

**Construction and Contestation of Collective Memory of WWII in Japan:
Victimhood, Aggression, and War Responsibility toward Asia**

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Introduction

In 1993, Japanese Prime Minister Hosokawa acknowledged Japan's war responsibility in Asia for the first time after the end of the Pacific War in 1945. In other words, the Japanese government had been reluctant to officially admit its wartime actions for 48 years. Japan's wartime responsibility includes the sexual slavery of "comfort women" by the Japanese imperial army and compulsory taking of not only Asian people but also English and Australian prisoners for construction of railroad for the war.¹ Specifically, up to 200,000 young girls and women in colonized Korea and elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific islands, including China, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia, were forced to engage in sexual services for Japanese soldiers during the war (Soh, 2004).² In the "Rape of Nanking," the Japanese army slaughtered, mutilated and raped 300,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians including women and children (Buruma, 1994).³ Significantly, Japan's war responsibility involves not only the atrocities of the Japanese military during the war, but also the brutal acts of Japanese colonialism, extending back to Taiwan in 1895, Korea in 1910, Manchuria in 1931, and further expansion in China and in Southeast Asia (Field, 1995). For example, Japanese military forcibly drafted Asian people to fight for Japan during the war. Also, the Japanese exploited Southeast Asians, including Indonesians, Malays, Thais, Burmese, Vietnamese, and Filipinos, and seized raw materials as rapaciously and ruthlessly as "the worst of the white colonialists" while Japan

¹ Asahi Shimbun, 1993, p.6.

² More than 80 percent of them are said to have been Korean women (Tsutsui, 2006).

³ In the middle of December 1937, the Japanese army's capture of Nanking, the capital of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, was greeted in Japan with nationwide celebration. According to Buruma, "Japanese Army officers allowed their men to run amok" for six weeks, during which at least 20,000 to 80,000 women between the ages of nine and seventy-five were raped and murdered by the Japanese army (Buruma, 1994).

emphasized that they liberated Asians from the European colonial powers (James, 1986: 714).

The memory ingrained before and during the war has colored the perception of Asian people about Japan so strongly and deeply that people in the region still view Japan with distrust and suspicion. The core of Asian people's negative perception about Japan lies in its inability to come to terms with the past. Although Japanese Prime Ministers began to acknowledge Japan's wartime actions since 1993, some Japanese officials have still denied the wrongs done before and during the war. For instance, some deny the occurrence of the Rape of Nanking⁴ and others refuse to even recognize the existence of comfort women.⁵ Moreover, some government leaders and ministers, even after 1993, visited the Yasukuni Shrine which houses the souls of Japanese who died for the Emperor including those of Class A war criminals. Given that Yasukuni Shrine is a symbol of the Japanese imperial militarism, Japanese leaders' visiting of this Shrine suggests that Japanese government fails to fully acknowledge wartime responsibility.

Then, why it took so long, half a century, for the Japanese government to acknowledge its wartime actions? Why did the Japanese government begin to admit its war responsibility in 1993? Why however has the Japanese government been still reluctant to fully come to terms with the past even after it acknowledged its responsibility? I argue that

⁴ For example, in 1994, then Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano called the Nanking Massacre a "fabrication." He was forced to resign by Tsutomu Hata, the Prime Minister at that time (Ogawa, 2000). Recently, a Lower House member from Miyazaki Prefecture also openly claimed that the Nanking Massacre was a "pure fabrication" (The Japan Times, March 11, 2007).

