

The Efficiency of Networking in Social Movements through the Case of the Korean Council and
South Korea's Comfort Women Issue

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Abstract

If it was not for international networking, the world may have never known about the existence of the comfort women system during World War II and how Japan was all behind it. In my research, I have found how essential networking is for social organizations in order to invoke change. The Korean Council used networking to gain strength and recognition for the Japanese to be brought to justice and to correct history on the national and international level. Teamwork across borders aids social movements in becoming more capable of reaching towards their goal or towards the betterment of the world.

Networking is a powerful resource that enables organizations and movements from different regions and countries to overcome challenges in their fight for change. In South Korea, the Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan, also known as the Korean Council, used networking as their primary tool to force Japan to take responsibility for the crimes they committed against hundreds of thousands of women. In order to aid their movement, they built international and national connections to create awareness to a broad range of individuals through non-violent protesting. Andrew Walder theorizes that non-violent protests are successful and produce more support because this kind of protest draws in sympathy. This led the Korean Council to obtain a large audience in which they were able to voice their stories and allegations against the Japanese's war crimes that they have committed and had gotten away with. Beth Caniglia and JoAnn Carmin as well as Margret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink attribute the success of networking to its ability to gain more supporters and for gathering information. Networking and non-violence empowered the Korean Council with the international and national support needed to not only reveal the history of the comfort women hidden by the Japanese but to combat the Japanese governments' attempts to avoid cooperation.

The reason for the Korean Council started with the creation of the comfort women and the comfort women system. "Comfort women" is the translation of the Japanese word *ianfu*, and it is a euphemism for "prostitute" (Soh). Despite its name, these "comfort women" were sex slaves who were abused and tortured by the Japanese Imperial Army (Soh). As the Japanese Imperial Army grew its empire throughout Asia, they started to set up comfort stations, or brothels (Asia-Pacific Journal). Figure 1 on the appendix page on page 23 shows the map of the territories and countries that the Japanese colonized spreading from Korea all the way down to

the Dutch-colonized Indonesia (Smethurst). The Imperial Army set up these comfort stations for four reasons: to prevent the spread of venereal diseases, to create an “escape” or “leisure” for the Japanese soldiers, to prevent the rape of civilians in Japanese colonies, and to use the women to check for espionage within the Japanese military (Orreill 134-136). With this, the Japanese hoped for stability and obedience amongst their soldiers while preventing uprising from locals from their colonized territories due to rapes (Orreill). Therefore, the Japanese Imperial Army started to kidnap women throughout the territories they colonized (Soh). These women were kidnapped through various methods, with some being tricked into thinking they were going to go work or dragged away due to debt (Asia-Pacific Journal). They were forced to live through unspeakable hardships, and the Japanese government went unpunished until decades later. In South Korea, the surviving comfort women came together along with supporters for their cause for justice to create organizations Korean Council

For Korea, the colonization and oppression of the Japanese happened a lot earlier than most Asian countries. In 1910, Korea and Japan signed a Japan-Korean Annexation Treaty, in which Korea felt like they were coaxed into signing (Japan Times). Under this treaty, Japan would have complete control over Korea “in order to maintain peace and stability...promote the prosperity and welfare of Koreans, and at the same time to insure the safety and repose of foreign residents” (“The Annexation of Korea to Japan”). Japan’s paternal and colonial ideology shaped the way the Koreans were met with oppression as Japan ruled them from 1910 until 1945, when they lost all of their territories and colonies once they lost the war (Asia for Educators). Under Japan, the Koreans suffered hardships which included discrimination, inhumane treatment, and enforced labor in Japanese factories (Asia for Educators). Koreans were taught that they were inferior to the Japanese, and they were forbidden to speak Korean and sometimes discouraged

from using Korean names (Orreill). The Koreans faced cruel oppression, and at times death, during the 35 years under Japanese colonial rule, which made it easier for the Japanese Imperial Army to kidnap young women for their comfort stations.

Hundreds of thousands of girls were taken across countries to be placed at a comfort station. It is estimated of about 200, 000 girls were a part of this system (Mohideen). About 80% of that number is said to be Korean (Murayama). These girls were forced to travel all over Asia, even near the front lines, to get to and serve at the comfort stations where they were starved, dehumanized, and repeatedly raped (Orreill). In a BBC article, Yi Ok-seon shared her story when she was taken when she was 15 years old when she was working away from home to help provide for her family: “I felt really violated...It was like a slaughterhouse there-not for animals, but for humans” (Williamson). She is one of thousands who were abused by Japanese soldiers, left untreated for any sort of abuse or illness, could have been killed if attempted to escape, and left to die.

