual issue but as a social issue that can no longer be neglected means that the comfort women issue, which has remained as a simple subject of individual suffering, has been newly recognized as a social and even national issue. Two factors have led to such a renewed understanding of the comfort women issue.

First, with the advent of a democratic regime under Roh administration in the late 1980s, freedom of speech and demonstration has sparked growing voice of marginalized people. Especially victims of Japan's colonialism have voiced out their testimonies of the suffering, appealing for lawsuit for compensation. Second, gender issue and violence against women has emerged as a social issue. The case in which three female students of Kyunghee university were taken to the police station during the protest and raped has led to public anger. Ten women's organization then joined forces to engage in the first political activities. The disclosure of Bucheon Police sexual harassment scandal in 1986, whereby Kwon In-Sook, the victim of sexual harassment accused the reality of sexual violence committed by the state authority became a serious social problem.

In the midst of this changing social atmosphere, the comfort women issue, an issue that is both a legacy of colonial suffering as well as violence against women gained huge social momentum. It really took off when the Korean Council was organized. In November of 1990, 37 women's organizations gathered to form the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (The

---

<sup>44</sup> 야마시타 영애 지음, *내셔널리즘의 틈새에서* p.124.

Korean Council).<sup>45</sup> The following year, on August 14, 1991, with a strong support from the Korean Council, the “first” witness Kim Hak-soon held a testimonial press conference that allowed the comfort women to be widely known to the public. While changes in social atmosphere and creation of strong civil society became the foundation for public outcry, this brave woman’s testimony triggered the social momentum for comfort women issue. With her testimony, many other victims opened up about their experience. Her testimony enabled comfort women to be publicized internationally, changing the paradigm of comfort women issue in the future.

When the Japanese government denied the existence of comfort women, the Korean Council published 7 statements that continues to be the crux of their voice. The 7 statements are: 1. Admit the Japanese military sexual slavery system as a war crime, 2. Disclose official documents, 3. Deliver an official apology, 4. Pay reparations to the victims, 5. Erect a memorial monument and build an archive, 6. Record the sexual slavery system in history textbooks, and 7. Punish those responsible.<sup>46</sup> The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan changed their name to the Korean Council for Justice Remembrance in 2018 when they merged with the Justice and Memory Foundation for the Solving of Sexual Slavery by the Japanese Army which was established by participation of more than 1 million citizens to invalidate the 2015 Comfort Women Agreement.<sup>47</sup> Up until now, the Korean Council stands as the single most important social actor in dealing with the comfort women issue.

### **3. Initial response from Japan**

Similar to Korea, until former comfort women Kim Hak-Soon testified, comfort women issue was relatively forgotten. Although some historians were aware of the forced prostitution system, it has never been publicly recognized. The testimony of Kim Hak-Soon, and the lawsuit of three

---

<sup>45</sup> 정의기억연대 [정의기억연대 \(womenandwar.net\)](http://womenandwar.net)

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

comfort women against the Japanese government in 1991 has instigated public awareness of the issue in Japan.<sup>48</sup> Initially, the Japanese government denied any involvement of the Japanese military in the recruitment of the comfort women. They not only refused to apologize and provide reparation, but also denied to carry out any kind of investigation.

However, the Japanese government soon changed their position. Japanese government's change of position was partly due to strong pressure from the Korean government, but also due to the efforts of consciousness Japanese scholars, politicians and civic groups. For example, 25 female lawyers, including former chairman Takako Doi of the Japanese Socialist Party submitted a specific proposal to chief cabinet secretary Koichi Kato that the Japanese government should apologize to the Korean comfort women who were forcibly arrested during World war II and to conduct a detailed investigation. Meanwhile, in early January 1992, Michio Watanabe, the first government official to appear on TV recognized Japanese military's involvement of the comfort women system. Japan could no longer deny its involvement when Yoshimi, a professor at Chuo University in Japan revealed that the Japanese military directly intervened and managed the system by discovering a large amount of historical materials related to the comfort women issue at the Japanese Research Institute.<sup>49</sup> As there were lack of resources to counter Japanese government's claim from the Korean side, dedication of conscious Japanese elites has allowed the Japanese government to take responsibility.

These efforts have led Prime Minister Miyazawa to apologize for Japanese government's involvement, at a policy speech on a visit to South Korea on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1992. He stated, "*What we should not forget about relationship between our nation and your nation is a fact that there was a certain period in the thousands of years of our company when we were the victimizer and you were the victim. I would like to once again express a heartfelt remorse and apology for the unbearable*

---

<sup>48</sup> Hirofumi Hayashi, "*Disputes in Japan over the Japanese Military Comfort Women System and its Perception in History*", P.5

<sup>49</sup> 조윤수, 일본군·위안부·문제와 한일관계: 1990년대 한국과 일본의 대응을 중심으로, 76



*suffering and sorrow that you experienced during this period because of our nation's act." Recently the issue of the so-called 'wartime comfort women' is being brought up. I think that incidents like this are seriously heartbreaking, and I am truly sorry.*"<sup>50</sup> This acknowledgement of Japan's involvement has been formally stated 5 months later by Chief Head Secretary Koichi Kato. *"That is, the inquiry has revealed that the Government had been involved in the establishment of comfort stations, the control of those who recruited comfort women, the construction and reinforcement of comfort facilities, the management and surveillance of comfort stations, the hygiene maintenance in comfort stations and among comfort women, and the issuance of identification as well as other documents to those who were related to comfort stations... The Government again would like to express its sincere apology and remorse to all those who have suffered indescribable hardship as so-called "wartime comfort women".*<sup>51</sup> Japanese government's recognition of Japan's involvement and apology has further extended to admitting coercive measures in the process of recruiting the comfort women through the Kono Statement. It reads, *"A comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women. The recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military. The Government study has revealed that in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., and that, at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitments. They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.*"<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> "Japanese Government Statements and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statements." <https://kls.law.columbia.edu/content/japanese-government-statements-and-ministry-foreign-affairs-statements>.

<sup>51</sup> "Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Kato on the Issue of the so-called "Wartime Comfort Women" from the Korean Peninsula." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/rp/page25e\\_000344.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page25e_000344.html).

<sup>52</sup> "Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary." Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/rp/page25e\\_000343.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page25e_000343.html)

#### **4.Summary**

For decades, comfort women issue, although publicized in small quantity in literatures and journals have not been a political issue. Comfort women issue gained public attention in Korea with democratization when the social conditions have allowed a renewed understanding of the issue. With changes in social atmosphere, the testimony of Kim Hak-Soon, with strong support from the Korean Council has politicized the comfort women issue which was successful in getting Japan's attention. Despite the initial denial of the Japanese government, continued efforts of conscious Japanese individuals and groups have led to change in Japanese government's position. In the early stage of the comfort women issue, social atmosphere in Japan coincided with Korea given that there was empathy towards the comfort women victims.

### **III Diverging perception on the comfort women issue**

#### **1. Asian Women's Fund: division between Korea and Japan**

Asian Women's Fund was launched under a "Project to deal with Issues Occasion of on the Fiftieth Years After the War". Government decided to acknowledge moral responsibility for the comfort women issue, establish a Fund in cooperation with the people of Japan, promote projects expressing the atonement of the Japanese Government and people to the former comfort women, and promote other projects aimed at the resolution of contemporary problems faced by women.<sup>53</sup> Four main activities of the Asian Women's Fund are as follows: (ii) the Fund will support those conducting medical and welfare projects and other similar projects which are of service to former comfort women, through the use of government funding and other funds; (iii) when these projects are implemented, the Government will express the nation's feelings of sincere remorse and apology to the former comfort women; and (iv) the Government will collate historical documents relating to the comfort women, to serve as a lesson of history. The Chief Cabinet Secretary also clearly stated that the Fund would, through the use of government and other funds, support those who undertook projects aimed at resolving contemporary problems, such as violence against women.<sup>54</sup>

Asian Women's Fund had its limits as it was a political compromise. The coalition government headed by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama was divided within. At that time, Liberal Democratic Party members, which had the majority of the ruling coalition party, expressed strong opposition to the idea of national level compensation. They believed that Japanese government's legal responsibility was settled with the San Francisco Treaty and 1965 bilateral treaty on the issue of compensation and property claims. They were also quite concerned that if personal compensation as

---

<sup>53</sup> Establishment of the AW Fund, and the basic nature of its projects. Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://awf.or.jp/e2/foundation.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

made by the state, it would expand to other victims of war. The Socialist Party members, especially female officials and chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi's call for national compensation was overruled.

While being a political compromise, the Asian Women's Fund was also a sincere effort of conscious Japanese scholars and people. The idea that post-war compensation itself may be thwarted by the influence of the right-wing nationalists led to the recognition of the Asian Women's Fund as the best option.<sup>55</sup> This included conscientious intellectuals such as Wada Haruki and Onuma Yasuaki who participated in the progressive social movement, especially contributing in solving the postwar damage problems, such as compensation to the Sakhalin Koreans, as well as Lawyers and citizens who had been working to solve the problem of the comfort women issue.<sup>56</sup> Wada Haruki's letter to professor Kim Jong-Ok well illustrates the limitation and the sincerity. He stated, *"I fully understand the criticism of the Asian Women's Fund itself. This is a product of power relations in 1995. The Socialist Party's leader and chief cabinet secretary could not take the form of compensation because they were unable to suppress resistance from LDP members and cabinet members. It must have been insufficient because of that. Unfortunately, it is inevitable that the disagreement over the fund will deepen...However, as a Japanese person, the government's decision to accept responsibility, express its remorse and apology, and work together with the people to compensate for this project is a step forward that has never been seen before."*<sup>57</sup>

When the donations were made, a large number of individual and citizen's groups in Japan sent a message along with their donations. *"As long as one is a citizen of this country, it is not possible to escape from Japan's past mistakes or history. As a Japanese person, and as a human*

---

<sup>55</sup> 김정란, "일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로" P. 116

<sup>56</sup> 신영숙, 여성을 위한 아시아평화국민기금과 일본 사회의 인식 p. 105

<sup>57</sup> 정대협 김윤옥 선생께 답합니다/와다 하루키, 한겨레, 2002

*being, I would like to express my heartfelt apologies to all who were coerced into becoming wartime comfort women.” “I was only a child during the war, but when I later learned of the comfort women and tried to imagine their humiliation, I trembled with rage at the Japanese troops who carried out this inhumane scheme. I believe that each Japanese citizen should make amends for this crime on an individual basis.” “I am participating because I realize that the Japanese people also share the responsibility for the war.”*<sup>58</sup> These statements display sincerity of their remorse as human beings, and as Japanese citizens.

As seen, Asian Women’s Fund, while had its bounds as a political compromise, was also a true reflection of the remorse of the Japanese people within the limited circumstances. Aware of this circumstance, in the initial phase, the Korean government was positive of the fund. Yet, with the announcement that the Asian Women Fund was officially launched in July 1995, the Korean Council strongly criticized the Japanese government, saying that the fund is a private fund that is consolation money by private organizations and a means of avoiding Japan’s legal responsibility. Jeong Jin-Sung, leading figure of the Korean Council made his clear opposition, saying, *“Japan’s Asian Women Fund is a national disgrace.”* At the same time, the Korean Council has emphasized its position through emphasizing the words of the victims who had similar perspective with the Korean Council’s position such as victim Kang Deok-Kyung’s remark that said, *“never receive Asian Women Fund!”*. In early 1997, the Korean Council criticized, the Asian Women’s Fund for secretly meeting with the victims in Korea a month before the Korea-Japan summit to pay the funds, stating that the fund completely ignored not only the Korean government but also the public's feelings. Chairman of the welfare and finance committee of the Korean Council at that time, Kim Hye-won described the Korean Council’s view of the Asian Women’s Fund, *“First, the fund distort the nature of the issue of state responsibility and compensation for war crimes and see the victims as objects of benefit, which is nothing more than*

---

<sup>58</sup> Messages from Japanese contributors. <https://awf.or.jp/e3/donators.html>.

*an insult to the victims and human rights abuses. Second, it causes division within the victims, and between the victim and the Korean Council. The victims, who were tempted by the fund, were suspicious of each other by receiving it, and distrusted the Korean Council's refusal. Third, fund is only a political purpose of Japan to enter the UN permanent seat.”<sup>59</sup>*

The Korean Council, rather than perceiving the fund as a sincere remorse of the Japanese people, the fund was radically perceived as a wicked attempt of the Japanese government to deny their wrongdoings. In the 188<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Demonstration on October 25<sup>th</sup> of 1995, the Korean Council issued a statement that called the Asian Women's Fund as a scam to silence the poor Asian victims and avoid criminal liability for legal compensation.<sup>60</sup> Ever since the establishment of the Asian Women Fund, the problem of comfort women issue has shifted from Japanese government's apology to Japan's legal responsibility.<sup>61</sup> As of 1996, the word, “legal responsibility” appeared frequently in the Korean Council's protest which became the focal point of Korean council's redress movement.

The diverging perception of the Asian Women's Fund led to disappointment and dissatisfaction in Japan, expressing that their sincerity was not properly recognized and that they were deeply hurt<sup>62</sup>. The Asian Women Fund controversy reflected a fundamental difference between Korean activists and the Japanese activists. Jeong Jin-Sung argues that human rights and nationalism was the basis for solidarity of the Korean civic groups while the common denominator of Japanese civic groups was human rights and pacifism.<sup>63</sup> While the Korean and Japanese civic groups shared mutual understanding of comfort women as human rights, clash between pacifism and nationalism

---

<sup>59</sup> 신영숙, “일본의 아시아평화국민기금 (국민기금)에 대한 한국사회의 대응”. *여성과 역사* p. 252-254 쪽

<sup>60</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” p.126

<sup>61</sup> 조윤수, 일본군·위안부·문제와 한일관계: 1990년대 한국과 일본의 대응을 중심으로, P.86

<sup>62</sup> 양기호, “한일갈등에서 국제쟁점으로: 위안부 문제 확산과정의 분석과 함의” p.13

<sup>63</sup> 오경택, “일본군 위안부 문제에 관한 동북아 NGO들의 초국가적 연대활동 연구” P.203

was visible as the comfort women issue progressed. In similar vein, Yang Gi-Ho articulates that while Japanese civic groups emphasized feminism's view of women's rights, the Korean civic group viewed the issue from a nationalist perspective in a form of national discrimination under colonial rule.<sup>64</sup>

This fundamental difference of values weakened Japan-Korea coalition.

## 2. Weakening of Leftist Coalition in Japan

As the Asian Women's Fund progressed, not only did it lead to division between the Korean and Japanese civic groups, conflicts rose within progressive Japanese society on how to deal with the issue. Particularly, there was a conflict among Japanese intellectuals who supported the fund and those who opposed it. Although both sides represented the leftist, progressive elites, their perception diverged. For example, Yoshiaki, a Japanese history professor claimed that responsibility for any type of violence against women caused by structural problems within society through social division and suppression undeniably lies with the government. Yoshimi argued that the so-called comfort women" issue is multilayered as it is caused by the superiority and arbitrariness of the occupier—the Japanese people and, more specifically, men. As such, it should not be approached so simply; that is to say, a fund raised by the Japanese people cannot replace the compensation due to the wartime victims.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, Japanese international human rights lawyer Etsuro Dotsuka has harshly criticized Japanese Foreign Ministry's officials for falsely representing public opinion to the international community—including the United Nations—by manipulating, concealing, and distorting information.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile intellectuals such as Haruki Wada and Onuma Yasuaki who participated in the establishment of the Asian Women Fund defended their position by arguing that it was the best option to reconcile in a confined circumstance.

---

<sup>64</sup> 양기호, “한일갈등에서 국제쟁점으로: 위안부 문제 확산과정의 분석과 함의” P. 16

<sup>65</sup> Chun, Jahyun, “*Social Divisions and International Reconciliation: Domestic Backlash against Foreign Policymaking between Japan and South Korea*” 377

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

How to handle the comfort women issue not only divided progressive individuals, it also led to internal division among liberal civic organizations that were once unified in their support for the comfort women issue. Many Japanese civic organizations expressed discomfort and concern over the Korean Council's direction which began to prioritize legal punishment of the perpetrators. Organizations such as "An Organization to Ensure Japan's Postwar Responsibility" and "Japanese Women Council" argued that the issue of punishment of the emperor may instigate strong backlash in the Japanese society. These organizations became significant supporters and contributors to the Asian Women Fund. Meanwhile other organizations were critical of the Asian Women's Fund and continued to network with the Korean Council. These civic groups, although not limited, were mostly formed around Zainichi Koreans such as the "Korean People's comfort Women's Network", and "Korean Peoples Comfort Women's Association"<sup>67</sup> which based its movement on ethnic-nationalism.

### 3. Summary

To summarize, unlike the initial phase of the comfort women movement where there was shared empathy between the two countries, fundamental differences on their views soon clashed. While Korea, led by the Korean Council has approached the issue from context-specific ethnic nationalism, many Japanese civic groups and individuals approached the issue as universal human rights. Misperception augmented rapidly after the establishment of the Asian Women's Fund where the Korean Council viewed the fund as a wicked effort of the Japanese government to disguise its legal responsibility, while the Japanese people felt betrayed that their sincere efforts were not recognized. Not limited to division between Korea and Japan, different approaches to the comfort women has led to division among the Japanese individuals and groups. This has led to weakening of the leftist coalition in Japan which had been a powerful force in pressuring the Japanese government to change its stance.

---

<sup>67</sup> 최명숙, "초국적 시민연대의 형성과 한계. (일본군 위안부를 위안 한. 일 시민운동을 중심으로)" p. 571



## **IV. Right-Wing resurgence in Japan and the Comfort Women Issue**

### **1. Right-wing resurgence in Japan**

While leftist coalition weakened, right-wing forces slowly gained momentum. For decades, right-wing mobilization in Japan were unfulfilled. Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) dissolved right-wing institutions and as a result, about 49,000 individuals involved in right-wing conservatism were expunged, 233 right-wing organizations out of 350 were disbanded by 1951<sup>68</sup>. 1970s have witnessed rise of few right-wing organizations such as Gaisen Uyoku group which blasted imperial hymns on the streets. Also, some organizations such as Japan Association of War-Bereaved Families, the Association of Shinto Shrines, and the House of Growth acted as lobbying groups. However, this groups were a minority, organized in small numbers and with little influence. It was in the 1980s that a small but significant group of right-wing organizations started to establish grassroots mobilization to engage the public. Many of the leaders including ethno-nationalists protested against the rise of the Left during student movements in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>69</sup> Yet, these efforts still could did not lead to large mobilization of the right-wing forces.