⁵ The Japanese government, for the first time, acknowledged the existence of comfort women in 1992, when historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki discovered several official documents that showed that the imperial army was involved in both establishing and operating sexual slavery system for Japanese soldiers. Since then, the Japanese government began to reluctantly acknowledge the wartime actions (Ogawa, 2000). However, recently, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe denied the Japanese government's involvement in sexual slavery during the War (The New York Times, March 6, 2007).

coherence and contestation of collective memory inform the ways in which the Japanese state construct its identity and deal with the past and foreign relations. I argue that the Japanese state was unable to admit war responsibility, offering a public apology because the domestic collective memory of victimhood, which was constructed by the Japanese state in the context of U.S. bombing and the Cold War, was so stable and widely spread that it constituted Japan's state identity as a victim, constraining the Japanese state's action possibility for acknowledging its past. I also argue that international context has a significant impact on construction and contestation of collective memory. I suggest that contestation of collective memory of Japan was stimulated by international impact, which eventually allowed the Japanese state to acknowledge its wartime actions in 1993. I argue that competing accounts of the past, with fluid, multiple nature of collective memory when contested, gives a room for multiple, conflictual identities to operate when dealing with the past.

The questions addressed in this paper are significant because although much research has addressed Japan's war legacy and the issue of apology, it has seldom systematically explored the question of *why* Japan has been reluctant to acknowledge war responsibility, from a theoretically comprehensive perspective. Rather, much research is skewed towards descriptive and normative analyses (Dower, 1993; Buruma, 1994; Field, 1995; Ogawa, 2000; Schalow, 2000). For example, one stream of research done so far has focused on Japan's atrocities and cruelties committed before and during the war, which involves Nanking Massacre, comfort women, and the Unit 731 which conducted experiments and research program on biological and chemical warfare, including vivisection, on Chinese prisoners (Hicks, 1997; Kristof, 1998). This line of research

focuses on what Japan *did* to its Asian neighbors and what kind of attitudes and positions the Japanese governments have taken in dealing with the past. On the other hand, the existing research highlights a normative dimension of the issue of taking war responsibility and making a public apology. For example, studies suggest that Japan *should* apologize because justice should be established. Also, studies suggest that Japan *should* take war responsibility if Japan wishes to assume a more active role in Asia as well as in the world by serving on the UN Security Council as a permanent member (Ogawa, 2000; Singh, 2002). In spite of the importance of establishing normative justice, however, it has been a puzzle why it took so long for the Japanese government to acknowledge its wartime actions and why it is still reluctant to come to terms with the past.

This paper is organized as follows. In the first section, I present theoretical background and significance of this paper from the perspective of constructivist account of state identity. In the second section, I discuss method and data employed in this paper. I use discourse analysis as a primary method and analyze speeches of Japanese leaders, the Emperor and Prime Ministers, by examining Asahi Shimbun from 1945 to 2005. The third section offers preliminary findings, which provides three distinctive phases that pertain to construction and contestation of collective memory of victimhood and aggression of Japan. The fourth section will attempt to link the theoretical context and the empirical findings. I conclude this paper with some accounts of limitation of this paper.

1. Theoretical Background, Gap and Significance

I situate my research primarily in the constructivist IR literature, especially state identity literature. Specifically, I draw on three dimensions of state identity scholarship, which

include bridging the domestic and international divide in constructing state identity, collective memory as a site for struggles over identity, and the importance of actors and subcultures in conceptualizing domestic culture.

1) State Identity: Bridging the Domestic and International Divide

An expanding literature in International Relations (IR), especially constructivism, has explored the notion of state identity in relation to foreign policy by suggesting that state identities constitute state interests and policies (Wendt, 1992, 1994; Klotz, 1995, 2004; Klotz and Smith, 2007; Katzenstein, 1996a; Jepperson et al., 1996; Weldes, 1996; Bukovansky, 1997; Berger, 1998; Hopf, 2002). Although identity scholarship generally agrees on the linear relationship between state identities, interests and foreign policies, the literature emphasizes either domestic or international dimension in terms of the construction of state identities. One stream of literature emphasizes the external, international, or “systemic” dimension of state identity formation (Wendt, 1992, 1994; Klotz, 1995; Bukovansky, 1997; Weldes, 1999; Neumann, 1999). For example, Wendt (1994) argues that the systemic process has an impact on collective identity formation of the state through the transnational convergence of domestic values. He assumes that states are qualitatively homogeneous entities, paying less attention to domestic factors. The literature that emphasizes the external aspect highlights that states are located in the international system and that identities vary according to changes in the external context.