South Korean women were not only had their lives stolen from them but they had their identities and culture taken away as well. In addition to this abuse, the young Korean girls were prohibited from speaking Korean, and if they did, they would be severely punished (Orreill). Some of them were taught Japanese, but just the words used as if someone was serving a customer such as *irashaimase* or “welcome” (Orreill). Furthermore, they were stripped of their identities: many of the women were forced to take on Japanese names or numbers instead of names, and they were tattooed on their bodies to show ownership and used as a way to keep track of them in case they escaped (Orreill). They had little access to proper medical care and nutrition. If any of the girls were found with a venereal disease or any kind of illness, some were killed off so that it would prevent the spread to the Japanese soldiers (Mohideen). By the end of

the war, once the Japanese surrendered, the Japanese were unsure of what to do with them. As a result, many of the girls were either killed, or left to defend themselves in countries far from their home (Orreill). The comfort women underwent an immense abuse of human rights that would later go unheard for decades to come.

In fact, how the Korean Council found its voice and came to be started in Japan. In 1982, Japanese feminist and journalist, Matsui Yayori, did an interview with a Korean comfort woman living in Thailand, who had remained anonymous as she was afraid of the backlash (Nozaki). Despite publishing in a popular newspaper in Japan, there was little reaction to her piece (Nozaki). However, Matsui's research on comfort women grabbed the attention of a South Korean professor, Yun Chung-ok, and they met up in the late 1980's and exchanged information on what they knew about comfort women (Nozaki). Yun used her newfound information to create a series of reports in a Korean newspaper in 1990 (Nozaki). Her reports took South Korea and Japan by storm: in South Korea, people were enraged and called for redress from the Japanese government and in Japan, it sparked women's organizations and political parties as they began to call for government inquiry (Nozaki). The result of Matsui's and Yun's networking was the catalyst to the creation of the Korean Council.

While demands for answers increased, Japan finally answered to some of the movements formed in South Korea and Japan as a result of the reports. The Diet, the name for the Japanese parliament, session of the government of Japan in June of 1991 concluded that there was no involvement of its military in the case of the comfort women (Nozaki). The Japanese government, again, denied the existence of the comfort women as well as their crimes. Fueled by anger and the growing support of social injustice organizations, a former Korean comfort woman, Kim Hak-Sun, broke her decades-long silence to the public to convey her testimony

against the Japanese (Murayama). She shared her story and her real name to the world, and demanded Japan to take responsibility for their actions by undergoing a lawsuit (Murayama). Through her story, the world became aware of the lives of comfort women and the crimes committed against them by the Japanese army and government. A fellow supporter contributed Kim's public testimony to the smaller movements already underway: "One of the main reasons that Kim Hak Sun broke her silence is the development of the women's movement in Korea. Before this, the women could not speak of their experiences because they would be treated as pariahs" (Mohideen). Kim's courage to stand up against the Japanese government along with the comfort that there are supporters who have her back led to more and more former comfort women coming out of their silence and providing their own stories to the public.

In conjunction with the supporter's statement, Keck and Sikkink also have a theory on why networking and using information from other countries enables movements to progress and strengthen their movement. According to Keck and Sikkink: "foreign influences or transnational linkages often provide the spark, but that spark only catches and sustains fire with domestic kindling and fuel" (39-40). This means that even though it is important to have international ties to fall back onto, having support in the country where the movement originated takes precedence. A movement is only effective as its support from the activists and resources in its own nation.

This theory is applicable of the collaboration of Japanese journalist Matsui and Professor Yun. Matsui had the information that Professor Yun needed to create her reports, which later sparked international awareness. With Matsui's and Professor Yun's teamwork and the uprising of South Korean and Japanese social movements, Kim felt empowered to share her secret that she had kept hidden for decades in fear of social backlash as so many of the surviving comfort

women feared. Kim's public testimony furthered the spark by strengthening other surviving comfort women to come out of hiding and testify against Japan (Peaceboat). Once the surviving comfort women came out publicly with their own stories, they had their communities in support of them and carry on their movement.