#### **1.1 Textbook controversy as an initial trigger for right-wing mobilization**

When the issue of comfort women was made public in Japan through Kim Hak-Soon's testimony in 1991, reactions from the Japanese government, ordinary citizens, and even right-wing organizations were not aggressively negative. What had triggered a sense of urgency for the right-wing nationalists was the 1997 addition of junior high school textbooks which added facts about comfort women issue. The comfort women issue appeared in a history textbook in the 1990s because of three important cases: 1. The Kono statement in 1993, 2. The Murayama statement in 1995, and the

---

<sup>68</sup> Yoon Sharon, Asahina Yuki, "*The Rise and Fall of Japan's New Far Right: How Anti-Korean Discourses Went Mainstream*". p. 369

<sup>69</sup> Ibid p. 369

Ienaga trial in 1997.

First the Kono statement admitted the existence of the comfort women and the role of the Japanese government which further led to formal apology of the Japanese government in 1997 through the Murayama statement. These two cases have had a significant impact on Japan's education policy. Before the two statements, Japan's Ministry of Education rejected the inclusion of comfort women under the textbook screening system. However, these two statements forced textbook publishers to include references to the comfort women issue in history textbooks during the 1990s.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the Ienaga trial became an important trigger to change the contents of Japanese history textbooks. When Ienaga began writing history detailing the atrocities such as the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, the comfort women issue, and the inhuman experiments carried out by the Unit 731, under the textbook screening, he had to make more than 200 revisions to his text. He filed a law suits in 1965 which continued until the 1990s. In 1990, the pressure on the education ministry prompted a reform of the screening process, which is now more transparent. Many textbooks included passages about the Nanjing massacre and the comfort women issue. In 1997, the Tokyo supreme court acknowledged that he had been right about the Unit 731 and ordered the government to pay 300,000 yen in damages. The judgement quoted the novelist Rutarō Shōin, "A country whose textbook lie will inevitably collapse".<sup>71</sup> After his law suit ended in 1997, the comfort women issue appeared in all seven middle school history textbooks.

Right-wing nationalists began to mobilize against this textbook trend, calling the textbook as self-torturing.<sup>72</sup> In 1996, conservative scholar such as Fujioka Nobukatsu established the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and announced their plan to publish a new version of the middle school textbook which contains more positive view of the Japanese history by deleting references to

---

<sup>70</sup> Chun JaHyun and Choi Daeun, "Japan's Foreign Policy on Postwar Issues Relating to South Korea". p. 469

<sup>71</sup> Saburo Ienaga. one man's campaign against Japanese censorship" The Guardian

<sup>72</sup> "Education Minister slams textbooks as self-torturing" Japan times, November 28, 2004.

the comfort women issue. Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform's new textbook was endorsed by the Ministry of Education in 2001. More importantly, the textbook controversy has led to mobilization of the biggest right-wing forces, the Japan Conference (Nippon Kaigi), which was organized on May 1997 through uniting two conservative groups. As one of the 6 goals of the Japan Conference is to recover Japan's tradition in education and foster teenagers with pride and affection for their homeland,<sup>73</sup> the "self-torturing" textbooks instigated strong right-wing mobilization

## 1.2 Changing East-Asian dynamics as a factor for nationalist momentum

While textbook controversy was an instant trigger, changes in the East Asian dynamics was a lingering factor for right-wing impetus. Except for the few years following the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, Japan had the lowest rate of economic growth in East Asia. China eclipsed Japan in 2009 and South Korea's economy grew to the point where Korea's average wages exceeded those of Japan for the first time in 2015.<sup>74</sup> Territorial disputes with China and South Korea, and North Korea's proliferation and abductee issue created a sense of collective insecurity in Japan. Moreover, the Korean Wave which overtook the popularity of Japanese cultures in Asia and the West has exacerbated feelings of animosity. In the midst of this crisis, the comfort women issue, which heavily criticized the Japanese government further exacerbated the feeling of hostility. Thus, anti-Korean sentiment has played a crucial role in distorting the "comfort women" issue, which reveals Japan's dark history.<sup>75</sup>

The threats coming from changes in the East Asian dynamics have created a sense of

---

<sup>73</sup> The 6 goals are 1) Respect the imperial family centered on national unity and foster a sense of nationality, (2) A new constitution suitable for a new era, (3) Politics that protects the honor of the state and the lives of the people, (4) Recovering Japan's Tradition in Education and fostering teenagers with pride and affection for their homeland, (5) Increase the safety of the country and contribute to world peace: Develop the spirit of protecting the country, improve the defense capabilities that contribute to securing the safety of the country, and contribute to world peace and (6) Friendship with the world that has led to a spirit of symbiotic co-prosperity. (구유진, "아베 정권과 보수시민사회: 일본회의의 정책제언활동을 중심으로")

<sup>74</sup> Yoon Sharon, Asahina Yuki, "*The Rise and Fall of Japan's New Far Right: How Anti-Korean Discourses Went Mainstream*". p.372

<sup>75</sup> Chun JaHyun and Choi Daeun, "Japan's Foreign Policy on Postwar Issues Relating to South Korea". P.466

collective insecurity which in turn has led to right-wing mobilization. Charles Tilly in his assessment of political opportunities and threats contended that not only opportunities, but also threats stimulate mobilization. In fact, he argues that “a given amount of threat tends to generate more collective action than the same amount of opportunity, insofar as the response to opportunity is likely to require more alteration of the group’s organization and mobilization pattern than is response to threat; the group can respond to threat via its established routines.”<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Koo Yoojin, who studied conservative civil society in Japan articulated the importance of these political environmental conditions as a condition for enabling conservative mobilization. She analyzed that the conditions of dissatisfaction and anxiety regarding the economic decline, exclusive nationalism and patriotism, combined with political opportunities and threats create policies in favor of the conservative civil societies.<sup>77</sup>

### **1.3 Rise of Abe and LDP: consolidation of right-wing mobilization**

This right-wing mobilization consolidated with new opportunities coming from the rise of political conservatism. Former prime minister Abe, since his election as a member of the House of Representatives in 1993, started to actively participate in the right-wing revisionist movement. For example, Abe participated in the LDP’s Committee to Examine History founded in 1993 which considered World War II a war of liberation for Asia and concluded that such stories of Nanjing Massacre and the comfort women are exaggerated. Abe also came to be involved in the revisionist history movement in 1997 and founded the Young Diet Member’s Group for Japan’s Future and History Education.<sup>78</sup>

Most importantly, with Abe’s rise, the Japan Conference became a power political organization, amassing more than 40,000 members. Noteworthy is the strong accessibility of

---

<sup>76</sup> Yoojin Koo, “A Configurative Approach to Conservative Mobilization in Japan: The Effect of Combining Political Opportunities and Threats,” p.35

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi “*Japan’s Right-Wing Women and the “Comfort Women” Issue*” P.46

conservative civil society to the policy decision-makers. For example, following the formation of Japan Conference, on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1997, Japan Conference's Parliamentary League was established which consisted of politicians and bureaucrats whom supported the Japan Conference. This Parliamentary League increased accessibility of civil groups to policy-makers through forming networks and holding joint seminars. Shinzo Abe acted as a special supervisor to the 290 politicians who belong to the Parliamentary League, and as of September 2019, 16 out of 20 cabinet members belonged to the organization.<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, Koo Yoojin's research showed a correlation where a member of the national assembly who makes more frequent remarks at the assembly, the more likely that he or she belongs to the Japan Conference's Parliamentary League<sup>80</sup>, shaping the direction of domestic and foreign policies. Furthermore, not limited to the Parliamentary League, the Japan Conference was also active in local politics whereby 1,800 politicians belong to Japan Conference's Local Assembly Union. With strong connection and accessibility with the policy-makers, they have initiated grassroots protests like the 10,000 people rally to revise the Article 9 of the constitution. At a twentieth anniversary commemoration, Abe expressed his deepest respect to members who worked diligently in their local communities to help restore Japan's national pride.<sup>81</sup>

Along with the Parliamentary League and Local Assembly Union, many organizations began to be affiliated with Japan Conference. Japan's Women's Association, a women's section of the Japan Conference was created while conservative think-tanks such as Japan Policy Institute started to work closely with Japan Conference. As seen, despite having different names of the organizations, many of the organizations had common leadership and close relationships with Japan Conference.<sup>82</sup> Since it

---

<sup>79</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch, *The "History Wars" and the "Comfort Woman" Issue: The Significance of Nippon Kaigi in the Revisionist Movement in Contemporary Japan* P. 236

<sup>80</sup> 구유진, "아베 정권과 보수시민사회: 일본회의의 정책제언활동을 중심으로" p. 142

<sup>81</sup> Yoon Sharon, Asahina Yuki, *The Rise and Fall of Japan's New Far Right: How Anti-Korean Discourses Went Mainstream*. P. 371

<sup>82</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch, *The "History Wars" and the "Comfort Woman" Issue: The Significance of Nippon Kaigi in the Revisionist Movement in Contemporary Japan* P. 236

was founded in the midst of intense controversy surrounding the inclusion of the comfort women issue in history textbooks, while they dealt with wide range of issues such as promotion of the emperor system, protection of traditional family values, and revision of the constitution, comfort women issue became one of their deep interests. When the first large-scale rally of Japan Conference was held on 6 November 1997, for example, the leader Nakagawa gave a speech entitled “The ‘comfort women’ and ‘forced mobilization’ are fake,” criticizing history textbooks that included “comfort women” and also the Kono statement of 1993.<sup>83</sup>

While right-wing organizations gained much strength with rise of Abe and political conservatism, other civil organizations which tried to fulfill the role of being a watchdog against the government lost its strength. Chun Ja-hyun argues that this phenomenon is due to the unique structure of non-profit organization status of civil societies. To develop a nonprofit sector and public interest activities, the NPO Law was enacted in 1998. A noticeable point is that the NPO Law allows civil society groups to acquire nonprofit corporation legal status through a system of certification under the authorities. Certification of the authorities implies that NPOs work within the context of a partnership with the government which makes them vulnerable to retain a favorable relation with government. In light of the structure of civil society, NPOs can only conduct their activities with the support of the government. In contrast, civil society groups that oppose the government’s foreign policy have faced budgetary constraints while simultaneously finding it difficult to fulfill their essential roles.<sup>84</sup> She argues that this explains Women’s Active Museum on War and Peace which records the facts of Japanese aggression including comfort women issue has serious budgetary constraints despite attracting large number of citizens.

The below picture highlights a correlation between political conservatism and right-wing civil movement. Initial increase of right-wing activism began after 1997 with the textbook

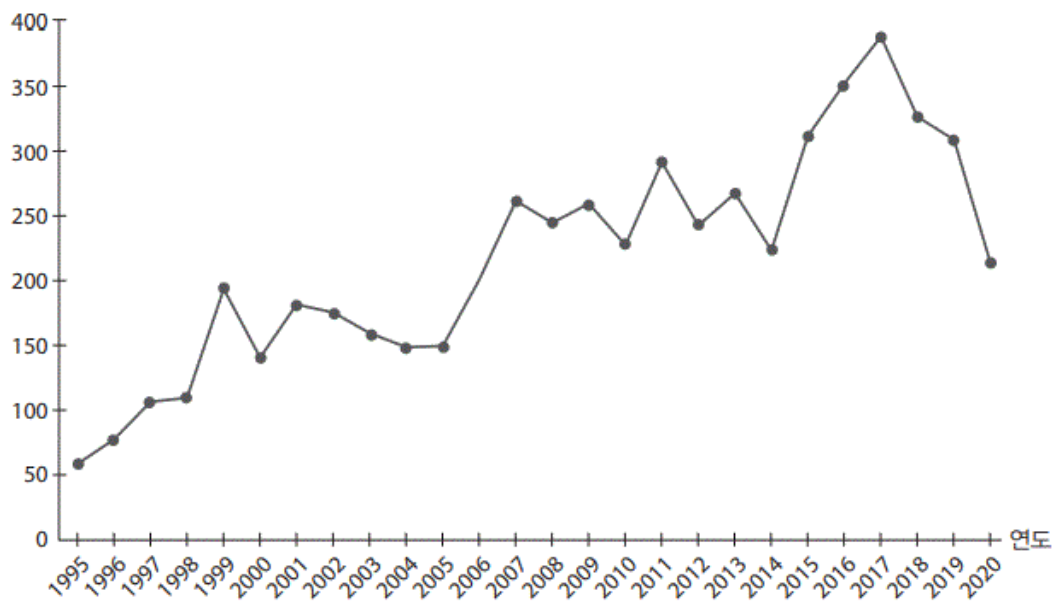
---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid 238

<sup>84</sup> Chun JaHyun and Choi Daeun, “Japan’s Foreign Policy on Postwar Issues Relating to South Korea” P.462

controversy which faded away in the early 2000s. Yet with rise of Abe in 2006, the number of events soon escalated. Since the start of the second Abe administration, its activities have been further increased since 2014. With increased activities of right-wing civil societies, efforts to distort facts about the comfort women issue had been accompanied in a broader effort for historical revisionism.

Picture 1. Number of Japanese Conservative Group’s Event Data, 1995-2020<sup>85</sup>



## 2. Role of Japanese Media

### 2.1 declining legitimacy of left-wing media

Asahi Shinbun was once the largest provider of Japanese newspaper. According to World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, up until 2010, Asahi Shinbun was the second most widely read newspaper in the world, with a daily circulation of 12 million. Asahi Shinbun, which represents the leftist voice have been most active in expressing remorse of Japan’s wrongdoings. In

<sup>85</sup> 구유진, “아베 정권과 보수시민사회: 일본회의의 정책제언활동을 중심으로” P.134

the 1960s, Asahi Shinbun journalists have been deeply influenced by the world federalist movements encouraging “Japanese youth to be unpatriotic... to abolish sovereign states and federalize the world”. Accordingly, Asahi Shinbun had been active in politicizing the comfort women issue in the 1990s.

Asahi’s reputation however, started to decline in 2014 when the newspaper publicly came to the conclusion that the memoirs of Yoshida Seiji, the author who committed in addressing the Korean comfort women were fictitious. When Asahi Shimbun announced that they would retract the eighteen articles they had published between 1982 and 1997 that cited his testimony, this dramatic admission of wrongdoing seemed to validate the revisionist perspectives of right-wing intellectuals who had long warned the public not to be duped by do-gooder liberals like Yoshida. They argued that Yoshida’s memoirs had been pivotal in proving coercion—the key factor distinguishing sex slaves from prostitutes. Proof of forcible recruitment of women was at the core of the demands made by comfort women for government compensation, and the Yoshida testimony had even led to a 1996 report by Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, on “military sexual slavery in wartime.” Asahi was blamed for shaming Japan and promoting anti-Japanese rhetoric around the world.<sup>86</sup> By 2015, Asahi’s daily circulation rates had fallen to 6.6 million a year according to the Japan Audit Bureau of Circulations.<sup>61</sup> And according to a 2020 survey of public trust in media, Asahi Shimbun ranked the third most biased and untrustworthy source of news, trailing behind two well-known tabloids, along with other well-established liberal media outlet.<sup>87</sup>

## **2.2 increased legitimacy of the right-wing media**

While the left-wing media lost its reputation, enduring political conservatism has allowed expansion of right-wing media. Apart from three years of rule by the Democratic Party of Japan, since the Mori cabinet took power in 2000s, conservative media expanded. Conservative journalism, which used to be represented by Shogun (1969), Seiron (1973), and Voice (1960), greatly expanded to include

---

<sup>86</sup> Yoon Sharon, Asahina Yuki, “*The Rise and Fall of Japan’s New Far Right: How Anti-Korean Discourses Went Mainstream*”. P. 375

<sup>87</sup> Ibid p. 373



SAPIO (1989), Bart (1991), and Buzz (1991) in the 1990's. Such conservative journalism coincides with the change of Japanese politics. Both magazines showed a decline in circulation between 2009 and 2012, when the Democratic party was in operation, but the number of circulations increased sharply in 2013 and 2014 when the Abe cabinet came into power. This tendency can be seen in Shogun of Bungeishunju Ltd, a representative conservative journalism in Japan. It issued a maximum of 85,000 copies in 2006 and 2007, the first period of the Abe Cabinet. In 2009, when the Democratic Party came into power, the number of circulating copies decreased to about 60,000. The number of reports on the comfort women issue by the Yomiuri Shimbun was less than 20-30 times a year on average, but it soared to 172 times in 2007 and 490 times in 2013, when Abe's administration was in control. This shows that the discourse of nationalism in Japanese society is highlighted in conjunction with its political opportunity structure.<sup>88</sup> Conservative media tends to highlight the comfort women issue more frequently as seen by Myung-Hee Parks research which shows that Sankei Shimbun reported 378 comfort women cases while Asahi Shinbun reported 276 in 2015-2016. Particularly, the amount of comfort women related editorials was 7 to 8 in the progressive newspapers such as Asahi and Mainichi while nearly double the editorials were published by Yomiuri (12) and Sankei (13) indicating that conservative newspapers deal with the comfort women issue more frequently.<sup>89</sup>

### **2.3 diversification of media outlet and its impact**

Dependence on newspaper in Japan has slowly diminished as media outlets diversified. For example, the main source of information about the 2014 lower house election was TV (63%), newspapers (23.1%), and the Internet (7.2). Moreover, according to a survey done by the Asahi Shimbun, on 2,000 18-19-year-old teenagers on April 2016 regarding the current political situation of Japan, the respondents' main source of information came from: TV (86%), social media (58%), newspapers (28%),

---

<sup>88</sup> Park, Myung-Hee, "The Gap Enlargement Mechanism between Korean-Japanese Perceptions: Focusing on the Comfort Women Agreement (2015.12.28)" P. 506

<sup>89</sup> 박명희, *일본군 위안부피해자 문제 합의 관련 일본 미디어의 보도동향과 대일 공공외교 방안*, P.13

school classes (26%) and friends (11%). Out of these options, the most reliable source for them was TV (52%), and then newspapers (9%), and then social media (8%). One noteworthy factor here is that 43% of these youths who mostly relied on social media responded that they did not like Korea, which shows a higher rate than the rate of those who relied on newspapers (26%).<sup>90</sup> As Abe preferred to communicate through TV interviews, and internet such as Facebook due to the fear that newspaper distorts his intention, conservative voices strengthened. To sum up, weakening of the progressive media, strengthening of rightist media and diversification of media outlet has had a negative impact on the comfort women discourse not just for right-wing nationalists, but to the general public.

### 3. Summary

While progressive coalition weakened after the Asian Women's Fund, diverse circumstances such as changing East Asian dynamics, rise of political conservatism, and influence of media has led to right-wing mobilization in Japan. With strong right-wing forces taking power in both politics and society, historical revisionism has taken place and comfort women issue has been incorporated in a broader goal for right-wing historical revisionism, further increasing misunderstanding between Korea and Japan. With the advent of the Asian Women's Fund to rise of right-wing nationalism in Japan, many factors widened misperception in regards to the comfort women issue.

---

<sup>90</sup> Park, Myung-Hae, *The Gap Enlargement Mechanism between Korean-Japanese Perceptions: Focusing on the Comfort Women Agreement* P. 508

## V. Strengthening of nationalistic discourse in Korea

### 1. Over-representation of the Korean Council

While rightward drift was occurring in Japan, Korea has witnessed a leftist turn. The comfort women issue was discovered and politicized by the leaders of the Korean Council, not by the Korean government. As a result, one social organization overrepresented the authority of the state because they were in charge of what the state had to do for a long time.<sup>91</sup> The Korean Council was perceived to be the sole legitimate representation of the entire victims while the Korean government simply responded to their demands. As the Korean Council dominated the comfort women discourse, their strong ethnic nationalism infiltrated the Korean society. As right-wing nationalism strengthened in Japan, efforts to deny and undermine the comfort women issue increased. Continued denial of the comfort women system, as well as frequent problematic remarks by the rightist politicians and civic groups in Japan led to a nationalistic backlash in Korea. The need to respond to Japan's provocation led to a more principled response from the Korean civic organizations. Especially in regards to the comfort women controversy, the Korean Council played a determining role in responding to Japan's aggravation. While these principled responses have been effective in alarming the Korean public, strong anti-Japan sentiment has infiltrated the Korea society. Moreover, the need to defend against Japan's provocation has strengthened the Korean Council's fundamentalism which excluded other efforts or voices which inevitably restrained mature debate to occur. In short, while the Korean Council's responses became "principled", it also made it susceptible for radical extremists to overreact to Japan's provocation. This section attempts to illustrate how the Korean Council's core values, unique redressive acts, and radicalized direction of their movement influenced comfort women discourse in the Korean society.

---

<sup>91</sup>심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” p. 34

## 2. The Korean Council's strong ethnic-nationalism

### 2.1 intersectionality between feminism and nationalism

Comfort women issue encompass universality and specificity. Comfort women issue is a universal violence against women (feminism) while at the same time is context-specific legacy of the colonial suffering of the Korean people (nationalism). While Japan's civic groups approached the issue as a feminist/human rights issue, the Korean Council's direction focused on the latter. The reason for Korean Council's emphasis on nationalism can be attributed to a distinctive history of Korea's women's movement which were initiated along with nationalism.

In general, feminists have argued that nationalism is incompatible with feminism. This incompatibility thesis<sup>92</sup> is generated under the ground that nationalism is necessarily patriarchal and is therefore detrimental to domestic causes promoting women's equality and well-being. In many occasions, feminism movement were a counter-reaction to the patriarchal nationalism. Korean feminism however, underwent a distinctive history where women's movement were incorporated in a broader effort for nationalistic goals. This has enabled intersectionality between feminism and nationalism, but also permitted strong ethnic-nationalism to infiltrate the society.

Anti-colonial sentiment has been around the Korean society for centuries. Anti-colonial nationalism and its linkage with contentious politics in Korea started long before the formation of the Korean council. Exploitive nature of the Japanese apparatus during the colonial rule resulted in contentious anti-Japanese sentiment among people and a large gap between the state and society. Such cleavage eventually led to the detachment of the society from the state, and those mobilized and politicized society shared the idea of anti-statism, which was mainly absorbed and spread by intellectuals. This was a remarkable remnant of Japanese colonial era. As the alien colonial government replaced the

---

<sup>92</sup> First Coined by Ranjoo Seodu Herr, "Can Transnational Feminist Solidarity Accommodate Nationalism? Reflections from the Case Study of Korean "Comfort Women"

‘legitimate, traditional, and national’ Korean state, the society separated itself from the state, and, therefore, engraved the nationalism as the main political culture in post-colonial Korea. In other words, the contentious Korean civil society started to operate in the shape of the nationalistic reaction to the alien Japanese rule.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, women’s emancipation movement in early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Korea emerged against a backdrop of nationalist struggles and call for national independence. Under the oppressive Japanese occupation, colonized Korean women actively joined the nationalist struggle and formed women’s underground organization, striving both national liberation and women’s liberation. Korean feminists’ scholars agree that these nationalist women’s organizations under Japanese domination signaled the inauguration of an organized Korean women’s movement.<sup>94</sup> After liberation from Japan, in the 1960s and 1970s, the women’s movement entered a new stage where the movement was wedded to the minjung movement. Minjung movement, literally translated as the “people’s movement” represented the Korean mass who suffered significant oppression from diverse oppressors of foreign powers, neocolonial socioeconomic and cultural dominance of the ruling class, and military dictatorship. The minjung movement, while being the crux of democratization, also led to a unique bottom-up Korean nationalism, formulated by the common mass. Women as the “oppressed of the oppressed” participated in the minjung movement and it was later even called minjung feminism.<sup>95</sup> As minjung feminists had a close connection to the minjok-minju (national-democratic) movement, women’s movement and nationalism went in parallel.

This unique social context in which nationalism and feminism were reinforced by common values formulated a unique structure of the Korean Council and its’ comfort women movement whereby

---

<sup>93</sup> Hagen Koo, *[Strong State and Contentious Society]*

<sup>94</sup> Cho, Hae-Joang (1994). “The “woman question” in the Minjok-Minju movement: A discourse analysis of a new women's movement in 1980s' Korea.”

<sup>95</sup> Chai, Alice Yun (1997). “Integrative feminist politics in the Republic of Korea.”

feminist elements were incorporated within a broader nationalist goal. The comfort women movement in the 1990s was spurred by sex tourism of Japanese visitors and US military camp prostitution. The continued exploitation of Korean women's sexualities has occurred in the context of Korea's position of inferiority in relation to Japan and the United States, a continued legacy of colonialism. In other words, the Korean Council was founded upon in women's suffering (feminism) caused by colonial suppression (nationalism). As comfort women issue was spurred by sex tourism, comfort women issue was perceived as an extension of the replicated sexual violence towards Korean women by the colonial powers of Japan and the US. Thus, as Chai highlights, comfort women issue was a demand not only on the "autonomy of Korean women's sexuality, but also the substantive autonomy of the nation itself".<sup>96</sup> As seen, unlike the assumption that nationalism is detrimental in promoting women's rights, the unique colonial structural context of the Korean society has enabled feminism to be incorporated in the nationalist movement. In this context, the Korean Council's comfort women movement was reinforced by double values of feminism and nationalism perceiving the comfort women issue as a sexual exploitation of Korean women by the Japanese military.

This duality of feminism and nationalism has been determinant in empowering the victims to voice out their experiences. Nationalizing women's suffering under Japan's occupation has made it possible to pinpoint a clear perpetrator: the Japanese military. Until the perpetrator of Japan was revealed, all the victims could blame was their fate, fortune, or destiny. It has geared the victims' anger and frustration towards a clear offender. It was also something that could offset the shame that they have kept. Overcoming of shame of the victims was enabled through the efforts of the Korean Council to redress the movement as a national suffering, which also gained huge public empathy. The Korean Council has constantly reminded that the suffering of the victims occurred in our ethnic situation and that we have a responsibility to share the pain in that regard. The victims, who were once considered as

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid 180-182

target of criticism, has been newly framed as emblematic agony of the nation.<sup>97</sup>

## 2.2 nationalism as a “superior” voice

This intersectionality of feminism and nationalism however had its limits. As feminism was incorporated in a broader effort for nationalistic goals, feminism was only used as a mechanism for nationalistic purpose rather than being the subject itself. Lee You-Jung, the first president of the Korean Women’s Association United who had been a critical member in establishing the Korean Council stated, *“it must be aimed to transform all social structures that create the reality of the women oppression. The women’s movement must be firmly established as an anti-foreign struggle to achieve national independence, a struggle for democracy and gender equality from political oppression, and a struggle to secure the rights to live as a human being”*.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, at an interview in 1992, the founder of the Korean Council, professor Yoon stated, *“Sexual slavery is not a problem limited to the past or women. It is a continuation of the colonial legacy which has not been dealt clearly. In the past, the Japanese have abused us with military uniform and sword, now they are abusing us with modern suits and sex tourism, repeating the history of sexual slavery. Sexual slavery is not a problem of women, but of nation. It is a national violence.”*<sup>99</sup>. Their statements reflect the limitation of women’s movement which downgraded feminism to fit the broader social call for national change.

While feminism became embedded in nationalistic movement, “nation” tended to be more emphasized than the individuals. It is this very essence that feminist scholars such as Yamashita and Kim Jung-Ran criticized about the direction of the Korean Council. They argued that the patriarchal perspective of the Korean Council which viewed women as an asset of the nation generated the

---

<sup>97</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” p. 80

<sup>98</sup> 야마시타 영애 지음 “내셔널리즘의 틈새에서” 167-168

<sup>99</sup> 야마시타 영애 지음 “내셔널리즘의 틈새에서” p 143

conception that an attack on women equate an attack of the whole nation. This has limited the attention to the individuals and their sufferings.<sup>100</sup> For example, Kim Hak-Soon, the first victim to politicize the issue became the symbol of comfort women much due to her image as a fighter. In her interviews, individual's hard life does not appear at the forefront. Her testimonies tend to focus on elevating comfort women issue as a symbolic problem that needs to be addressed in the Korea-Japan relations.<sup>101</sup> In diverse activities of the Korean Council such as public demonstration and international trials, victims of comfort women were framed as a tu-sa (투사), a passionate fighter, fighting for the justice and the wrong doings inflicted to her and her nation. This juxtapose the earlier known victims such as Bae Bong-Gi, who lived a quiet life after her testimony. Unlike Kim Hak-Soon, her testimony was a reflection of her hard life and experience which did not gain much social momentum. While Bae Bong-Gi is forgotten<sup>102</sup>, the date of Kim Hak-Soon's testimony is celebrated as the World's Comfort Women Memorial Day. Likewise, although unique development of women's movement in Korea has allowed the intersectionality of feminism and nationalism, it has also led to over-emphasis of the nationalistic discourse.

### 2.3 Crux of Korean Council's nationalism

In the process of raising the comfort women issue as a national subject, strong Korean nationalism has infiltrated the comfort women discourse. This strong Korean nationalism was based on Korean-ness, an ethnic centered approach to the issue. This has created a clear antithesis between we versus them, victims versus offenders, and Korea versus Japan.

This emphasis on ethnicity can be seen through the Korean Council's intimate relations with

---

<sup>100</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” p.86

<sup>101</sup> 이권희, (2020) “일본군 위안부의 ‘주체화’에 관한 고찰”, p.170

<sup>102</sup> “우리가 잊어버린 최초의 위안부 증언자...그 이름, 배봉기.” 한겨레



the North Korean side. In the first Asian Solidarity Conference held in 1992 of August, Yoon Mi-Hyang proposed a joint response with North Korea on the issue of comfort women within broader efforts for unification movement. She stated, *“in the midst of the continued unification movement, we should seek a way to jointly respond to the comfort women issue. It should no longer be a Cold War. During the Japanese colonial period, the South and North were one, and we were a national forced to suffer the same. Now the demands of victims are increasing day by day in South, and the North is trying to make sure that war crimes are compensated while politically negotiating diplomatic relations with Japan. Now more than ever, it is time for both the South and the North to have sufficient subjective capabilities to urge Japan to find out the truth about the truth and receive compensation.”*<sup>103</sup>

The appeal to Korean-ness of the comfort women issue is also well illustrated in the Korean Council's strong words to describe the comfort women system as a policy of obliterating the Korean nation (민족 말살). For example, in the 4<sup>th</sup> symposium held in Tokyo in 1993 under the name Asia's Peace and Women's Role, Lee Hyo-Jae, as a representative of the Korean Council stated, *“Japanese military sexual slavery is a systematic crime of the Japanese military and government which forcibly took Korean women into sexual slavery, which is not limited to individual and collective rape of an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 Korean women, but an attempt for ethnic obliteration by destroying the reproduction function of the Korean women.”*<sup>104</sup> This idea that mobilization of Korean women leads to destruction of reproductive ability which leads to ethnic extermination has also been shared with North Korea. In November of 1993 at a Pyongyang conference that dealt with Japan's post-war issues, North Korean presenter Kim Eun-Ju stated that the comfort women system *“implies that the Japanese government and military were making a conspiracy calculation to exterminate the Korean people by*

---

<sup>103</sup> 문소정, “일본군 위안부 문제와 남북여성연대” p. 224

<sup>104</sup> Ibid p.229

*massively attracting young women from Joseon to eliminate their reproductive functions”.*<sup>105</sup>

The Korean Council’s logic of differentiating Korean comfort women with the Japanese comfort women also well illuminate their focus on ethnicity. In the Japanese government’s second report on the military comfort women issue, the report states that the largest number of comfort women, apart from the Japanese women, were from the Korean Peninsula.<sup>106</sup> This report was an objective research to investigate the factual findings. Yet, when the report was publicized, the Korean Council clearly demonstrated that the characteristics of Korean comfort women were sharply different with the Japanese comfort women. They made the following statement after the release of the report, “*Unlike Japanese prostitutes under the military system at the time, the Korean comfort women were sex slaves who were coerced by the state authority of Japan. Up until now, there has been an effort in Japan to frame comfort women as prostitution to evade responsibility of the Japanese government. This issue is therefore a very central issue*”.<sup>107</sup> As this qualitative differentiation suggests, the focal point was on Korean ethnicity.

Put it concisely, the Korean Council was founded upon in women’s suffering coming from a context-specific context. This unique historical development of women’s movement in Korea has allowed the comfort women issue to be framed as both a women’s suffering and a nation’s suffering. At the same time, feminism became embedded in a broader nationalistic movement in which “nation” tended to be more emphasized than the individuals. This in return has allowed strong anti-colonial nationalism to be the driving force of the comfort women movement.

### **3. The Korean Council’s redressive acts**

As the previous section has shown, when the issue of comfort women began to be publicized, the Korean Council made it a key strategy to frame the issue as not an individual pain but a suffering

---

<sup>105</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로 p81

<sup>106</sup> Ibid p.90

<sup>107</sup> Ibid p.91

of a whole nation. As the Korean Council led the direction of the comfort women movement, this nationalistic discourse became the dominant voice in the Korean society. Yet, this anti-colonial sentiment was not enough to continue the momentum. In other words, endurance of such voices and popularization of the issue to the mass can be attributed to their unique redressive performances such as the Wednesday demonstration and the establishment of the comfort women statues which played a pivotal role in educating the public and continuing the momentum.

### **3.1 Redressive Act: Wednesday Demonstration and establishment of Statue of Peace**

The act of remembering, or the redressive acts is defined by Elizabeth Soh as “embodied practices that involve multiple audiences in actively reengaging with traumatic pasts to work toward social, political, cultural, and epistemological change”.<sup>108</sup> There are two main forms of the Korean council’s redressive act: Wednesday demonstration and establishment of statue of peace. Every Wednesday, weekly demand demonstrations are held in front of the main gate of the Japanese Embassy located in Jongno-gu, Seoul. It began on January 8, 1992 with the visit of former Japanese prime minister Miyazawa to Korea, calling for the resolution of the comfort women issues such as truth-finding, fulfillment of responsibilities, and the restoration of the honor and rights of the victims.<sup>109</sup> This protest which is led by the Korean Council is the longest single theme demonstration. As of October 26, 2022, the Wednesday Demonstration celebrated its 1567<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Statue of Peace was made to commemorate the 1,000<sup>th</sup> Wednesday demonstration in 2011. A bronze statue made by artists Kim Seokyung and Kim Eunsang depicts a Korean girl who was taken as part of Japanese military sexual slavery. Wednesday demonstration and establishment of statue of peace, as part of the Korean Council’s redressive act, has played a vital role in popularizing, institutionalizing, and accentuating their memory. Three very important aspects can be realized in the Wednesday demonstration and statue of peace: 1.

---

<sup>108</sup> Elizabeth W. Son, “*Embodied Reckonings- Comfort Women Performances, and Transpacific Redress*” P.3

<sup>109</sup> 정의기억연대 [정의기억연대 \(womenandwar.net\)](http://womenandwar.net)

Geographic location, 2. Main theme, and 3. Civilian participation.

### 3.2 “spatiality of the redressive site”

Spatiality has a very important implication to collective memory. It is important to take note of the spatial characteristic of the Wednesday demonstration and the statue of peace. First, the location of the protest and the statue is located in the center of Seoul district of Jongno which has served as a cultural, economic, and political center of the capital for the last 600 years.<sup>110</sup> Second, the surrounding area of the protest and the statue is filled with social activism featuring cafes, hotels, landmark tourists sites of Gyeongbok Palace and office buildings. Lastly, it is located right in front of the Japanese embassy.

Space of resistance is important because the meaning of resistance is understood through the place where the resistance occurs. As seen by the Tiananmen Square in central Beijing, Cairo’s Tahrir Square in 2011 that brought down Egypt’s former president Mubarak, and Taksim Square in Istanbul in 2013, the meaning and effectiveness increase when a place with geographical centrality and historicity within a specific society is selected as a place for rallies and demonstrations.<sup>111</sup> Likewise, placing the comfort women redressive act in the center of Seoul increase the power of resistance. Spatiality is also important because of the accessibility. Pedestrians walk by the comfort women redressive site every day. Given the easy accessibility, it invites close, bodily encounter from the mass.<sup>112</sup> Lastly, and most importantly, by locating the redressive sites in front of the Japanese embassy, spatiality has visualized a clear target of resistance, the Japanese government. Especially by placing the statue of peace across the Japanese embassy directly facing the Japanese flag, symbolic resistance becomes tangible.