Upon the growing number of testimonies from the former Korean comfort women, the effects of networking were underway. When hearing Kim's testimony, a Japanese history professor, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, underwent research about the comfort women system under the Japanese Imperial Army in World War II (Soh). He found war documents at the Library of the National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo that officially states that "the imperial army was involved in both establishing and operating the comfort stations" (Soh). The Japanese government could no longer deny their involvement in the creation of the comfort women system and the kidnapping of young girls to be used as sex slaves. Due to Kim's international testimony, Yoshimi was able to know about her and her situation and with his skills and resources, he was able to back her testimony against the Japanese. This led to further support for the former comfort women and the assurance of a proper investigation so that the surviving comfort women could get the justice they deserve.

Official investigations were made into the situation, but as the documents surfaced and more and more comfort women reveal themselves, the truth was evident. This led to various Japanese government officials like the Prime Minister at the time, and the government itself issuing apologies throughout 1992 (Soh). Before the Prime Minister's apology, smaller social movements, a surge of supporters, and the former comfort women and their families came together to create a larger organization and named themselves called Korean Council for Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan, or the Korean Council for short. The non-governmental

organization was created in March of 1992 (Soh). The Korean Council started peaceful protests across from the Japanese embassy every Wednesday in 1992 to express their frustrations and demand recognition by not only from the Japanese government but by the world as well (Ahn). These protests still continue to this day, every Wednesday at noon (Ahn). This became famously known as the Wednesday Demonstrations and was named the world's oldest rally with a single theme by Guinness Book of Records (Limon). After the conclusion of the official investigation, in August of 1993, the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono made his famous statement to sum it all up:

“Undeniably, this was an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere and remorse to all...who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.”

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

The Kono statement became the turning point of Japan's amends for the comfort women as this was the first time a government official as outwardly apologized about the comfort women issue. At that point, Japan seems to have finally recognized the crimes committed against the comfort women after decades of hiding official documents and denying the claims. Yet, after this, not too much was done. In spite of the statement and apologies, Japan did not end up taking on other responsibilities for aspects involving the comfort women issues although it tried to tackle some of the issues.

Eventually, Japan started to take its first step to “try” to amend with the South Korean to fix some of the issues they have failed to recognize in the past. This included apprehending those

that got away for the crimes against the women, reparations to the surviving comfort women, compensation for the financial assistance for the surviving comfort women, and appropriate inclusion of the events in Japanese textbooks. In 1994, the Korean Council drew together a list of charges against those who and the list of requests for the Public Prosecutor of the Tokyo District at that time (“COMPLAINT”). The first request was to further look for the facts around the ‘Military Comfort Women’ issue (“COMPLAINT”). The Korean Council wanted an official investigation to be done and properly. It was best to not only look for more official documents in case they were to “disappear” but to gather all of the stories of the former comfort women while possible too. This was essential especially since most of the comfort women left were reaching old age or passing away. The surviving comfort women wanted the truth as well as their stories be known to the world after decades of remaining silent.

The second request was for NGOs and the United Nations. They stated that Japan had to work not only with international human right NGOs but with the United Nations and other international organizations in order to resolve what they called the ‘Military Comfort Women’ issue (“COMPLAINT”). The second request highlights the importance of international networking in order to resolve issues in which more than one country would connect to other countries affected by the Japanese Imperial Army. Not to mention, since this was an international crime, the international community and organizations should be involved, to some degree, with the investigation, and the investigation and information surrounding it should be made aware to the public in order to prevent history from repeating itself.

Since their history was ignored for decades, the surviving comfort women wanted historical recognition. The third request was for the accurate education in school and for the public as well as for the publication of the history of the comfort women and their stories

("COMPLAINT"). This request was not only for the Japanese youth to learn accurate history but to further understand one of the reasons the relationship between South Korea and Japan tends to be tense (Oi). The third request wants the truth to be taught to the Japanese, and a lesson for the world so that this atrocity would never happen again.

Proper aid and assistance to the survivors were mentioned as well. The fourth request was the support for the surviving victims ("COMPLAINT"). When the women that found their way back or returned back to South Korea, they were faced with humiliation and ostracizing. South Korean women at the time were expected to marry and have kids. Since the comfort women were raped, they were seen in their society as "unfit" for marriage (Orreill). Moreover, the abuse and diseases that affected these women prevented them living a healthy life or from having children (Orreill). Most lived without the aid of family members, though many sought refuge in group homing for former comfort women (Williamson). The surviving comfort women did not realize the struggles coming home after an unspeakable experience.