---

<sup>110</sup> Shim, David “*Memorials’ Politics: Exploring the material rhetoric of the Statue of Peace*” P.7

<sup>111</sup> 정희선, “소수자 저항의 공간적 실천과 재현의 정치. 일본군 위안부 문제해결을 위한 수요시위의 사례” P.104

<sup>112</sup> Shim, David “*Memorials’ Politics: Exploring the material rhetoric of the Statue of Peace*” P.7

### 3.3 Civilian Participation

One major significance of comfort women redressive acts is that it has popularized the comfort women issue to the public. Many other previous civic activists have failed due to its limited accessibility and empathy from the mass. Yet, Wednesday protest and statue of peace have drawn civilian participation, increasing the awareness of the comfort women issue. For example, although the main part of the Wednesday demonstration is demanding for an official apology from Japan, it also includes cultural performances such as singing, and theatrical acting, creating an atmosphere of a cultural event. Also, teenagers participate as part of a field trip or as part of history classes. This nature of the Wednesday demonstration as a cultural event is one of the main factors that allowed the long-term durability of the protest. For example, at the latest 1567th Wednesday protest, three elementary students from Incheon made a testimony while a club from Ehwa university sang a song called Chun-Hyanga (춘향가)<sup>113</sup>

Likewise, statue of peace also became an arena for civilian participation. An empty chair next to the statue invites the viewers' interaction with the statue and their participation in the protest.<sup>114</sup> Korean mass personified the statue of peace as a living being and took care of it by covering it with umbrella on rainy days and covering the statue with hats and scarves on a cold day. This statue of peace has spread to major cities and even abroad with the voluntary participation of the citizens with their own motives. As seen by the public's rejection of the 2015 agreement when the removal of the statue became the central issue, to the Korean public, statue of peace became equivalent to the existence of the redress movement.<sup>115</sup> When there were attempts to remove the statue, not limited to activists, but ordinary citizens have shielded the statue by using their bodies to build a cordon. The statue is

---

<sup>113</sup> 정의기억연대 [정의기억연대 \(womenandwar.net\)](http://womenandwar.net) 1567회 수요집회

<sup>114</sup> Vicki Sung-yeon Kwon, "*The Sonyōsang Phenomenon: Nationalism and Feminism Surrounding the "Comfort Women"*" P.8

<sup>115</sup> Ibid p. 11

continuously guarded year-around. In short, both the Wednesday protest, and the statue of peace has played as a mechanism for the continuance of the comfort women momentum by bringing in public participation and shared public responsibility.

### **3.4 Accentuation of nationalistic memory**

While these redressive acts of the Korean Council popularized the comfort women issue, continued provocation from Japan has strengthened anti-Japan sentiment of the comfort women discourse. From the initial phase, Wednesday demonstration's main purpose was to strengthen the momentum of the movement, and instigate interest to the public. Anti-colonial sentiment and strong nationalism has been an effective tool to politicize the issue to the mass while also a strategy to counter right-wing groups. Jaeyeon Lee states that as time passed, Wednesday demonstration narrative created an "ethnic comfort zone" in which the sense of "we" Koreans fueled by ethnic victimhood is strengthened and a unified Korea (victim) is re-imagined in opposition to perpetrator Japan.<sup>116</sup> As anti-apology activists in Japan consistently proclaimed that comfort women were wartime prostitutes, the discrepancy between we versus them sharpened. Strengthened sense of this ethnic comfort zone in return has erased "uncomfortable" complicity to the comfort women issue. For example, Chung-Hee Soh argues that the narrative of comfort women simultaneously erased uncomfortable Korean complicity in these histories as "many Korean entrepreneurs lured girls and women for the Japanese army, and ran the comfort women states". Moreover, the narrative blurred historical details that in rural areas, many Korean daughters were sold by their poor parents to procurers and many young women actively ran away from home to escape domestic violence and the oppression of crushing poverty. In many cases, such young females were deceived by 'human traders' who enticed them with promises of well-paying jobs in factories and sold them to brothels and military comfort stations.<sup>117</sup> Rather than

---

<sup>116</sup> Jaeyeon Lee (2021): "*The ethno-nationalist solidarity and (dis)comfort in the Wednesday Demonstration in South Korea*" P.1

<sup>117</sup> Ibid p.3

opening this uncomfortable history, the need of ethnic comfort zone has “smoothed them over and quickly returned to spaces of familiarity” that promote positive understanding of the Korean identity.<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, this sharp discrepancy between we versus them highlighted the cruelty of the Japanese government. For example, in the most recent Wednesday protest, the representative of the Korean Council Lee Na-Young stated, *“It is absolutely ridiculous. Japan, the perpetrator of unprecedented wartime sexual violence, seeks to slander and hinder the voluntary memory culture of citizens around the world... How can the perpetrator be so arrogant?... What on earth is the basis of that arrogance. Nevertheless, the Japanese government has consistently denied and distorted its tragic history and continues to defame its victims. Sometimes blatantly, sometimes secretly, they are busy covering and erasing all the truths related to the Japanese sexual slavery. Global right-wing historical corruption forces, which represent the Japanese government's position and claim to be action leaders, are sometimes wearing academic coats, distorting history, insulting victims, disparaging the movement and attacking the statue.”*<sup>119</sup> Rather than promoting peace and cooperation, anger became the driving force of the Wednesday demonstration. Soh highlights this essence in her statement, “leaders of South Korea’s women’s organizations have been galvanized by a strong dose of postcolonial ethnic nationalism and have turned the redress movement into a righteous battle against Japan, demanding truth and justice for the latter’s historical wrongdoings perpetrated during its colonial rule.”<sup>120</sup> Recently, Lee Yong-Soo, a living victim of comfort women declared not to participate in the Wednesday Protest, calling the protest a place where there is only hatred and anger<sup>121</sup>.

In similar manner, the statue of peace was also build based on a conventional image of the comfort women. The characteristics of the statue reflect the artist's intention First, statue was built as a

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid p.3

<sup>119</sup> 정의기억연대 [정의기억연대 \(womenandwar.net\)](http://womenandwar.net) 1567회

<sup>120</sup> Ward, Lay, Thomas, William. (2019) *Park Statue Politics*. P.107

<sup>121</sup> 이용수 할머니 “증오. 상처만 가르치는 수요집회 불참” 국민일보 2020

teenage girl considering that there were many minors aged 13 to 18 when they were taken to Japanese military sexual slavery during the Japanese colonial period. Moreover, in order to stress the chastity (virginity) of the victims, adolescence was emphasized. Second, the roughly cut hair represents the disconnected from her home regardless of the victims' intention, highlighting the forcedness of the recruitment. Third, tightly hold fist symbolize anger and determination against the Japanese government and last bare feet represents the suffering that they have experienced as sex slaves.<sup>122</sup>

Statue of peace is valid as a symbolic representation to deny Japan's claim. When the victims are represented as a young girl, the pure image becomes a strong tool to rebuke anti-apologist' claim of voluntary prostitution. Thus, statue of peace is built to secure its position as a national monument in our society that directly refutes the distortion of history by Japan. However, some feminists have argued that, as the victim is represented as a "girl," the issue of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery is distanced from fundamental issues such as prostitution and commercialization of sex. Choi Eun-Ju argues that this factor limits a more mature discourse to form surrounding the comfort women issue, simplifying the issue as a dichotomy-based issue.<sup>123</sup> The three films produced in a form of theatrical films, *Sorigoepse* (소리굽쇠, 2012), *Last comfort Women* (마지막 위안부, 2015), and *Return* (귀향, 2016) were all produced after the statue of peace was established, and the main characters are all teenage girls.<sup>124</sup>

### 3.5 collective memory of the redressive acts

Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs argued that concept of collective memory is reconstructed by society. Even individual memories are reconstructed by the influence of group memory. According to

---

<sup>122</sup> 송진원, 안병학, “평화의 소녀상을 통해 나타난 시각 문화의 상징성과 사회적 기억의 확산” p.247

<sup>123</sup> 최은주, “위안부= ‘소녀’상과 젠더 - ‘평화의 비’를 중심으로” p. 256

<sup>124</sup> Ibid p. 254



Halbwachs, the state or a particular social group forms identity through the process of strengthening mutually shared perspective of a certain incident. Jeffery Olick agrees with Halbwachs' position that although memory is formed on a personal level, the act of remembering eventually takes place within the framework of a given society.<sup>125</sup> Thus, the society to which the individual belongs provides a framework of memory and affects what the individual remembers and forgets. Memory is not a storage that preserves "all" past experiences, but a "image" that has been generalized according to time and social changes. Thus, it is needed to analyze how diverse social acts of remembering creates group memory in regards to the comfort women issue.

Wednesday demonstration and visible sculpture of statue of peace is not just a historical reproduction, but a symbol of the wounds of the victims of comfort women and the center of social memory of the colonial past. The traumatic memory of the victims has expanded to minority activists, and further broadened to collective social memory of the Korean people. Memory of the comfort women issue has spread to the public since the Wednesday demonstration, and solidified through erecting the statue of peace. While this created a sense of cohesion and a shared feeling of connectedness, anti-colonial discourse of the redress movements also instigated strong ethnic nationalism not only to minority activists, but to the general mass.

### **3.6 Internationalization of redressive acts as a principled response to Japan's provocation**

The Korean Council's redressive acts, especially erection of comfort women statue has brought strong reaction from the Japanese government. The Korea Council, observing Japan's reaction to the statue have understood that they had struck a nerve. They grasped that the best reaction to Japan's provocation might best be achieved through first prevailing in the court of public opinion, not just through legislation or a court order. They recognized that the erection of comfort women statues and

---

<sup>125</sup> 송진원, 안병학, “평화의 소녀상을 통해 나타난 시각 문화의 상징성과 사회적 기억의 확산” p240

memorials both in Korea and abroad might conveniently accelerate the realization of their goals.<sup>126</sup>

As a method of a principled response to Japan's provocation, the Korean Council initiated international redressive acts, especially proliferation of comfort women statues and memoirs. The Korean Council, with the help of local Korean communities and other human rights groups established comfort women memoirs outside of Korea. In the US, replicas of Statue of Peace have been set up in Glendale, California in 2013; in Southfield, Michigan in 2014; in Brookhaven, Georgia in 2017; New York City, New York in 2017 and so on. In addition, beginning with a memorial set up at the library of Palisades Park, memorials in the form of stone slabs and bronze plaques proliferated throughout the cities in America.<sup>127</sup> Not limited to the United States, comfort women memoirs spread to Germany, and to Australia. On August 2016, Australia's first Statue of Peace was built in Sydney. More than 400 people including the local citizens, comfort women survivor Gil Won-ok, Korean Council's head representative Yoon Mi-Hyang, former Seongnam mayor Lee Jae-Myung, and key figures of Australia's House of Representative and human rights activities participated in the ceremony.

Internationalization of comfort women issue expanded a nation-state's traumatic memories across national borders. Internationalization of the issue was a systematic and principled reaction from the Korean Council and supporting civic groups to alarm the international audience and to thwart Japanese right-wing groups' efforts to deny or spoil the truth

#### **4. The Korean Council's Monopoly of Justice and Logic of Exclusion**

The Korean Council's systematic and principled responses have been effective in alarming the Korean and international public. Yet, the need to defend against Japan's denial has radicalized the direction of the comfort women movement in Korea. In other words, Japan's provocation has

---

<sup>126</sup> Ward, Lay, Thomas, William. (2019) *Park Statue Politics*. P.50

<sup>127</sup> Rangsook Yoon (2018) Erecting the "Comfort Women" Memorials: From Seoul to San Francisco, p.75

strengthened the Korean Council's fundamentalism which excluded other efforts or voices which inevitably restrained mature debate to occur. As the comfort women movement progressed, the issue has been considered as the sanctuary that does not tolerate objections. Therefore, the third view which may differ with the direction of the Korean Council were not considered as a sound effort but rather considered as an attempt to corrupt the comfort women movement. In other words, strong anti-colonial nationalism embedded in the Korean Council has limited various views and mature discussions to take place within the Korean society. Shin Ki-Wook highlights this essence, "it is true that Korean nationalism has contributed a lot in overcoming colonization and forming a modern nation, but it should also be noted that it has limited various views and discussions and brought a sense of black and white logic of history."<sup>128</sup> Park Hong-Gu, professor at Korea University labels this phenomenon as "monopoly of justice" and "logic of exclusion".<sup>129</sup> When it comes to the issue of comfort women, the Korean Council's views are the only way to correct historical injustice and restore justice, and the logic of exclusion is played out to deny all other actors other than themselves, the only embodiment of justice.

#### 4.1 exclusion of "different" victims

Most representative case is the exclusion of the victims themselves. Unlike the conventional wisdom that victims had common understanding with the Korean Council, victims' voices varied. For example, when the Asian Women's Fund was created, some victims actively expressed their intention to reject the fund, sharing a common perception with the Korean Council while the victims on the other side expressed their intention to receive it. Meanwhile, the majority remained silent. Unlike the Korean Council's call for victim-centered approach, those victims who accepted the fund were criticized. When the first seven victims received the Asian Women's Fund, the Korean Council

---

<sup>128</sup> 채진원, "공화적 애국주의에 대한 시론적 고찰: 이용수의 윤미향 비판을 중심으로" p 14

<sup>129</sup> 박홍규 (2020) "한일 역사화해의 전개 과정 — '책임론적 화해'에서 '포용론적 화해'로"

immediately criticized the fund for its attempt to divide the victims. At the same time, the Korean Council expressed disappointment with the victims who receive the fund. The Korean Council said that the behavior of these grandmothers further humiliates other victims and urged them not to be swayed by money.<sup>130</sup> This is well represented by the testimony of one victim, *“Even when grandmothers are dying, they say don’t take the fund, its dirty money, and if you take it you are a prostitute, they always say things that bothers my ears”*.<sup>131</sup>

Comfort women victims that went counter to the Korean Council were considered different. When the Citizen Solidarity Fund was created in Korea to provide for the victims, head of the Citizen Solidarity Fund Kim Sung-Jae said, *“since the donation of Citizen Solidarity is morally pure donation, we cannot distribute it to the grandmothers who received the Asian Women’s Fund for money even though they knew it was unfair”*.<sup>132</sup> As this statement suggest, Citizen Solidarity Fund and Asian Women’s Fund were perceived to be mutually exclusive where the former is morally justified donation and the latter is perceived to be unjust money. As a result, the grandmothers who chose the latter were also recognized as immoral. These recipients of the Asian Women’s Fund were excluded from the memorial monuments, and excluded from diverse invitation ceremonies including the Blue House invitation. In similar vein, when the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation was established on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016 following the 2015 agreement, 34 of the 45 surviving victims which is more than the majority of the living victims received 100 million won from the foundation. Yet, under the name of *“Women’s Rights Award”*, 8 victims who did not receive the fund were granted the same amount by separate donation of the Korean Council. As the name *“Women’s Rights Award”* indicate, only those who rejected the fund from the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation were considered to be morally

---

<sup>130</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” p. 128

<sup>131</sup> 심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” p. 37

<sup>132</sup> 김정란, “일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로” p.131

righteous.

The logic that the Korean Council is the only embodiment of justice has led the Korean Council to believe that they represented the voices of the victims. Some victims may have followed the Korean Council's view due to strong social pressure. When the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation sent an official letter of cooperation to allow them to meet grandmothers living together in the House of Sharing, it was rejected. The House of Sharing, a network organization of the Korean Council opposed by saying that the grandmothers do not support the 2015 agreement nor the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation and that they do not want visitors.<sup>133</sup> It is still unknown whether the victims really denied the visitors or a unilateral decision of the House of Sharing. As these incidents show, the logic of exclusion of the Korean Council limited diverse voices of the individual victims.

#### **4.2 exclusion of “different” literatures**

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Seoul Eastern District Prosecutor's Office indicted professor Park Yoo-ha of Sejong University, who wrote “Empire's Comfort Women”, for defamation under the criminal law. The reason for such accusation is that the book described Japanese military comfort women as voluntary prostitutes and expressed Japanese military and comfort women as having a comrade relation.<sup>134</sup> The Korean Council and the House of Sharing heavily criticized the book, calling her the front-man of the Japanese government willing to deny the truth about the comfort women issue. However, on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2016, the court ruled that "investigating the entire contents of this book, the main motive for writing is reconciliation efforts through mutual trust building between Korea and Japan', and it cannot be said that it was aimed at lowering the social evaluation of the victims of 'Japanese Military Sexual Slavery,' so it cannot admit the intention of defamation."<sup>135</sup>The Korean Council and the

---

<sup>133</sup> 심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” p.307

<sup>134</sup> "박유하 <제국의 위안부> 검찰 기소, 과하다" 지식인 190명 성명 발표...박유하 "위안부 폄훼 의도 없었다, 프레시안

<sup>135</sup> 손기영, “기억되는 과거의 과잉(過剩): 국제정치의 시간성(temporality)과 반일정체성의 장기지속(longue

House of Sharing criticized the result, calling the ruling as anti-historical and anti-human rights ruling that gives indulgence to perpetrators of the Japanese imperialist criminals. They even criticized the court by saying that this ruling stems from the lack of understanding of the book by the court.<sup>136</sup>

The book, although controversial, was a critical assessment of the direction of the comfort women movement rather than an effort to deny the historical facts. Lawyer Jeong Yeon-soon, former chair of the Lawyers for a Democratic Society, who consulted Yoon Mi-Hyang said, “*the Empire’s Comfort Women is clearly a defamation of the Korean Council and the supporting groups.*”<sup>137</sup> As this statement suggest, the book was a critical assessment of the supporting groups and their direction, not a critical assessment of the comfort women itself.

In fact, Park Yoo-Ha in her book claims that she wrote this book in a position that it is needed to know various facts about the comfort women issue to accurately resolve the conflict between Korea and Japan and hold Japan accountable properly. Nor she denies the existence of Japanese government’s legal responsibility. The book states that the comfort women were recruited as part of the Japanese military’s war and were sent to various brothels in East Asia by the Japanese military. In the end, in order to understand the issue of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery, she argues that although it is an inevitable fact that it is a war crime of organized mobilization and human rights abuses by the Japanese military, but also the problem of Korean patriarchal family structure that played a direct role in mobilizing Japanese Military Sexual Slavery in the colonial social structure of the time, in which young women were forced to escape poverty and discrimination.<sup>138</sup> In this regard, she argues that Japanese authorities need to apologize and compensate, but it cannot be ignored that the incompetent and

---

*durée*) 및 위안부 문제” p. 58

<sup>136</sup> 나눔의 집 ‘박유하 무죄판결은 반역사적·반인권적 판결’, 한겨레

<sup>137</sup> 박유하 교수 “‘제국의 위안부’ 소송, 할머니 아니라 주변인들 일으킨 소송” 경향신문

<sup>138</sup> 손기영, “기억되는 과거의 과잉(過剩): 국제정치의 시간성(temporality)과 반일정체성의 장기지속(longue durée) 및 위안부 문제” p.59

irresponsible ruling class of Joseon, and for the social structure that drove young women who faced poverty and discrimination as colonists in the Japanese colonial era can avoid responsibility.

Her claim, whether she wanted to or not, helped solidify Japan's position. It also has the tendency to empower Japanese right-wingers who call the comfort women as voluntary prostitutes. In fact, that's probably why Japanese media showed much more interest than Korean media when they raised these issues at the symposium held in 2014. Many of her "facts" are erroneous and some statements are hard to agree. The core issue however, is not necessarily about the content but about the limitation of expressing minor voices that challenge the dominant comfort women discourse of the Korean Council.

When the book was indicted by the court, 190 scholars issued a statement which said that there may be areas that require more academic thorough investigation and sophisticated analysis, and there may be areas that offend political and social organizations at home and abroad. Comfort women issue is politically and academically a tricky issue that has elements that cause conflicts from the beginning. But they concluded that, "However, the reasonable way to deal with this issue is not allow any specific political or social group to monopolize the authority of speech, but to freely express and compete with various voices".<sup>139</sup> Kim Chul, a professor at Yonsei University further stated that the accusation has rather prevented a sound debate in academia and said "what we want is to restore the structure in which the book is valued through sound academic discussions and criticism, not by legal judgement."<sup>140</sup> Despite the content of the book, the controversy of the Empire's Comfort Women symbolize what happens when the existing mainstream discourse is challenged, especially when the challenged idea threatens shared identity of nationalism and victimization of the Korean Council.

---

<sup>139</sup> 박유하 <제국의 위안부> 검찰 기소, 과하다" 지식인 190명 성명 발표...박유하 "위안부 폄훼 의도 없었다, 프레시안

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

## 5. Role of Media

While the Korean Council and its network organizations became the symbolic representation of the comfort women issue, writing anything negative about the Korean Council has become a taboo in the media industry. Shim Gyu-sun, a veteran journalist defined this phenomenon as a “broken sanctuary”.<sup>141</sup> Critical voices of the Korean Council had been existent in the early 2000s. For example, in 2004, during the Roh administration, some victims filed a lawsuit against the Korean Council to ban fundraising activities and Wednesday Protest that indicates their shameful past experiences. These living victims created the World Peace Mugunghwa Association. This association once increased its members to 33 living victims. However, their voices were not much politicized by the media. Yang Soon-im, chairman of the Pacific War Victims' Liberation Association, said, "At that time, the power of the Korean Council was so large and powerful that Mugunghwa Association's criticism was not properly illuminated."<sup>142</sup> The fact that more than 60 victims accepted the Asian Women's Fund, and more than 30 victims received the fund from the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation were also not publicized. Shim Gyu-Sun also articulates that there is a confirmation bias in which many articles wrote on the premise of false preconception, such as that the foundation forced grandmothers to receive the money.<sup>143</sup>

Meanwhile the Korean Council got indulgence from the media criticism, the views of the conservative media from Japan have been magnified and massively reproduced in Korea in which Myung-Hee Park defines as the gap enlargement mechanism. In her analysis of the trend of Japanese media reports on the 2015 agreement (12.28 comfort women agreement), she has witnessed two trends. First, the Japanese media is not homogeneous and the differences between the liberal (such as Asahi) and conservative (such as Sankei) media were straightforward. Second, despite the variety of

---

<sup>141</sup> 심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” p. 44

<sup>142</sup> 30년 성역이 짓밟은 진실...16년 전 ‘무궁화회’ 고발은 누가 묻었나 주간조선

<sup>143</sup> 심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” p.306



opinions within Japan on the matter, an overwhelming view exists in Korea where the conservative viewpoint of the Japanese newspapers is magnified and mass reproduced. This is because the conservative media in Japan, such as the Sankei Shimbun, deal with the victims of the comfort women as a framing of diplomatic conflict with the strategy of stimulating nationalism within the public and the number of such coverage is greater than that of other media.<sup>144</sup> This is well reflected in Kim Dong-Yun and Oh Myung-One's research on the Korea-Japan media frame patterns where both liberal and conservative Korean media tend to regard the cause of the conflict over the issue from the frame of "lack of remorse" and "avoidance of responsibility" from the Japanese counterpart,<sup>145</sup> citing from the Japanese conservative media.

## 6. Summary

To summarize, in Korea, the comfort women movement was politicized by one dominant civic group, the Korean Council. With strong anti-colonial values, the Korean Council made it a key strategy to frame the issue as not an individual pain but a suffering of a whole nation. As the comfort women movement progressed, the Korean Council simplified the issue on a black and white logic. Comfort women issue which needed to be investigated through diverse lenses of national violence, individual rights, gender issues, and social issues, has been oversimplified into a structure of good and evil. As anti-apology activists in Japan tried to deny the forceful recruitment to frame the comfort women as voluntary prostitutes, forcefulness and cruelty was over-stressed, calling the comfort women system of the Japanese military an unprecedented inhumane act in history. This in return instigated strong anti-Japan sentiment, which further weakened Korea-Japan coalition to solve the issue. The strong ethnic nationalism and radicalized anti-Japan approach of the Korean Council limited communication channels between the two countries, increasing misperception and mistrust.

---

<sup>144</sup> Park, Myung-Hee, "The Gap Enlargement Mechanism between Korean-Japanese Perceptions: Focusing on the Comfort Women Agreement (2015.12.28)" p.510

<sup>145</sup> 김동윤, 오명원, 한일 언론과 일본군위안부 - 보도양상 및 미디어 프레임 분석, p.161

On the contrary as victimhood of the victims were over-emphasized through stressing victim's sense of helplessness, and their chastity, diverse victim's voices were ignored. This has created a conventional image of the comfort women in the Korean Society as "pure daughters of Joseon who were forcibly taken away by the imperial Japan".

Although the Korean Council is largely composed of three groups (grandmothers who are victims, activists, and academics), continued provocation by Japan have strengthened activists' voices, making the activists as the most influential group. As majority of the activists were strong nationalists, their voices were most politicized, dominating the public atmosphere. Moreover, generational change of the activist leaders has stipulated stronger nationalistic voices. So-called 386 democratization forces in politics, academia, media, and civil society who led the pro-democracy movement in the 1980s have attached themselves in the comfort women movement after democratization. As an extension of the student movement, the social activists who considered the importance of continuing the social movement participated in the Korean Council after democratic movement. As first-generation leaders were replaced by second and third generation, nationalistic appeal became stronger and sharper. Yoon Mi-hyang is the most representative figure. She is a graduate of Hanshin University's theology department, the home of liberation theology in the 1980s which stressed ethnic-nationalism. Pastor Moon Ik-Hwan, the godfather of the unification movement in the 1980s was a professor of Hanshin university theology department. Also, Yoon's husband Kim Sam-Seok, the main force of the Unified Progressive Party had committed to the student movement with Lee Seok-Ki.<sup>146</sup>

The development of the comfort women discourse in Korea can be well explained through the framework of Irving Janis' groupthink. There are several implications of groupthink to the comfort women discourse in the Korean society. First, there is a pressure on an individual to conform to the views seemingly held by others in a group setting.<sup>147</sup> This is visible where much of the victims

---

<sup>146</sup> 이권희, (2020) “일본군 위안부의 ‘주체화’에 관한 고찰” 18

<sup>147</sup> World Politics: The Menu for Choice. 10<sup>th</sup> edition. p.144

themselves refrained from receiving the Asian Women's Fund or the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation Fund. Moreover, the media refrains from criticizing the direction of the Korean Council nor illuminate on different voices. Second, ingroup tends to have unquestioned belief in its own morality. This in affect creates a stereotyped view of the opponent<sup>148</sup>, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed at the out groups creating a dysfunctional group dynamics dilemma. This is visible in the Korean Council's logic of exclusion and monopolization of justice in which other efforts were perceived to be wicked attempts to corrupt the comfort women movement.

Lastly, groups may fall in a dilemma of collective loyalty. Groups move with a specific purpose and are used as a means to achieve the goal. However, excessive loyalty toward the group does not view the group as a means, but as the purpose itself. This becomes a purpose-lost group whose previous purpose has been lost. This is also visible in the way Korean Council became the purpose of the movement whereby much of the victims themselves were marginalized, losing the very meaning of victim-centered approach. Moreover, due to the recent controversy over Yoon Mi-Hyang and the Korean Council, some members of the Democratic Party have proposed a bill to ban defamation against comfort women organizations. Yoon Mi-Hyang, former chairman of the Korean Council was part of the initiator of the bill. The bill established a new clause that said, "We should not damage the reputation of victims, bereaved families, comfort women-related organizations by stating false rumors." In explaining the background of the revision, they said "Recently, there have been cases of openly denying and distorting the history of comfort women at home and abroad and defaming the victims by insulting them."<sup>149</sup> As this incident highlights, the Korean Council has become the purpose rather than the means.

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> 위안부 관련단체 사실적시 금지" 與법안에 윤미향도 참여, 서울경제

## **VI. Comfort Women as a symbolic representation of history wars**

### **1. International history wars: cycle of endless contention**

The establishment of the Asian Women's fund, rightward conservatism in Japan, and principled response in Korea have led to endless contention between the two countries. These factors limited communication, leading to misperception and misunderstanding. The Korean Council and their principle response to Japan's provocation, especially their attempts for internationalization of the comfort women issue not only failed to institutionalize apologetic discourse within Japanese society, but was actively used by the Japanese right-wing as a symbolic representation of national humiliation and defamation. Professor Tsuneo Akaha argues that the more critical the Korean criticisms of Japan are, the more determined the nationalists will be in their rejection of those criticisms and appeals to the general public.<sup>150</sup> Internationalization of the comfort women issue, and intervention of third parties (especially the US) have led to international criticism of the Japanese government which prompted huge nationalistic backlash in Japan. As an affect, among other historical animosities, comfort women issue became highly peculiar and sensitive, becoming the center of history wars for the Japanese right-wing revisionists. Internationalization of the comfort women can be classified into 3 phases: 1. Rights revolution and intervention from the UN 2. The US House of Representatives Resolution 121 and 3. Establishment of Peace Statues and period of history wars.

#### **1.1 Phase I. Rights Revolution and Intervention from the UN**

Comfort women victims who were politically marginalized for decades began to voice out after democratization in the 1980s and 1990s. The Korean Council along with the victims initiated a unique form of rights revolution, which is a substantial transformation in social perception on minority or marginalized peoples' rights, through transnational litigations<sup>151</sup>. As victims' voices were

---

<sup>150</sup> Tsuneo Akaha, *"The Nationalist Discourse in Contemporary Japan: The Role of China and Korea in the Last Decade"*.

<sup>151</sup> Ja-hyun Chun, Youcheer Kim, "A New Interpretation of Korea-Japan Relations: 'Rights Revolution' of Sex Slaves and Forced Laborers in the Courtroom" P. 264

unheard at the diplomatic table due to the legacy of San Francisco Treaty and the 1965 Normalization, the only accessible venue to marginalized people was the judicial system. What was unique about comfort women rights revolution was that the target of litigation was a foreign government, making the process more complicated as it required penetration of states' sovereignty. While transnational litigation in Korea and Japan was the optimal strategy, continued dismissal of the case frustrated the victims and their support groups.

The victims and the supporting groups turned to the UN. During the 1990s when the Korean Council made an effort to internationalize the comfort women issue, violence towards women during war has been severe. Incidents such as mass rape during Bosnian civil war had gained much international attention and the Korean Council naturally joined forces with feminist organizations working for women's rights. On the basis of this solidarity, a significant report was drawn from the Human Rights Commission, and solidarity was further strengthened around this report. The report was submitted in 1996 that included a detailed report on the issue of comfort women by Radhika Coomaraswamy, which recognized that the "system of sex slaves was established and strictly regulated by the Japanese Imperial Army in a systematic way, as ordered by the army and civilian commands".<sup>152</sup> After the report, 58 UN-based women's groups formed an international alliance based on universal values of feminism.<sup>153</sup> Since then, comfort women stood as a symbolic violence against women perpetrated by the state during times of armed conflict which is referenced in other cases such as the Afghanistan, Myanmar, and East Timor incident.<sup>154</sup>

Internationalization of the comfort women issue had an immense impact on Japan's apology. With external pressure for Japan to recognize its role in the comfort women issue, the Japanese

---

<sup>152</sup> UN Commission on human rights - report on mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

<sup>153</sup> 정진성, "한국, 일본, 아시아 및 서구 시민단체 (NGO)의 협력과 갈등: 군위안부문제에 관련한 운동단체들의 가치지향을 중심으로" p.33

<sup>154</sup> 정진성, "전시 하 여성침해의 보편성과 역사적 특수성: 일본군 위안부문제에 대한 국제사회의 인식" p.46

government issued the Kono Statement followed by Murayama Statement. This in turn allowed progressive scholars and civil societies to utilize this external pressure which enabled inclusion of comfort women in the history textbooks. Meanwhile, this very external pressure also worked as a mobilization factor for the right-wing nationalists. This external pressure has allowed dispersed right-wing nationalists to mobilize, creating a momentum of domestic backlash.

## **1.2 Phase II. The US House of Representatives Resolution 121**

Not limited to rights revolution at UN, the victims and the Korean Council turned to US as an alternative venue to the Japanese court. There were mainly two advantages of US intervention. First, US court had a unique legislation of the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) which allowed litigations by foreign nationals against foreign nationals, even if a problematic action was not perpetrated in a US territory. The ATCA stipulates that “the district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action by an alien for a tort only, committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States” (Alien Tort Claims Act 1789).<sup>155</sup> Second, the US as its strong ties with Japan could transform the Japanese government through political and diplomatic pressures.

Although many attempts such as the case brought by Hwang Geum-Joo and 14 other victims in the district court of the District of Columbia was ultimately dismissed, House Resolution 121 which urged the Government of Japan to “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its imperial armed forces coercion of young women into sexual slavery, know to the world as “comfort women”, during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II.”<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Ja-hyun Chun, Youcheer Kim, “A New Interpretation of Korea-Japan Relations: 'Rights Revolution' of Sex Slaves and Forced Laborers in the Courtroom” 267

<sup>156</sup> Full statement: Expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the government of Japan should: (1) formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility for its Imperial Armed Force's coercion of young women into sexual slavery (comfort women) during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II; (2) have this official and public apology presented by the Prime Minister of Japan; (3) refute any claims that the sexual enslavement and trafficking of the comfort women never occurred; and (4) educate current and future generations about this crime while following the international community's recommendations with respect to the

The House of Resolution 121 directly refuted Abe's claim that there is no evidence to prove that there was coercion<sup>157</sup> and that it is not based on objective facts. However, unlike the 1990s, conservative forces during the mid-2000s were already mobilized to strike back immediately. For example, Yomiuri Shimbun reported, "the House Resolution is based on mistaken facts, and thus unjustified. We must block its adoption at the regular session."<sup>158</sup> Moreover, in this period, right-wing civil groups started to practice their own international redressive acts. For example, after the House Resolution was introduced, Japanese conservative group the Committee for Historical Facts took out advocacy advertising in the Washington Post under the title "The Facts" in an attempt to dissuade the resolution.<sup>159</sup>

The House of Resolution 121 and intervention of third party, the US, had much implication to the comfort women issue. The issue of comfort women no longer became a bilateral dispute but a more complicated issue entangling more actors. The issue was led to diversifying the redressive acts by private actors from both Korean supporting civil societies as well as Japanese right-wing nationalist, enlarging the perception gap while also limiting government's capacity. Lastly, intervention of US and Korea's victory at the House of Resolution 121 was perceived as a "unjustified international pressure" to defame Japan.

### **1.3 Phase III. Statue politics and history war**

Backlash against internationalization of comfort women issue really took off after 2010, when civic groups launched a campaign to erect monuments and statues commemorating the comfort women in the United States, Australia, and other foreign countries. The first comfort women

---

comfort women. (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-resolution/121>.)

<sup>157</sup> "Japan's PM Denies 'Comfort Women' Coerced." NBC News

<sup>158</sup> Ji Young Kim, Jeyong Sohn, *Settlement Without Consensus: International Pressure, Domestic Backlash, and the Comfort Women Issue in Japan* p.91

<sup>159</sup> "The Facts (2007)." <http://fendnow.org/encyclopedia/the-facts-2007/>

monument build in front of a library in Palisade Park, New Jersey in 2010 by the Korean American Voter's Council (KAVC) and installation of comfort women statue following the Peace Statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul in Glendale California in 2013 sparked a realization to the right-wing nationalists that battleground of the comfort women was not limited to domestic audience but to the international society, especially the United States.

Ji Young Kim and Jeyong Sohn argues that external pressure during this period had a different character compared to before. After 2010, external pressure was exerted on the public opinion of international society at large, rather than targeted efforts aimed at specific national governments or international organizations. If the earlier efforts were focused on explaining and persuading particular actors based on detailed historical records on the comfort women, now the movement targeted global public opinion (particularly in the United States) based on simple messages and symbols such as comfort women statues and monuments. In an indirect fashion, the new movement imposed a heavy burden upon the Japanese government.<sup>160</sup>

Erection of comfort women monuments and statues have become the symbolic representation of defamation and dishonor of Japan. In this context, comfort women issue became the main target of "history wars". The concept of history war was first coined in Sankei Shimbun in 2014 which focuses on Japan's disagreements with South Korea concerning historical events to the colonial history. It emphasizes that Japan is a victim of false indictment and has no choice but to fight against these accusations. Arimoto Takashi, the head of the "history wars" reporting group of Sankei, writes that "the comfort women issue is no longer simple difference of opinion on historical understandings;

---

<sup>160</sup> Ji Young Kim, Jeyong Sohn, *Settlement Without Consensus: International Pressure, Domestic Backlash, and the Comfort Women Issue in Japan* p.94



it is a war”.<sup>161</sup> For right-wing nationalists, especially with erection of statues in the “Asian diasporic communities”,<sup>162</sup> Japan’s national honor and global credibility were at stake.