With that in mind, along with the societal difficulties the women faced, the Korean Council made a final request. It was for the compensations and fund raising for financial assistance of the surviving women ("COMPLAINT"). Many of the women had no financial means and sometimes no family to help them as they grow older and need more help in their daily lives. Also, the abuse these women underwent caused lifelong physical and psychological damage in which medication is needed as well as the funds to pay for the medication. These were the goals that the Korean Council set out for as they protested and sought out international allies.

In response to the Korean Council's protests and their letter to the Public Prosecutor, the Japanese government put forth an organization that would attend to the needs of the surviving

comfort women. The organization was called *Kokumin Kikin* (“People’s or National Fund”) in Japanese, which is also known as the Asian Women’s Fund, or AWF, in English (Soh). The AWF would bring in private funds and fundraising and use the money to give as compensation to the surviving comfort women (Murayama). They did projects based on other countries affected by the Japanese Imperial Army, including the Netherlands for some of their women were taken during the time where Dutch colonies became Japanese (Murayama). Yet, the Korean Council was not satisfied. They felt that the Asian Women’s Fund received funds from private donors, meaning that the Japanese government was not paying for their compensation and, thus, the Japanese government was not owning up to their crimes (Soh). Although this turned out to be not true because though private funds went to AWF, the Japanese government was “financially responsible for the operation of the fund” (Soh). Nonetheless, the apology and creation of Asian Women’s Fund with its compensation did not stop the Korean Council from protesting every Wednesday.

The Korean Council’s movement brought members at a domestic level and at a international level to come together to testify against another nation. This can also be related to Caniglia’s and Carmin’s theory on networking. Caniglia and Carmin both believe that networks “establish a means by which information and ideas are communicated.” (204). People can pass on methods of protesting or ways of gaining supporters that were effective or not to other groups and organizations. Improving upon one’s social movement could mean the success or failure of the movement or an organization. In addition, with passing along information to other groups, social organizations also connect and bring along more members for their cause. They view networking as a resource for recruiting new members and supporters for social movements (Caniglia and Carmin 204). Not only did was the Korean Council made up of smaller

organizations from other social organizations and movements, but its origin could even be rooted to the networking of Matsui and Professor Yun. Moreover, the help of the Japanese history professor, Yashimi, found the documentations after Kim's international testimony that placed Japan in a position to no longer deny the truth. He gave the Korean Council, as well as the surviving comfort women, an upper hand in pushing for the Japanese government to meet their demands and for the recognition of their crimes. Networking gave the Korean Council a foundation and the support group needed to kick start its organization.

Accompanying the international and national networking of the Korean Council are their connections and alliance with the United Nations and other international organizations to help push Japan for its cooperation. Organizations like the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Commission on the Status of Women, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Economic and Social Council, and Committee Against Torture have all issued reports on Japan on the comfort women issue ("Fact Sheet on Japanese Military 'Comfort Women'"). Along with their reports, they also highly recommended that Japan should do some, if not all, of the demands the survivors have asked for ("Fact Sheet on Japanese Military 'Comfort Women'"). This was a big push forward for the Korean Council because the investigations and reports of these international organizations meant that the world took the accounts of the surviving comfort women seriously and wanted the Korean Council to succeed. Moreover, allies essential to Japan and other countries have pressured Japan to comply with the demands of the surviving comfort women (Sang-Hun and Peace Boat). Japan's allies were not going to condone ignoring horrid crimes done against the women and not listening to their international counterparts could mean relation troubles for Japan. International pressure forced

Japan to take the demands of the surviving comfort women more seriously because they knew the whole world was watching Japan's every move.

Furthermore, networking brought a unity among the countries affected by the Japanese Imperial Army. One of the most recent was the 12th Asian Solidarity Conference for the Issue of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan in Tokyo, Japan from May 31st to June 3rd of 2014 (Peace Boat). They state that though the United Nations and other international organizations have recommended that Japan should acknowledge the comfort women issue, the Japanese government has continued to ignore them and the resolutions passed by "various national parliaments" around the world (Peace Boat). Comfort women survivors and supporters from South Korea, China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Timor Leste, and the Netherlands created an international conference to create their own resolution to present to Japan (Peace Boat). This would show Japan that people are still fighting for the comfort women, especially in places like South Korea.