## **2. Right-Wing counter-redressive acts by Japan’s right-wing groups**

### **2.1 International counter-redressive acts**

In accordance to international pressure, right-wing groups in Japan have utilized their own ways of international and domestic redressive acts to pursue their revisionist goals. Especially after the first Statue of Peace identical to the one in Seoul was erected in Glendale, California in 2013, Japanese right-wing civil societies took actions. Although many local Japanese American progressive civil rights groups such as Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress and the Japanese American Citizens’ League supported the statue installation, Japanese American right also took proactive actions to counter the installment. For example, when the plan was under discussion in the Glendale City Council over the installation, Nadeshiko Action and other Japanese right-wing groups mobilized Japanese mass protest emails and faxes. Local Japanese residences in California area attended the public hearing to express opposition on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, in 2014, right-wing civil organization, the Global Alliance for Historical Truth (GAHT), a new organization involved in the People’s Campaign for the Truth about Comfort Women was established two weeks before the lawsuit was filed.<sup>164</sup> Holding a strong connection with Japan Conference, they sued the city of Glendale for its intrusion of the federal government’s power to conduct foreign policy.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch , *The “History Wars” and the “Comfort Woman” Issue: The Significance of Nippon Kaigi in the Revisionist Movement in Contemporary Japan* 234

<sup>162</sup> Rangsook Yoon (2018) Erecting the “Comfort Women” Memorials: From Seoul to San Francisco,

<sup>163</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch , *The “History Wars” and the “Comfort Woman” Issue: Revisionism and the Right-wing in Contemporary Japan and the U.S* p. 6

<sup>164</sup> Ibid p.6

<sup>165</sup> Rin Ushiyama, ‘Comfort women must fall’? Japanese governmental responses to ‘comfort women’ statues around the world P.1262

In Japan there were multiple collective lawsuits brought in 2015 by three different-right wing organizations against the Asahi Shinbun, claiming that due to the Asahi coverage, Japan's reputation in the international community has been harmed, as well as creating great suffering to the Japanese people living abroad. The first and second case brought by the National Conference to Correct the Asahi Shinbun and the Group to Correct the Asahi were not much politicized. However, the third case by the Global Alliance for Historical Truth, backed by Japan Conference which filed a collective lawsuit had a lasting impact. The complaint by the lawsuit declared that Asahi Shinbun's fabricated coverage of the comfort women issue had a major impact on the international community's understanding of the issue, which also led to the establishment of state of peace in Glendale.<sup>166</sup>

The Glendale-lawsuit led to Japanese-language, and English newspapers distributed at Japanese markets and restaurants in the United States which tended to cover the comfort women issue from a right-wing perspective. Moreover, stories of bullying against Japanese people through the erection of comfort women statue have been politicized. Supporters of Japan Conference and the Asahi-Glendale lawsuit held demonstration rallies in Japan and the US to mobilize support for the case. Also, in order to engage in activism and host the events, new organizations, such as Himawari Japan in New Jersey, were formed. Although they lost the case, through their redressive acts, they spread the message that the widely accepted version of the comfort women narrative is fake.<sup>167</sup>

## 2.2 Diversification of redressive acts

As comfort women became a symbolic representation of history war, counter-redressive acts

---

<sup>166</sup> The Asahi coverage, the plaintiffs claim, impacted the following: 1) public opinion in South Korea; 2) reports in the Euro-American media; 3) UN reports such as the "Coomaraswamy Report" of 1996,<sup>45</sup> the "McDougall report" of 1998,<sup>46</sup> and other UN recommendations to Japan; 4) the U.S. House Resolution 121 of 2007; 5) the building of memorials and statues in the U.S.; and 6) the introduction of "comfort women" in the McGraw Hill history textbook used in U.S. high schools. (Tomomi Yamaguchi, *The "History Wars" and the "Comfort Woman" Issue: Revisionism and the Right-wing in Contemporary Japan and the U.S* P.246)

<sup>167</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi, *The "History Wars" and the "Comfort Woman" Issue: Revisionism and the Right-wing in Contemporary Japan and the U.S* P.8

became more diversified and systematic. Since around 2007, the ultranationalist Action Conservative Movement (ACM), a network of new far right groups emerged. Unlike traditional right-wing groups such as the Japan Conference which includes comfort women issue as one of their agendas, the ACMs have become more specific, targeting only the comfort women issue as their main objective. For example, Nishimura, a former corporate accountant created a group, “Citizen’s Group Aiming for the Withdrawal of the Kono Statement,” which specifically targeted the comfort women issue. Another ACM called Zaitokukai (the Citizen’s Association Against Special Privileges for Japan-resident Foreigners) targeted Zainichi Koreans in which the comfort women issue has been perceived to be a major target.

These groups, unlike the mainstream right-wing organizations, have initiated more blatant street-level activisms. Criticizing the mainstream conservatives for not taking real actions, these ACMs go to the streets and use hate speech, spontaneous actions in their demonstrations, and broadcasting them on the internet.<sup>168</sup> In 2011, “Citizen’s Group Aiming for the Withdrawal of the Kono Statement” began holding anti-Wednesday Demonstrations in front of the Korean Embassy. Zaitokukai and other ACM groups also stated counter-actions against events run by comfort women support groups. For example, Team Kansai, a coalition of ACM activists in the Kansai region made a counter-action against a rally by comfort women support groups such as Kansai Network for the Japanese Military Comfort Women Issue. With strong clashes with the police and hate speeches, these counter-activism were virally politicized. Tomomi Yamaguchi, who had been researching about the ACMs, argue that these unconventional redressive acts have attracted younger people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, in contrast to mainstream conservative groups whose members are mostly over 60.<sup>169</sup>

Moreover, women began to actively participate in the anti-comfort women redressive

---

<sup>168</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi, *Revisionism, Ultrnationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue* P 199

<sup>169</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi, *Revisionism, Ultrnationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue* p.199

campaigns which previously had been dominated by men. A female journalist Akiko Okamoto who was an activist in Japan Conference and a leader of the group Family Values Society was active in publicizing that Japanese children in the United States were bullied due to anti-Japan campaigns by Koreans with the erection of comfort women monuments and statues which eventually led to a formal lawsuit. After the Glendale statue was erected in 2013, a right-wing organization based in Japan called The People's Campaign for the Truth about Comfort Women was established as a self-described "counter-propaganda" movement to "protect Japan's honor." Female members of the organization, including Sugita and Yamamoto, attended and gave speeches at meetings of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva and the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.<sup>170</sup> Yamamoto Yumiko, who was a former vice president and secretary of Zaitokukai and currently the leader of the women's group Nadeshiko Action, argues that due to the special nature of the comfort women issue, it is an issue that women should deal with. She said, "I thought it better to make it an issue of women versus women, instead of having conservative men working on the issue."<sup>171</sup> With establishment of ACMs, women were strategically placed as leaders to enhance their ordinary citizen's image.<sup>172</sup>

### 3. Summary

Internationalization of the comfort women issue, and intervention of third parties (especially the US) have led to increased international criticism of the Japanese government which prompted huge nationalistic backlash. Especially proliferation of Statue of Peace and comfort women monuments around the world has led comfort women to be center of history wars for the right-wing revisionists. This in turn has led right-wing organizations to create international counter-redressive

---

<sup>170</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch *"Japan's Right-Wing Women and the "Comfort Women" Issue"* p.50

<sup>171</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi, *Revisionism, Ultrationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the 'Comfort Women' Issue* P.204

<sup>172</sup> Tomomi Yamaguch *"Japan's Right-Wing Women and the "Comfort Women" Issue"*p.48

acts which became more systematic with the creation of Action Conservative Movement. As comfort women became the center of history war, the issue no longer was perceived to be a dark colonial past of the Japanese empire, but as a symbolic representation of national humiliation and defamation. As a result, comfort women controversy, among historical disputes have become a symbolic representation of history wars.

## **VII. Comfort Women Deal's Two-Level Game**

So far, this paper illuminated on the historical development of the comfort women discourse in Korea and Japan. With particular attention to strong ethnic-nationalism in both countries and the role of civil activism which fostered division rather than cooperation, this research highlighted how comfort women issue became particularly sensitive and hard to resolve. This section attempts to elaborate on how this domestic social atmosphere affects foreign policy outcome through utilizing Robert Putnam's Two-Level Game Theory. Comfort women issue shows vividly the importance of domestic ratification in validating the international agreement. Robert Putnam has argued that the size of win-sets, which is all set of possible international agreement that would also gain the support at the national constituents is vital for international agreement. As such, the size of win-set determines the success of failure of an international cooperation. In the case of comfort women issue, ratification between Korean and Japanese government is highly limited as the size of win-set is particularly small. Through investigating three main factors that decide the win-set size, this paper attempts to elaborate why comfort women negotiation continues to fail. The three factors are 1. The power distribution, preferences, and possible coalition among domestic constituents, 2. Political institutions, and 3. Negotiator's strategy.<sup>173</sup>

### **1. Factor I. distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among level II constituents**

#### **1.1 Internationalist/Isolation Dichotomy, Homogeneity VS Heterogeneity**

The first factor that determines the size of win-set is determined by power distribution and the possible coalition among domestic constituents. The constituent includes civil groups, interest

---

<sup>173</sup>Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." p.442

groups, corporations, political parties, media, and public opinion. The constituents express their policy preferences in their unique ways. For example, the media expresses their policy preferences by their editorials, and as seen by the Korean Council, civic groups express their policy preferences through their unique redressive acts. At some point, the constituents interact to create either coalition or division. The character of coalition among domestic constituents is vital in understanding the domestic source of foreign policy. Two characters are essential: 1. Whether the constituent is homogenous or heterogenous, and 2. Whether power is more distributed to isolationist or internationalists.

In Korea, comfort women discourse is rather uniform. Despite division on how to handle the comfort women issue, the dominant voice is legal punishment and official apology. With strong presence of the Korean Council, and their coalition with the victims, media, and the general public through the redressive acts have allowed their voice to be the dominant voice. Also, with the Korean Council's logic of exclusion and monopolization of justice, it limited mature debate on the issue, further limiting diversity of the constituents. Thus, although constituents are not fully homogenous, it can be said that with the presence of a strong single group, viewpoint on comfort women issue has become rather uniform. This type of homogenous constituent in Korea can be labeled as an isolationist force. Although Robert Putnam's Isolationist/Internationalist dichotomy do not fit perfectly to the comfort women issue, the notion of acceptability sets helps us understand why Korea's constituent is isolationist. Acceptability-set is policy preferences of each constituents, or a set of agreements preferred by each domestic constituent. If a domestic group is an internationalist type, the acceptability-set of the group lies relatively closer to the foreign win-set. Conversely, isolationist type's acceptability-set lies further from the foreign win-sets.<sup>174</sup> In Korea, the Korean Council's acceptability-set is rather narrow and non-negotiable. Their firm stance on legal punishment and official apology is far from the foreign win-set that the Japanese government can negotiate on. As the

---

<sup>174</sup> Toshiya Nakamura's "Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach" p.170

Korean Council prefers no-agreement over compromised agreement, the Korean Council can be labeled as an isolationist force. In short, Korean society is homogenously isolationist.

In Japan, unlike Korea, the domestic constituent is rather heterogenous. There are progressive forces such as the Japanese Women Council and right-wing forces such as Japan Conference. Robert Putnam stated, domestic division may actually improve the prospects for international cooperation.<sup>175</sup> In the initial phase of the comfort women issue, with strong progressive forces in Japan pressuring the government, it has enlarged the win-set size between the two governments. With the Kono Statement, Murayama Statement, and the Asian Women's Fund, progressive coalition of Japan's constituents have made it more likely for cooperation between Korea and Japan. However, as the comfort women movement progressed, this coalition led to division. Conflicts rose within the progressive Japanese society on how to deal with the issue, particularly after the establishment of the Asian Women's Fund. Meanwhile, diverse circumstances such as changing East Asian Dynamics, textbook controversy, rise of political conservatism, and international defamation of Japan has led to strong mobilization of isolationist power, the right-wing groups. At the current state, in both countries, power is distributed mostly to the isolationist groups, playing as veto groups in the reconciliatory process.

## **1.2 Politicization of the issue**

The composition of the active domestic constituency also varies with the politicization of the issue. Robert Putnam argues that politicization often activates groups who are less worried about the cost of no-agreement, thus reducing the effective win-set.<sup>176</sup> Putnam thus stressed the value of secrecy to successful negotiations. However, the comfort women issue is highly politicized, not just to

---

<sup>175</sup> Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." p.444

<sup>176</sup> Ibid p.437



specific interest groups, but to the general public. The character of politicization is also quite troublesome. In both countries, comfort women issue has been politicized as more than a simple disagreement, but as a problem of national dignity and reputation. The Korean Council's unique redressive acts such as the Wednesday Demonstration and Statue Politics has instigated strong nationalist momentum. In Japan, internationalization of the comfort women has been utilized by the right-wing groups to initiate their counter-redressive acts which framed the comfort women as the center of history wars while symbolizing the issue as national defamation. Thus, not only is comfort women controversy highly politicized, it has been politicized by the isolationist, creating diverging perception and further limiting the win-sets.

In addition, comfort women issue, politicized as an issue of global human rights have been internationalized. Internationalization has led to intervention from third parties, the UN, and specifically the US, creating complexity to the controversy. With intervention from third parties, the comfort women issue became more than just a bilateral issue, and activated both nationalists in Japan and Korea to initiate their own international redressive-acts which broadened the battlefield as well as the audience, further limiting the win-set size.

## **2. Factor II. The Political Institutions**

### **2.1 State Strength and State Autonomy**

The second factor of win-set size is the political institutions. Political institutions are a set of rules that structure social interactions in particular ways and that knowledge of these rules must be shared by the members of the relevant society.<sup>177</sup> Institutional arrangements are important to analyze the degree and the scope of the chief negotiator's autonomy from their domestic pressures. Hence,

---

<sup>177</sup> Toshiya Nakamura's "Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach" p.171

state strength and state autonomy are relevant. The greater the autonomy of central decision-makers from their level II constituents, the larger their win-set and thus the greater the likelihood of achieving international agreement.<sup>178</sup>

First of all, both Korea and Japan are democratic countries. As authoritarian governments are more autonomous, the democratic structure of both countries limit state strength and autonomy to certain extent. As Robert Putnam articulates, domestic ratification of international agreement is peculiar to democracies and the limit of expanded cooperation lies in the fact that countries have become democracies, and that they need to secure electoral majorities at home.<sup>179</sup> Before democratization, concession at a bilateral level was possible. 1965 normalization was possible due to the presence of a strong dictator Park Chung-Hee. After democratization, the need for popular support limited state power and sovereignty.

State power is especially weak in Korea when it comes to the comfort women issue. As mentioned previously, comfort women issue was discovered and politicized by the Korean Council, not by the Korean government. As a result, Korean Council over-represented the authority of the state because they were in charge of what the state had to do for a long time. During the 2015 comfort women agreement, according to the document from ministry of foreign affairs, director of the Korean Council Yoon Mi-Hyang had four meetings with the then director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Northeast Asian Affairs from March to December 2015 before the announcement of the agreement. Unlike Yoon's statement that she did not know much about the content of the agreement, the document provides evidence that she was informed of the main contents of the agreement, including the Japanese government's contribution of 1 billion yen.<sup>180</sup> The need to inform the Korean Council even before releasing the agreement shows how powerful the Korean Council is. Former

---

<sup>178</sup> Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." p.439

<sup>179</sup> Ibid p.433

<sup>180</sup> 윤미향, 위안부 합의 전 내용 알았다... 외교부 면담문건 4건 공개, 동아일보

renowned journalist Shim Gyu-Sun argues that this shows a power relationship between the ministry of foreign affairs and the Korean Council. He articulates that in negotiating with Japan the ministry of foreign affairs always wondered whether the outcome of the negotiations could persuade the Korean Council. It reflected the perception that persuading victim's group is the most important.<sup>181</sup>

Saito proposal also reflects how the government lacks autonomy over the comfort women issue. The Saito proposal was a proposal initiated by Tsuyoshi Saito in April of 2012 to negotiate the comfort women issue at the South Korean presidential office with Chun Yung Woo, national security adviser of Lee Myung Bak administration. This proposal by Saito attempted to deliver government-funded compensation and an apology letter from Japan's prime minister to each of the victims. Chun Yung Woo articulated that right after he met with Saito, he explained the proposal to Yoon Mi Hyang, the director of The Korean Council. The rationale for meeting Yoon Mi Hyang was that he believed "it was no exaggeration to say that Korean Council had an immense influence that it was ruling over the law in regards to comfort women issue".<sup>182</sup> Without getting the approval of this civil group, he believed that this agreement would fail even if implemented by the two governments. He further argued that the influence of The Korean Council was so large that many from the Korean government urged him to refuse the Japan's proposal because it would eventually lead The Korean Council to frame him as pro-Japanese traitor which could ruin his career. Although this proposal was not implemented mostly because the Japanese government refused it, this case still shows how civic groups effect reconciliatory measures. The case of Saito proposal indirectly implicates that even if the proposal were to be implemented, it would be met with opposition from The Korean Council which would make it hard for actual implementation. Also, this case furthermore shows how the civil organization plays a powerful role in influencing the political atmosphere that makes it hard for the Korean government to implement or accept measures that contradict rigid stance of the civic groups in

---

<sup>181</sup> 심규선, "위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로" p.64

<sup>182</sup> According to Yonhap News, Chun Yong Woo, with an interview with the Japanese press articulated critically against The Korean Council

Korea

Furthermore, not only is the Korean government's capacity limited, they are mis-represented. The inability of the government to protect its people, the unfair treatment of victims at the 1965 agreement, and anti-authoritarian movement in the 1980s led to framing the government not as chief negotiator but an offender of crime. This unique phenomenon is also the result of 386 generation influence. The 386 democratic movement forces attached themselves to the anti-Japan movement after democratization. The influence of the 386 generation in the Korean Council's comfort women movement has led to a unique form of Korean nationalism, the minjung nationalism which has been critical of the Japanese government, but also the Korean government. The 386 generation and their democratic movements were geared towards the ruling class: the Korean authoritarian regime which they viewed was illegitimate and a target of *jukpe-chungsan* (적폐청산), a deep rooted evil. Even after democratization, any signs of cooperation or collaboration with the Japanese government was perceived as an extension of the humiliation and suffering of the Korean people. Therefore, the Korean Council's target became not just the Japanese government, but also directed to the Korean government. It is worth pointing out that the statements of the Korean Council criticize the Korean government's lack of autonomy in relation with Japan. With the concern of the Japanese government's returning to imperialism, the suspicion that Korean government is somewhat subordinated to the Japanese government is based on post-colonial sentiment of the Minjung nationalism. This was especially visible during the 2015 agreement when the criticism was rather geared towards the Korean government, rather than the Japanese government. The Korean Council heavily criticized the Korean government, calling the Korean government's diplomatic behavior as humiliating.<sup>183</sup> They also linked president Park Geun-hye and with her father Park Chung-Hee, stating that "after Park Chung-Hee, her

---

<sup>183</sup> 정대협, "한국정부의 외교 행태 가히 굴욕적" 뉴스앤뉴스

daughter tramples on grandmothers again”.<sup>184</sup>

In Japan, state autonomy and strength are relatively stronger than that of Korea. There is no one single dominant group that has an omnipotent leverage over the government. Therefore, government’s political maneuverability is relatively more flexible. Yet, too much “concession” is also restricted in Japan due to right-wing pressure. Since the diplomatic agreement on the comfort women issue between South Korea and Japan in December 2015, right-wing groups organized by Nishimura has been holding demonstrations on the comfort women issue mostly in front of LDP headquarters. For them, it is the LDP’s fault that the Kono Statement still has not been repealed; thus, making it necessary to criticize the LDP, even though the ultraconservative Abe Shinzo is its leader.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, as stronger a state is in terms of autonomy from domestic pressures, the weaker its relative bargaining position internationally,<sup>186</sup> making it more likely that they could be bullied around in the foreign negotiation process. Witnessing that more concession could lead to bullying, the Japanese government, since the Kono Statement and Asian Women’s Fund, has chosen to limit its political maneuverability. In sum, in both countries, the relative weak state autonomy limits the win-set size in dealing with the comfort women issue.