The conference was also an important opportunity to connect and use individual skills and resources. People from these countries and organizations met with NGOs, legal and policy makers, Japanese parliamentarians, media during the time span of the conference (Peace Boat). The conference is highly significant because not only is this a non-violent solution to the Japanese government's reaction, but it is a network. Plethora of people from different backgrounds and specialties are working with the former comfort women, social organizations, and supporters. Working with those who are skilled in a variety of areas brings a vast amount of knowledge and experience, which can be used to do things like build stronger cases against Japan and push for policies that will aid the comfort women. Also, organizations like the Korean Council would be able to improve upon their groups as well as gain more members. People are a

valuable resource to use for organizations in order for them to progress and reach their goal as a group.

During the three-day conference, all of the social organizations, supporters, surviving comfort and countries came up with a resolution. This resolution brought another voice to the demands of the surviving comfort women because the document was created by other surviving comfort women from other countries affected by the Japanese Imperial Army besides the Korean Council. Also, the conference has brought everyone together to create a document for the Japanese government made by grass root organizations. The resolution called out the Abe Administration, which they felt has intervened in how Japan and Japanese history is perceived in their history books and media (“Resolution”). Meddling with history would be “attempting to turn back history” on the comfort women issue (“Resolution”). Shinzo Abe is the current Prime Minister of Japan, and he has stated in the past that no further apology or work is needed since the Kono Statement in 1993, which has sparked a lot of international and national backlash (ARIRANG NEWS). These countries and groups came together to empower each other to demand change from the reluctant Japanese government through the aid of networking.

As a result of their teamwork and connecting, they formed a list for goals for Japan to commit to and goals for these groups. They placed a list of demands that they wanted the Japanese government fulfill such as complying with the recommendation of the United Nations and to strengthen their efforts to resolve the comfort women issue to the best of their abilities (“Resolution”). Additionally, they made a pledge for all those who participate in a resolution to follow to carry on the awareness of the history of the comfort women, the activeness geared towards promoting that demands are met, and much more (“Resolution”). When international organizations, like the United Nations, do not place the pressure needed to make change,

networking enables grass root organizations and countries affected by the Japanese to work together to overcome the social injustices and bring change.

Individuals and organization continuously and regularly participate in the Wednesday protests to show their support in helping the Korean Council and the surviving comfort women. Many of these people and groups come from other countries to work with the Korean Council and show their support and assistance. In a video called *Nihongun "ianfu" mondai no kaiketsu wo negatte*, which roughly translates to "Hoping for a Solution to the Japanese Military 'Comfort Women' Issue", an American women's organization joins South Koreans to show their support and solidarity for the comfort women issue (okamura keisuke). The American women showed their alliance by creating a flag for their organization that used the same colors as the official colors representing the comfort women issue (okamura keisuke). Although the Wednesday Demonstrations started years ago, the Korean Council, the fight of the surviving comfort women, and protests still provide encouragement for other social movements around the world to tackle issues. Moreover, these organizations are being influenced by the methods of the Korean Council and their courage to overcome the injustice committed by another country. Despite Japan's difficult cooperation throughout the years, the Korean Council's use of non-violent and use of networking has strengthened their movement.

Between the Wednesday Demonstrations and the various meetings going underway, the Korean Council and surviving comfort women will not stop their fight for their demands to be met. Even though they have oftentimes been met with hardship, the Korean Council has overcome obstacles and gain international support through their methods of nonviolence. They have never used force during their protesting and have obtained more support because of it. Andrew Walder believes that the success of a social movement depends on the kind: non-

violent protests are more likely to generate “sympathy and external support” (403). It is the mindset that if people see a peaceful and cooperating organization seeking change, the Korean Council, up against an oppressive force, the Japanese government, then more people would appeal to the Korean Council.

Having more appeal would thus lead to more supporters and collaborating organizations, both domestically and internationally. This happens because if the Korean Council did use violent tactics to protest the Japanese, then the Korean Council would be met with international, and domestic, backlash (Walder 403). Not to mention that any repression from the Japanese government would seem acceptable to some part of the public eye (Walder 403). Hence, the Korean Council’s tactics of non-violence has gained its organization the advantage it needs to sway Japan into due to its massive number of support and alliances with international and national communities.