## 2.2 Weak State Power and Involuntary Defect

Comfort women issue from the framework of two-level game provides insights to involuntary defect. Whereas voluntary defect refers to reneging by a rational egoist in the absence of forceable contracts (prisoner’s dilemma), involuntary defection refers to behavior of an agent who is

---

<sup>184</sup> 박정희 이어 박근혜도 할머니들 또 다시 짓밟아. 고발뉴스닷컴

<sup>185</sup> Tomomi Yamaguchi, *Revisionism, Ultrationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue* P.201

<sup>186</sup> Putnam, Robert D. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” P. 439

unable to deliver on a promise because of failed ratification<sup>187</sup> which can be only witnessed through the theory of two-level game. 2015 agreement shows how this involuntary defection works. For example, official document of the 2015 agreement highlights that the Japanese government requested that the statue be relocated from the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, the Korean government responded that once the issue is resolved in a final and irreversible manner, the Korean government will make an effort to persuade them.<sup>188</sup> The statue which the Korean government “promised” to make an effort to remove, is constructed by the Korean Council, thus the Korean government has limited leverage to deal with it. According to Scott Snyder and Brad Glosserman, the statue cannot be forcibly removed because “justification, legal or otherwise, would be thin” in removing the statue created by the civil society.<sup>189</sup> Korean government furthermore failed to keep its promise when civic organization, Citizen’s coalition for Volunteer Korea, established another statue at Busan in front of the Consulate General of Japan in December 2016. When it was removed by Busan district office, it was met with severe protest by civic group called Promoting Committee for the Statue of Peace, organizing protests and calling the Korean government as “Japanese police and Japanese bureaucrats”.<sup>190</sup> This severe protest has led Busan district to reverse its decision saying that they have no “jurisdiction because it had been placed there not by the government but by citizen’s group”.<sup>191</sup>

Moreover, in the 2015 agreement, the Korean government promised to limit international criticism of Japan at the UN.<sup>192</sup> Yet, while the government may limit its criticism, they could not legally limit the Korean Council’s criticism. Right after the agreement, the Korean Council went to

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid P. 433

<sup>188</sup> 한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 (2015.12. 28.) 검토 결과 보고서. P.18-20

<sup>189</sup> Scott Snyder and Brad Glosserman, made this comment in their article posted on Council of Foreign Relations titled *The Japan-Korea Comfort Women Deal: Proper Implementation is What Matters*.

<sup>190</sup> 부산 일본영사관 앞 '소녀상' 4시간만에 철거 한겨레

<sup>191</sup> “comfort women statue installed near Japanese consulate Busan” Japan Times

<sup>192</sup> 한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 (2015.12. 28.) 검토 결과 보고서. p.20-21

the UN to criticize both government of South Korea and Japan that this agreement contradicts the guidelines for “resolving the problem that had been set forth by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women”.<sup>193</sup> Simply put, the 2015 agreement shows the “deliver-ability” aspect of Robert Putnam’s two-level game where even if states don’t have the intention to cheat, if they fail to gain domestic support for international agreement, then, it fails to keep the promise. This creates a negative cycle of skepticism, making negotiations harder not necessarily because a state deliberate cheats, but due to the failure to deliver its promises.

### **3. Factor III. Negotiator’s Strategy**

Unlike the assumption that chief negotiator has no independent policy views and acts merely as an honest broker acting behalf of his constituents, Putnam argues that this assumption is unrealistic.<sup>194</sup> In other words, chief negotiator’s individual motive can heavily influence the negotiation process. For example, comfort women issue was highly contentious during the Kim Dae-Jung administration. Yet, with strong leadership of Kim Dae-Jung, Korea-Japan relations recovered. 1998 South Korea-Japan Joint Declaration made between Japanese prime minister Obuchi and Korean president Kim Dae-Jung reconfirmed friendly relations and led to cultural exchanges. With strong leadership, the historical contention deescalated. Furthermore, with strong lead by President Park Geun-Hye, 2015 comfort women agreement was made. Park administration settled the comfort women problem that has been frozen for over 25 years on December 25, 2015. Park administration has strongly pressured Japan in regards to dealing with historical issues and in the end the negotiations led to one of the sincerest agreements from the Japanese government what recognize Japanese military involvement and a sense of responsibility of the Japanese government. Former Japanese prime minister Maruyama articulated that the biggest accomplishment of this agreement is

---

<sup>193</sup> Official Website for The Korean Council again referred to this case as the violation of international human rights

<sup>194</sup> Putnam, Robert D. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” P. 456

that “Japanese government acknowledged the responsibility of the Japanese government and military at that time”.<sup>195</sup> Although the agreement had limitation as it failed to convince the civic organizations and the public, Park administration’s strong pressure influenced the negotiation process.

Chief negotiator can either expand or constrict the win-set size. The strategy of “cutting slack” is aimed to expand the domestic win-set through accommodating an international agreement that might otherwise be rejected by enlarging the win-set sizes. On contrary, the strategy of tying-hands intends to constrict it which deliberately shrinks his own win-sets, inducing the opposing chief negotiator to compromise at a point closer to his own domestic win-sets.<sup>196</sup>

In Korea, chief negotiators mainly used a strategy of tying-hands rather than convincing the domestic constituents for the need for compromise. After the announcement of the Kono Statement, the Korean Foreign Ministry positively evaluated the Japanese government’s announcement in that it recognized the compulsiveness and expressed its determination to face up its history with apologies. Based on the Kono Statement, when the Asian Women’s Fund was established, the Kim Young-Sam administration was positive about the fund. Although the comfort women controversy was the biggest political issue during his early days, Kim administration said it would no longer make it a diplomatic issue. This statement reflected president Kim’s determination to establish Korea-Japan relations based on superior morality. However, when the Korean Council strongly protested against this, stressing the need for state-compensation and legal responsibility, with negative reports broadcasting in the media, the Kim Young Sam government changed its position, asking the Japanese government to stop the funds.

The strong populist appeal to anti-Japan rhetoric has been also utilized by other previous leaderships in Korea, inevitably formulating a tying-hand strategy. Even Park Geun-Hye who established the 2015 comfort women agreement initially utilized strong anti-Japan populism, applying

---

<sup>195</sup> Mediapen highlights reactions from leaders around the world in regards to the 2015 comfort women agreement.

<sup>196</sup> Toshiya Nakamura’s “Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach” p.174



tying-hand strategy. For Park Geun-Hye, the linkage with her father Park Chung-Hee created legitimacy deficiency, which framed her as pro-Japan collaborator. Thus, in order to depart from the image, she took a very rigid and provocative stance towards Japan. During the 94<sup>th</sup> annual memorial speech of March First Movement, president Park defined ROK-Japan relations as an “aggressor-victim relationship”.<sup>197</sup> Also as the first female president, her appeal to feminism has led to prioritization of comfort women over other historical issues for her popularity. On a BBC interview, Park made it clear that she would not engage in any summits with Abe until the issue of comfort women was properly acknowledged. She continuously tied the comfort women issue to the Korean-Japan summit even at the expense of areas of “national security, economy and culture”.<sup>198</sup>

For Moon Jae-In, anti-Japan populism was also effectively utilized given the unique circumstance of Park’s impeachment. In the midst of Park’s impeachment, 2015 comfort women agreement faced strong criticism. In 2015 January Gallup Korea Daily survey on the assessment of president Park, comfort women agreement was seen as the third major source of her unpopularity. More than 50 percent of the respondents had negative view of the agreement while only 25 percent of the respondents supported the agreement.<sup>199</sup> In 2017 January, in the middle of Park’s scandal, Moon visited living comfort women and strongly argued that the 2015 agreement was a humiliating agreement and do not represent the voices of the victims and promised for the annulation of the agreement.<sup>200</sup> As seen, unpopularity of the agreement was seen as a political advantage for him to proceed with the firm stance on Japan which continued during his presidency, leading to a state-led reversal of the agreement. This inevitably led to psychological nullification of the 2015 agreement, further leading to deadlock in the negotiation process.

---

<sup>197</sup> 제 94주년 3.1절 기념사. 외교부

<sup>198</sup> Panda, Ankit. “Park Geun-Hye: Japan Summit 'Pointless' Without Apology.” – *The Diplomat*

<sup>199</sup> 한국갤럽 데일리 오피니언, 역대 대통령 직무 수행평가 1988-2015

<sup>200</sup> 문재인 “10억엔 돈만 받은 위안부 합의 무효” 11 Jan, 2017 프레시안

Unlike Korea, for Japanese head negotiators, tying-hand strategy was not an optimal strategy. Despite strong right-wing pressure, the society was still divided. Moreover, the international pressure and criticism has led the Japanese government to make certain compromise. Thus, in the beginning, the head negotiators utilized a cutting-slack strategy to broaden its win-set size. The Asian Women's Fund was first proposed as a private fund by the Japanese government. However, when the Korean government refused a completely private fund, the Japanese government discussed on incorporating government subsidies. While the Liberal Democratic Party opposed government-level subsidies, the Chief Cabinet Secretary Igarashi Kozo was successful in agreeing to provide government support for the fund's operation.

The unique circumstance of the Japanese head negotiator to win the trust of the international society and the need to satisfy the domestic right-wing nationalists has led to creating a double-position of endorsing the Kono statement internationally, and supporting historical revisionism internally. Especially after Abe took leadership, this phenomenon became more apparent. For example, in 2007, prime minister Abe made a statement that there was no evidence to prove that there was coercion of comfort women into prostitutions. This statement led to media outcry in Asia, and in the US. When Abe met with president Bush two months later, Abe again reconfirmed his support for the Kono Statement stating "as both an individual and as prime minister, I sympathize with those women who were forced to taste life's bitterness."<sup>201</sup> However internally, Abe himself had been directly and indirectly connected to historical revisionism undermining the comfort women issue. Thus, although international pressure plays as a mechanism for enlarging the Japanese government's win-set size, the juxtaposing stance that the head negotiator takes is perceived to be ingenuine to the Korean public. The 2015 agreement has shown much compromise of the Japanese government as the prime minister admitted the country's responsibility and expressed apology. The agreement was met with harsh criticism, not necessarily because of its content, but due to mistrust coming from the

---

<sup>201</sup> *Nationalist Discourse* P167

double-standard of the Japanese government. There was a strong perception that the agreement is only a reflection of Japanese government's effort to lessen international pressure. Thus, despite enlarging its win-set size, the ambiguity coming from international/internal juxtaposition hampers the negotiation process.

#### **4. Summary**

To summarize, this section utilized the theoretical framework of Putnam's two-level game to illuminate the domestic ratification of the comfort women issue. Through the concept of win-sets and the three main determinants of win-sets size, this paper attempted to elaborate on the difficulty of resolving the comfort women issue between the two governments. As for the first factor (distribution of power, preferences, and possible coalitions among level II constituents), it is evident that isolationist powers (nationalist civic organizations) have controlled the social atmosphere in both countries while heavy politicization (such as internationalization) of the comfort women reduced the effective win-set size. As for the second factor (The Political Institutions), weak state autonomy due to strong civil societies in the two countries have led to weakened political maneuverability while inability to deliver the promise of negotiation led to involuntary defection, creating a negative cycle of skepticism. Lastly, the third factor (negotiator's strategy) was analyzed to highlight that in both countries, leaders, rather than minimizing the negative consequences, have instead utilized strong nationalism for domestic support. Small win-sets in both countries led to conflict, and failed negotiation as seen by the below table.

**Table 1. Win-sets and international negotiation outcome<sup>202</sup>**

Country X/ Country Y	Large win-set	Small win-set
Large win-set	<p><b>Process: cooperative</b></p> <p><b>Result: Equal distribution of interest</b></p>	<p><b>Process: relatively moderate</b></p> <p><b>Result: result more advantageous to Country Y</b></p>
Small win-set	<p><b>Process: relatively moderate</b></p> <p><b>Result: result more advantageous to Country X</b></p>	<p><b>Process: conflictual</b></p> <p><b>Result: failed negotiation</b></p>

---

<sup>202</sup> “양면게임이론으로 분석해 본 한일 과거사 문제: 2005년 역사교과서 파동을 중심으로” p.152

## VIII. Conclusion

This paper attempted to answer the seemingly puzzling question of why comfort women issue, among other disputes, been the center of contention where it still lingers as the prime obstacle to the bilateral relationship. While many scholarships have already dived into the comfort women literatures, this paper endeavored to address the peculiarity of the comfort women controversy which is especially sensitive and difficult to reconcile. The research found the answer in the unique development of the comfort women movement in Korea and Japan. In Korea, monopolization of comfort women discourse by the Korean Council has led to over-representation of a specific non-governmental organization. This on the contrary led to mis-representation of the Korean government. The strong ethnic nationalism of the Korean Council has led to nationalistic redressive acts which infiltrated the Korean society, while their fundamentalism disallowed other voices to be heard, limiting mature debates to occur. This contrasts with other countries which perceived the comfort women issue as human rights issue. In the Philippines, feminist value oriented the direction of the comfort women movement. In Taiwan the damage of comfort women was much less severe than in Korea and the anti-Japanese sentiment is not strong, thus the mainstream movement was geared towards human rights perspective.<sup>203</sup> In Indonesia and Netherlands, more freedom was given to the individuals on receiving the Asian Women's Fund and in China, strong state capacity limited the issue to be a stumbling factor between the two governments.

In Japan, unique internationalization of the comfort women issue through erection of statues and monuments not only failed to institutionalize apologetic discourse within Japanese society, but was actively used by the right-wing civil society as a symbolic representation of national humiliation and history war, institutionalizing right-wing mobilization. Especially with changes in political environs and rise of conservatism, their voices grew stronger, and their own redressive acts further limited the Japanese government's capacity for negotiation. These factors were systematically

---

<sup>203</sup> 오경택, “일본군 위안부 문제에 관한 동북아 NGO들의 초국가적 연대활동 연구 P. 200

investigated through the framework of two-level game and the concept of win-sets, highlighting the difficulty of negotiations.

There are several implications of this research. First, states do not necessarily monopolize the reconciliatory process. Even if both states have mutual benefits of reconciliation, the domestic ratification may fail due to many factors. In the case of the comfort women controversy, the mega-influential nationalistic civic organizations act as veto-power, making it hard for both governments to make consensus. Second, although much credit should be given to the Korean Council for its success in politicizing the comfort women issue, too much authority and radicalized ethnic-nationalism may blind positive and mature debates to occur. Viroli has articulated that ethnic-nationalism and republican patriotism is sharply different. The former tends to blindly defend their identity without discussing internal problems to emphasize unity and superiority while the latter is based on conditional love and has a tendency to search for improvements by discussing differences and opinions with compassion for shameful internal problems. Also, while the former tends to hate and attack the other country for the internal unity, the latter tends to be cooperative in pursuing solidarity with the neighboring countries.<sup>204</sup> Strong ethnic-nationalism of the Korean Council led to groupthink which created pressure on individuals to conform to the dominant views held by the dominant society, limiting mature debates to occur. Last, although government do not monopolize the foreign policy outcome, leadership is vital. Chief negotiator's decision heavily influences the foreign policy outcome. As seen by the easing of relations during Kim Dae-Jung administration despite the ongoing comfort women controversy, strong leadership is essential in coordinating the bilateral relations.

The future of Korea-Japan bilateral relations is not much hopeful. With continued cycle of skepticism between the two governments, comfort women issue is becoming harder to be resolved. Yet, Lee Yong-Soo has shown an alternative path for reconciliation. With recent controversy with the Korean Council, she reflected her perspective on the direction of the comfort women movement that

---

<sup>204</sup> 채진원, “공화적 애국주의에 대한 시론적 고찰: 이용수의 윤미향 비판을 중심으로”

creating a common value of the past history between Japan and Korea is needed rather than hosting anti-Japan campaigns.<sup>205</sup> She further said ““We are not trying to insult or attack Japan," adding, "We just want the Japanese Military Sexual Slavery issue to be resolved peacefully.”<sup>206</sup> She has consistently stressed the need to communicate with Japan, and to create a common ground to foster dialogue. This is not to argue that Korea should compromise to the Japan’s right-wing nationalists. Embracing is not about forgiving Japan unconditionally and giving an exoneration. Priority should be Japan’s sincere and official apology. Given this basis, Korea’s response should utilize a political method of reconciliation necessary to bring about Japan’s responsibility rather than appealing to nationalistic emotions. A method to explore the future through inclusive reconciliation which fosters dialogue and breaking away from the vicious cycle of hatred and miscommunication is needed. It is time to permit freedom from anti-colonial prison and lead the reconciliation with superior morality.

---

<sup>205</sup> In May 25th, former sex slave Lee Yong Soo laid out criticisms of The Korean Council and also laid out several alternative ways that for Korea-Japan reconciliation

<sup>206</sup> 채진원, “공화적 애국주의에 대한 시론적 고찰: 이용수의 윤미향 비판을 중심으로”

## IX. Bibliography

- Brad Glosserman and Scott A. Snyder. 2015. *"The Japan-South Korea Identity Clash: East Asian Security and the United States."* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chai, Alice Yun (1997). Integrative feminist politics in the Republic of Korea. In Lois A. West (Ed.), *Feminist nationalism*. New York: Routledge
- Cho, Hae-joang (1994). The "woman question" in the Minjok-Minju movement: A discourse analysis of a new women's movement in 1980s' Korea. In Hyoung Cho & Pil-wha Chang (Eds.), *Gender division of labor (in) Korea*. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press.
- Chun JaHyun and Choi Daeun, "Japan's Foreign Policy on Postwar Issues Relating to South Korea". *Pacific Focus Inha Journal of International Studies*
- Chun, Jahyun, *"Social Divisions and International Reconciliation: Domestic Backlash against Foreign Policymaking between Japan and South Korea"* *International Studies Perspectives* (2019) 20, P.373-389
- Comfort Women' Statue Installed Near Japanese Consulate in Busan  
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/12/30/national/comfort-woman-statue-installed-near-japanese-consulate-busan/#.Xu0LYdhxdPZ>
- CSIS. "The Importance of U.S.-Japan-Korea Trilateral Defense Cooperation." August 28, 2019. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/importance-us-japan-korea-trilateral-defense-cooperation>.
- "Education Minister slams textbooks as self-torturing" Japan times, November 28, 2004.  
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2004/11/28/national/education-minister-slams-textbooks-as-self-torturing/>
- Elizabeth W. Son, *"Embodied Reckonings- Comfort Women Performances, and Transpacific Redress"* University of Michigan Press 2018.
- Establishment of the AW Fund, and the basic nature of its projects. Accessed November 15, 2022.  
<https://awf.or.jp/e2/foundation.html>
- Hagen Koo, *[Strong State and Contentious Society]* Cornell University Press, 1994
- Hirofumi Hayashi, *"Disputes in Japan over the Japanese Military Comfort Women System and its Perception in History"*, *ANNALS, AAPSS*, 617, May 2008
- "H.Res.121 - 110th Congress (2007-2008): A Resolution Expressing the ..." Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-resolution/121>.
- Jaeyeon Lee (2021): *"The ethno-nationalist solidarity and (dis)comfort in the Wednesday Demonstration in South Korea"*, *Gender, Place & Culture*



Ja-hyun Chun, Youcheer Kim, "A New Interpretation of Korea-Japan Relations: 'Rights Revolution' of Sex Slaves and Forced Laborers in the Courtroom" *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 12-1 (June 2014), 255-76

"Japanese Government Statements and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statements." Japanese Government Statements and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Statements | Korean Legal Studies. Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://kls.law.columbia.edu/content/japanese-government-statements-and-ministry-foreign-affairs-statements>.

"Japan's PM Denies 'Comfort Women' Coerced." NBCNews.com. NBCUniversal News Group, March 1, 2007. <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna10625961>.

Ji Young Kim, Jeyong Sohn, *Settlement Without Consensus: International Pressure, Domestic Backlash, and the Comfort Women Issue in Japan* Pacific Affairs, Vol. 90, No. 1 (MARCH 2017), pp. 77-99

The Korean Herald. "No. Of Japanese Visitors to Korea Jumps More Than 28% in 2018." January 26, 2019. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20190126000029#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20data%20from,than%202.92%20million%20in%202018.>

Lee, Kangkyu, "The Comfort Women Agreement: An Analysis of the Motivation that led to Park Geun-Hye's Acquiescence" January 19, 2017 Georgetown University

Le, Tom, and David Yu. "Analysis | 75 Years Later, Japan and South Korea Have Yet to Fully Reconcile Their Wartime and Colonial History." The Washington Post. WP Company, August 13, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/13/75-years-later-japan-south-korea-have-yet-fully-reconcile-their-wartime-colonial-history/>

Messages from Japanese contributors. Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://awf.or.jp/e3/donators.html>

Panda, Ankit. "Park Geun-Hye: Japan Summit 'Pointless' Without Apology." – *The Diplomat*, For The Diplomat, 13 Nov. 2013, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/11/park-geun-hye-japan-summit-pointless-without-apology/>

Park, Myung-Hee, "The Gap Enlargement Mechanism between Korean-Japanese Perceptions: Focusing on the Comfort Women Agreement (2015.12.28)". Institute of Korean Studies, Vol. 48, No.3 2017 P.489-512

Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization*, vol. 42, no. 3, 1988, pp. 427–460.

Ranjoo Seodu Herr Can Transnational Feminist Solidarity Accommodate Nationalism? Reflections from the Case Study of Korean "Comfort Women" *A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 2015

Rangsook Yoon (2018) Erecting the "Comfort Women" Memorials: From Seoul to San Francisco, *de arte*, 53:2-3, 70-85

Rin Ushiyama, "Comfort women must fall"? Japanese governmental responses to 'comfort women' statues around the world. *Memory Studies*, Vo.14(6), 2021

Saburo Ienaga. one man's campaign against Japanese censorship” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, December 3, 2002.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2002/dec/03/guardianobituaries.japan> .

Seong-hyon Lee, “Where Is Washington? The Missing Mediator between Seoul and Tokyo,” *The Washington Quarterly* 42:1 (2019): 89-110.

Shim, David “*Memorials’ Politics: Exploring the material rhetoric of the Statue of Peace*” Memory Studies, 2021.

“South Korea (KOR) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners.” OEC. Accessed November 15, 2022.

<https://oec.world/en/profile/country/kor>.

“South Korea and Japan's Feud Explained.” BBC News. BBC, December 2, 2019.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49330531>.

“Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Kato on the Issue of the so-called "Wartime Comfort Women" from the Korean Peninsula.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Accessed November 15, 2022. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/rp/page25e\\_000344.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page25e_000344.html).

“Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Accessed November 15, 2022. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/rp/page25e\\_000343.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page25e_000343.html).

Tomomi Yamaguchi “*Japan’s Right-Wing Women and the “Comfort Women” Issue*” Policy Forum Vol.6, 2020

Tomomi Yamaguchi , *The “History Wars” and the “Comfort Woman” Issue: The Significance of Nippon Kaigi in the Revisionist Movement in Contemporary Japan* 2020

Tomomi Yamaguchi , *The “History Wars” and the “Comfort Woman” Issue: Revisionism and the Right-wing in Contemporary Japan and the U.S*

Tomomi Yamaguchi, *Revisionism, Ultrnationalism, Sexism: Relations Between the Far Right and the Establishment Over the ‘Comfort Women’ Issue* Social Science Japan Journal Vol. 21, No. 2, pp 193–212 2018

Toshiya Nakamura’s “Explanatory Power of the Two-level Game Approach” Journal of the Faculty of Global communication Siebold University of Nagasaki No.8

Tsuneo Akaha, “*The Nationalist Discourse in Contemporary Japan: The Role of China and Korea in the Last Decade*”. Pacific Focus, 2008 P.156-188

“The Japan-South Korea Joint Public Opinion Poll 2019.” The Genron NPO. Accessed November 15, 2022. [https://www.genron-npo.net/en/opinion\\_polls/archives/5489.html](https://www.genron-npo.net/en/opinion_polls/archives/5489.html).

“The Facts (2007).” Japan-U.S. Feminist Network for Decolonization (FeND), June 14, 2021. <http://fendnow.org/encyclopedia/the-facts-2007/>

“Talks on Sexual Slavery.” Korea Times, April 20, 2014.  
[https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/202\\_155621.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/202_155621.html).

UN Commission on human rights - report on mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (Jan 96). Accessed November 15, 2022. <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/commission/country52/53-add1.htm>.

Vicki Sung-yeon Kwon, “*The Sonyōsang Phenomenon: Nationalism and Feminism Surrounding the “Comfort Women” Statue*” *Korean Studies*, Volume 43, 2019, pp. 6-39 (Article) University of Hawai'i Press

Ward, Lay, Thomas, William. (2019) *Park Statue Politics*. Bristol: E-International Publishing,

Womenandwar.net. Accessed November 15, 2022. <https://womenandwar.net/kr/visionnmission/>.

World Politics: The Menu for Choice. 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Book

Yoon Sharon, Asahina Yuki, “*The Rise and Fall of Japan’s New Far Right: How Anti-Korean Discourses Went Mainstream*”. *Politics&Society* Vol.49, 2021

Yoojin Koo, “A Configurative Approach to Conservative Mobilization in Japan: The Effect of Combining Political Opportunities and Threats,” *Japanese Political Science Review* 5, 2020.

김호섭(2009). “한일관계 형성에 있어서 정치 리더십의 역할.” 현대일본학회. 『일본연구 논총』. 제29호

김위근, Media Issue 6권 4호 <한·일 갈등에 대한 양국 시민 인식 조사>. Pdf. 2020

김지민. 2021. “미국 시민사회의 일본군 ‘위안부’ 문제 인식과 램지어 논문을 둘러싼 논란.” 『역사비평』, 135, 198-225

김명희. 2017. “일본군 ‘위안부’ 문제와 부인(denial)의 정치학: [제국의 위안부] 사태’ 다시 읽기.” 『한국여성학』, 33(3), 235-278.

김정란, “*일본군 위안부 운동의 전개와 문제인식에 대한 연구: 정대협을 중심으로*” 2004. 한국교육학술정보원

김창록. 2016. “2015년 한, 일 위안부 합의의 법적 문제: 법적 관점에서 본 [2015 한 일 외교장관 합의].” 『민주법학』, 60, 45-77

김동윤, 오명원, 한일 언론과 일본군위안부 – 보도양상 및 미디어 프레임 분석.  
한국일본군대학회 제 50 호 2015 P.141-170

구유진, “아베 정권과 보수시민사회: 일본회의의 정책제언활동을 중심으로” 『日本の息吹』,

2020년 10월호

나눔의 집 “박유하 무죄판결은 반역사적·반인권적 판결”, 한겨레  
[https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area\\_general/780349.html](https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area_general/780349.html)

동아시아연구원(EAI)과 言論NPO 「제7회 한일 국민상호인식조사」  
[http://www.eai.or.kr/documents/190612\\_1.pdf](http://www.eai.or.kr/documents/190612_1.pdf)

문소정, “일본군 위안부 문제와 남북여성연대” 통일과평화 7집 2호. 2015

문재인 “10억엔 돈만 받은 위안부 합의, 무효” 11 Jan, 2017 프레시안  
(<https://www.pressian.com/pages/articles/148270?no=148270#ODKU>)

박홍규 (2020) 한일 역사화해의 전개 과정 — ‘책임론적 화해’에서 ‘포용론적 화해로  
日本思想, 39, 211-239

"박유하 <제국의 위안부> 검찰 기소, 과하다" 지식인 190명 성명 발표...박유하 "위안부 폄훼  
의도 없었다, 프레시안 <https://www.pressian.com/pages/articles/131532>

박유하 교수 “‘제국의 위안부’ 소송, 할머니 아니라 주변인들 일으킨 소송” 경향신문  
<https://m.khan.co.kr/culture/scholarship-heritage/article/202208311146011#c2b>

박철희, “한일갈등의 반응적 촉발과 원론적 대응의 구조,” 한국정치외교사학회  
vol.29, no.2 2008 P.323-348

박정희 이어 박근혜도 할머니들 또 다시 짓밟아. 고발뉴스닷컴 “박정희 이어 박근혜도  
할머니들 또다시 짓밟아” - 고발뉴스닷컴 ([gobalnews.com](http://gobalnews.com))

부산 일본영사관 앞 '소녀상' 4시간만에  
철거 [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area\\_general/776483.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area_general/776483.html)

부산 일본영사관 앞 '소녀상' 4시간만에  
철거 [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area\\_general/776483.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/area/area_general/776483.html)

손기영, “기억되는 과거의 과잉(過剩): 국제정치의 시간성(temporality)과 반일정체성의  
장기지속(longue durée) 및 위안부 문제” 아태연구 제 24 권 제 2 호 201

신영숙, “여성을 위한 아시아평화국민기금과 일본 사회의 인식.” 평화연구 Vol. 16-1, 2008

신영숙, “일본의 아시아평화국민기금 (국민기금)에 대한 한국사회의 대응”. *여성과 역사*  
제 12 집

손열, “위안부 합의의 국제정치: 정체성-안보-경제 넥서스와 박근혜 정부의 대일 외교”  
국제정치 논총 제 58 집 2 호 (2018), 145-177

심규선, “위안부 운동, 성역에서 광장으로” 나남출판 2012. Book

송진원, 안병학, “평화의 소녀상을 통해 나타난 시각 문화의 상징성과 사회적 기억의  
확산” 기초조형학연구, 2019 P. 239-250

양현아. 2016. “2015년 한·일 위안부 합의의 법적 문제: 2015년 한일외교장관의 ‘위 안부’  
문제 합의에서 피해자는 어디에 있(었)나?: 그 내용과 절차.” 『민주법 학』, 60, 13-44

이헌미. 2017. “[제국의 위안부]와 기억의 정치학.” 『국제정치논총』, 57(2), 328-366

이지영. 2020. “샌프란시스코 일본군 ‘위안부’ 기림비 건립 운동과 자이니치코리안 의  
정체성 정치.” 『기억과 전망』, 42, 255-294.

이헌미, “한일 위안부 외교의 역사와 쟁점” 역사연구 42호, 2020

이권희 (2020) 일본군 위안부의 ‘주체화’에 관한 고찰, 日本思想, 38, 161-185

이현숙 (한국교회여성연합회 25년사), 한국교회여성연합회, 1992, 385-386쪽

야마시타 영애 지음, 박은미 옮김 내셔널리즘의 틈새에서 , 한울 아카데미, 2008, p.124.

양기호, “한일갈등에서 국제쟁점으로: 위안부 문제 확산과정의 분석과 합의”  
일본연구논총 2015, P.5-30

오경택, “일본군 위안부 문제에 관한 동북아 NGO 들의 초국가적 연대활동 연구”  
21세기정치학회보 제 17 집 1 호 2007 년 5 월

야마시타 영애 지음; 박은미 옮김 내셔널리즘의 틈새에서 한울 아카데미 2012 Book

“우리가 잊어버린 최초의 위안부 증언자...그 이름, 배봉기.” 한겨레 August 7, 2015.  
<https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/international/japan/703614.html>.

"위안부 관련단체 사실적시 금지" 與법안에 윤미향도 참여, 서울경제  
<https://www.sedaily.com/NewsView/22QBA04C0K>

이용수 할머니 “증오. 상처만 가르치는 수요집회 불참” 국민일보 2020  
<http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0924137007&code=11131100&sid1=all>

윤미향, 위안부 합의 전 내용 알았다... 외교부 면담문건 4건 공개, 동아일보  
<https://www.donga.com/news/Society/article/all/20220526/113644705/1> 2022

정재민. 2016. “일본군 ‘위안부’ 관련 2011년 헌법재판소 결정과 2015년 한일정부 간  
합의의 관계: 외교적 보호권의 관점에서.” 『국제법학회논총』, 61(1), 189-219  
정희성. 2019. “일본군 ‘위안부’ 운동과 기독교 여성의 공헌.” 『한국기독교신학논총』, 112,  
293-322.

정미애(2011), “*한일관계에서 시민사회의 역할과 뉴거버넌스*” 아태연구 제 18 권 제 2 호  
17-41

조윤수, 일본군‘위안부’문제와 한일관계 : 1990년대 한국과 일본의 대응을 중심으로,  
2014년 제36집 1호 한국정치외교사학회, 71-98

정대협 김윤옥 선생께 답합니다/와다 하루키, 한겨레,  
2002[http://legacy.www.hani.co.kr/section-  
001048000/2002/03/001048000200203241946011.html](http://legacy.www.hani.co.kr/section-001048000/2002/03/001048000200203241946011.html)

정희선, “소수자 저항의 공간적 실천과 재현의 정치. 일본군 위안부 문제해결을 위한  
수요시위의 사례” 한국도시지리학회지 제 16 권 3 호 2013, 101-116

정진성, “한국, 일본, 아시아 및 서구 시민단체 (NGO)의 협력과 갈등: 군위안부문제에  
관련한 운동단체들의 가치지향을 중심으로” 지역연구 11 권 1 호 2002 P.21-40

정진성, “전시 하 여성침해의 보편성과 역사적 특수성: 일본군 위안부문제에 대한 국제사  
회의 인식” 한국여성학 제19권 2호, 2003

정대협, “한국정부의 외교 행태 가히 굴욕적” 뷰스앤뉴스 정대협 “한국정부의 외교 행태  
가히 굴욕적” - 세상을 보는 다른 눈 "뷰스앤뉴스" ([viewsnnews.com](http://viewsnnews.com))

제 94주년 3.1절 기념사. 외교부  
[http://overseas.mofa.go.kr/viewer/skin/doc.html?fn=file\\_20130304193511827\\_0&rs=/viewer/result/202012](http://overseas.mofa.go.kr/viewer/skin/doc.html?fn=file_20130304193511827_0&rs=/viewer/result/202012)

최은미, “양면게임이론으로 분석해 본 한일 과거사 문제: 2005 년 역사교과서 파동을 중심으로” 비교민주주의연구 제 7 집 1 호 (2011)

최은주, “위안부=‘소녀’상과 젠더 - ‘평화의 비’를 중심으로” 동아시아문화연구 제 66 집 2016, P.. 243-263

채진원, “공화적 애국주의에 대한 시론적 고찰: 이용수의 윤미향 비판을 중심으로” 인문사회 제 13 권 2 호 2022

최명숙, “초국적 시민연대의 형성과 한계- (일본군 위안부)를 위안 한.일 시민운동을 중심으로” 일본문화연구, 2012, P. 559-576

한국갤럽 데일리 오피니언, 역대 대통령 직무 수행평가1988-2015  
[panel.gallup.co.kr/Contents/GallupKoreaDaily/GallupKoreaDailyOpinion\\_174\(20150807\).pdf](http://panel.gallup.co.kr/Contents/GallupKoreaDaily/GallupKoreaDailyOpinion_174(20150807).pdf)

허윤, “일본군 위안부 재현과 진정성의 곤경- 소녀와 할머니 표상을 중심으로”. 여성과 역사 29, 2018

30년 성역이 짓밟은 진실...16년 전 ‘무궁화회’ 고발은 누가 물었나 주간조선  
<http://weekly.chosun.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=15727>

한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 (2015.12. 28.) 검토 결과 보고서. 한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 검토 태스크포스 2017. 12. 27

한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 (2015.12. 28.) 검토 결과 보고서. 한·일 일본군위안부 피해자 문제 합의 검토 태스크포스 2017. 12.

## 국문 초록

한. 일 협력의 상호 이익에도 불구하고, 두 나라간 역사적 적대감은 더 깊은 협력을 막는 주요 장애물로 남아 있다. 많은 역사적 문제들 중, 위안부 문제는 특히 논쟁의 중심으로 남아 있다. 위안부 문제는 그 어떤 문제들보다 더 오래 지속되고 있고, 유독 더 민감하다. 본 연구는 이러한 위안부 문제의 특수성에 대한 해답을 한국과 일본 위안부 운동의 독특한 전개에서 찾고 시민단체의 역할을 결정요인으로 구분 짓는다. 본 연구의 주요 논점은 다음과 같다. 한국에서는 위안부 문제가 한국 정부가 아닌 강력한 시민 단체인 정대협에 의해 발견되고 발전되었다. 이 같은 현상은 정대협의 과잉대표와 한국 정부의 잘못된 대표성을 초래했다. 정대협의 민족주의적 담론은 민족주의를 한국사회의 지배적인 목소리로 이끌었고, 위안부 문제는 민족적 고통의 상징으로 대변되었다. 또한 그들의 다양한 행위 (*redressive acts*)는 한국 정부의 협상 능력을 저하시켰다. 일본에서는 위안부 문제의 국제화 시도가 일본 사회 내에서 사과 담론을 제도화하는데 실패했을 뿐만 아니라, 역설적으로 우익 시민사회로 인해 민족적 굴욕과 국가 명예훼손으로 인식되고 적극적으로 활용되었다. 우익의 동원, 특히 정치적 환경의 변화와 보수주의의 대두로 이들의 목소리는 더욱 거세 졌고 이러한 요소들이 일본 정부의 협상 능력을 제한하는 변수로 작동되었다. 본 연구는 이러한 한일 양국간의 시민사회 역할이 외교정책 결과에 어떤 영향을 미치는지 조명하고자 한다.

즉 국내 외교의 원천이 국제 협상에 어떠한 영향을 미치는지 분석하고자 한다.