The continuation of the protests and conferences are essential because the Japanese government has not been cooperating with the Korean Council or any other organization pertaining to the comfort women. Since the Kono statement in 1992, Japan has done little of anything else to aid the surviving comfort women besides the compensations (Nozaki). Moreover, the Asian Women’s Fund closed down in 2007 after they had felt they had done all that they could have done (Murayama). Therefore, funds are no longer given out to the surviving comfort women around the world anymore (Murayama). Therefore, international communities, like the creation of the Asian Solidarity Conference, and the Korean Council’s Wednesday Demonstrations keep pushing reminders at Japan that the survivors are still not pleased with the results.

Even after the release of stories by the comfort women and the military documents, many Japanese people still do not believe the claims. A lawmaker in Japan stated that the “comfort women ‘were prostitutes by occupation’ and that the people have been ‘heavily misled by propaganda work treating them as if they were victims’” (Snyder). Even though the lawmaker was forced to apologize for his statement, many Japanese share similar views on the comfort women matter (Snyder). Some people go off of the fact that these were called “comfort women” and were paid, though they barely saw the money, to believe there is evidence to the claim that the survivors are faking their experiences (“Fact Sheet on Japanese Military ‘Comfort Women’”). The “payment” is mistaken for the fact that comfort women were “paid” but the money was always confiscated to repay debts that they never had as well as pay for “living expenses (“Fact Sheet on Japanese Military ‘Comfort Women’”). It is not just citizens believing the severity of the comfort women issue but higher officials, like Prime Minister Abe, as stated before, showed no interest in the comfort women issue (ARRIRANG NEWS). His attitude towards the subject conveyed almost a national lack of interest in it and, therefore, Japan would not hold up its end of the Korean Council’s demands.

Therefore, not all reparations that were asked for still not have been met. The Korean Council’s request for an accurate depiction of what happened to the comfort women in Japan during World War II in school textbooks have been ignored (Williamson). By 1997, (Nozaki). For example, one said “[M]any women, such as Korean women, were sent to the front as comfort women serving in the war” (Nozaki). The author from where the previous quote derived from defends the vague sentence by saying that it is “a legitimate window through which teachers can students could address the issue in classrooms” (Nozaki). This is actually a problem because it relies upon teachers and faculty to dive into the complex history of the comfort

women, which is something that not school can enforce. Not to mention that the vague sentence ignores the hardships, pain, and that the comfort women had to endure for so long because of the Japanese.

Furthermore, some attribute the lack of talking about the war atrocities committed by the Japanese to the large exam they must take to get into a good high school or university. Japanese history is covered on these exams, and the students “have no time to dwell on a few pages of war atrocities” (Oi). Saying that Japanese students must only focus on the “historic importance” in Japanese history while leaving out other bits of history means that atrocities, like the comfort women system, are then not “important” in Japanese history, which is hinting that the Japanese system focuses on nationalistic views rather than the facts. As one university student puts it they “learn what happened a long time ago, like the samurai era” (Oi). A former history teacher and scholar, Tamaki Matsuoka, commented on how the Japanese educational system made “young people who get annoyed” with what China and South Korea keep talking about war atrocities because “they are not taught what they are complaining about” (Oi). She is worried because many young people then “resort to the internet to get more information and they start believing nationalists’ views that Japan did nothing wrong” (Oi). The lack of information taught in schools leads to this cycle of misinformation.

Argument over the textbooks in Japan and what they are teaching convey why it has been so difficult for the surviving comfort women to meet their demand. There are even history book publishers in Japan, and approved by the Japanese government, who believe that atrocities like the comfort women issue does not exist. One such is Mobukatsu Fojioke, who believes that that the comfort women “were paid prostitutes” and that the Rape of Nanjing in China was “fabricated” and China hired actors and actresses pretending to be victims (Oi). One scholar

states that Fujioka believes that the “inclusion of ‘lies’ in history books...is acceptable for certain purposes, for instance, to make the story ‘colorful’.” (Nozaki). Fujioka has even gone as far to say that “[t]o write [a history] based only on verified truths...[it] insipid and dry” and felt that he “had no choice but to write from my own imagination to a great extent.” (Nozaki). He, like other historians and government officials like Prime Minister Abe, want to write about a past “that children can be proud of” (Oi). With ideology like that makes it difficult to change when many still believe that the comfort women issues, among other, do not matter in the history and learning of people. This gives fuel for the Korean Council who will continue to fight for their demands until they are met to their approval.

Decades long fight may be discouraging but the Korean Council has still kept fighting. Yet, there is a fear of losing personal stories and the motivation to keep protesting as the surviving Korean comfort women get older and are starting to pass away (Williamson). The most recent article to date talks about the number of surviving comfort women left state that 44 of the 238 South Korean women that came forth are still alive (Padden). Yet, old age does not stop these women. During an interview, one survivor recounted a time when a reporter asked her if she was tired with travel from telling her story so often: “I am a soldier fighting our battle, I cannot afford to get tired.” (WilsonHoang VIETTV). These women feel like they cannot give up the fight to be heard and to receive proper act towards true amendments by Japan, like the comfort women issue being told accurately and without bias. Surviving comfort women still hold interviews with various news stations like the BBC and still attend events like the Asian Solidarity Conference and the Wednesday Demonstrations (Williamson, Peace Boat). It has not stopped surviving comfort women like Gil Won-Ok, who “delivered 1.3 million signatures urging the Secretariat of the UN Human Rights Council to act” on the comfort women’s behalf,

from taking international action into their own hands (Ahn). These women have been the driving force of organizations like the Korean Council and have empowered other to strive for the truth and change in the face of adversary.

The Korean Council's connections and endless fighting did cause some sort of change during recent years. On December 28th, 2015, Prime Minister Abe finally made an apology to the surviving comfort women after ignoring the pleas of the international community and to the protesting of the Korean Council (Sang-Hun). His apology came with a compensation of what is about \$8.3 million in USD for the care of the surviving comfort women (Sang-Hun). Some of the surviving comfort women welcomed the apology and compensation with the finalized deal while others saw the compensation as an insult for a sensitive issue and would not be silenced by money (Kishmore). However, what adds more to the frustration is that some say that the Prime Minister Abe and South Korean President Park held negotiations on the surviving comfort women's behalf without their consent (Padden). Angry that their message was still not getting across, the women were not afraid to take action as 12 surviving women filed a lawsuit against the South Korean government later in 2016 (Jiji). The lawsuit was for the South Korean government for signing a deal with Japan even though they refuse to "acknowledge formal legal responsibility" (Jiji). The women asked for about \$90, 000 for compensation (Jiji). Although they asked for compensation, the act of the lawsuit conveys the disapproval for the actions taken for them when the surviving comfort women were not aware. Even when government officials believe they are helping, does not mean they have a right to speaking for the oppressed.

South Korea and Asian women have a strong position in the role of organizations and support for the comfort women. Although non-Asian women, like the Dutch, were kidnapped and underwent similar abuses as comfort women, when the comfort women's issue came to light,

they were not center stage. Since the majority of comfort women were Asian, it would make sense that highly held organizations like the Korean Council that worked with international communities would give credit to the people in charge: Asian women (Oreill). The Wednesday Demonstrations and conferences like the 12th Asian Solidarity Conference were started by Asian comfort women and Asian-organized organization though they have always been inclusive with international supporters (okamura keisuke and Peace Boat). International ties are essential for the battle against injustice, but countries, like South Korea, can still remain in charge during the fight; their fight for change does not become anyone else's and, thus, they are able to keep their sovereignty as an organization.

The Korean Council has brought hope to domestic as well as international organizations fighting for change. Even decades after being forced into oppression and silence, the surviving comfort women found their voice and will to fight through networking. Matsui's and Professor Yun's meeting and research on the comfort women issue brought in the support, and supporters, needed for Kim to feel encouraged enough to voice her story as a former comfort woman. The Korean Council had international organizations like the United Nations accessible at hand for helping in pressuring the Japanese to comply with them. Furthermore, the Korean Council's non-violent tactics through the use of protesting and peaceful gatherings for meetings and conferences have brought international aid and swapping of human resources and intel, but they have also gathered empathy and worldwide news coverage. Even though Japan has made the process to getting respected, recognized, and their demands fulfilled difficult, the Korean Council's use of non-violence and networking granted them allies, information, and connections that will allow the truth of the comfort women to never go diminished.

Appendix



Figure 1: A map of the Japanese Empire from 1870 until 1942

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