In contrast, the other strain of identity literature highlights the internal or domestic dimension of state identity construction (Johnston, 1995; Katzenstein, 1996b; Berger, 1998; Hopf, 2002). Scholars in this camp have suggested that domestic norms and culture

provide legal, institutional framework, which in turn constitute state identities, interests and foreign policies. For example, Katzenstein (1996b) and Berger (1998) illustrate that Japan's security policies have been grounded in cultural norms of antimilitarism after Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, which have offered institutional conditions by which Japanese decision-makers have been bounded in constructing state interests and policies.

It should be noted that each stream of the literature recognizes the importance of the other. For example, literature that emphasizes a domestic side recognizes the importance of the external dimension and the literature that pays attention to the international system acknowledges the relevance of the domestic context. However, primacy is given to one dimension vis-à-vis the other one. Interaction between the two dimensions in constructing state identities and formulating foreign policies are left unclear. As Klotz and Smith (2007) have recently provided sophisticated models of interactions between two arenas, the ways in which domestic and international realms are bridged need to be taken seriously in studying construction of state identity. Thus, my paper attempts to bridge the international and domestic divide.

2) Collective Memory as Cites for Struggles over Identity

Until recently, IR scholars including constructivists have not yet rigorously incorporated the notion of collective memory in its theoretical framework although collective memory has been examined in other disciplines including anthropology, sociology, history, and geography (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Olick, 1999; Igarashi, 2000; Ogawa, 2000; Forsberg, 2001; Phillips, 2004; Schwartz and Heinrich, 2004; Winter, 2006). Very recently, however, IR scholars began to pay attention to the concept of collective memory in understanding

world politics (Bartelson, 2006; Bell, 2006; Berger, 2007; Bleiker and Hoang, 2006; Fierke, 2006; Zehfuss, 2006).

In general, scholars agree that collective memory of the past is a social construct. Collective memory refers to representations of the past (Berger, 2007), shared understanding of history which creates social solidarity (Bell, 2006), which cannot be reducible to individual psychological processes (Olick, 1999). Although scholars have suggested that collective memory refers to a shared understanding of the past, this does not necessarily mean that collective memory is homogeneous or monolithic. Rather, scholars have suggested that memory practices involve *contestation* over identity as sites of ongoing political struggles (Olick and Robbins, 1998; Bell, 2006; Berger, 2007; Bleiker and Hoang, 2006; Phillips, 2004; Zehfuss, 2006). In other words, a memory site is where diverging narratives of the past compete with one other. For example, Berger (2007) notes that “collective memory is contested terrain, battles over the past” (184). Similarly, Phillips (2004) suggests that memory is “conceived in terms of multiple, diverse, mutable, and *competing* accounts of past events” (emphasis added) (2). He notes that the struggle over remembering and forgetting involves “the question of whose memories are inscribed into the broader public and whose are not” (5). Concerning public nature of collective memory, Forsberg (2001) notes that while “individuals may have only little conscious choice in their ability to remember or forget certain events or experiences, it is clearly possible for collectives to choose what is publicly remembered and what is forgotten” (60).

What makes the scholarship of collective memory more dynamic is that scholars have suggested that collective memory about the past still actively exists in the present rather than disappearing as a past (Bell, 2006; Berger, 2007; Bleiker and Hoang, 2006;

Fierke, 2006; Olick and Robbins, 1998; Olick, 1999). Bleiker and Hoang (2006), for example, have suggested that multiple narratives of the past exist in the present, which can be extended to multiple futures. In this view, collective memory can be distinguished from history which is viewed as implying “a singular and authentic account of the past” (Phillips, 2004: 2). In fact, scholars have pointed out that collective memory is central to identity (Bell, 2006; Berger, 2007; Bartelson, 2006), which means that collective memory actively forges identity in the present. Bell (2006) notes that it is important to understand “the way in which competing narratives of past experiences will continue to shape conflictual identities” (20). Importantly, just as identity scholarship has suggested that state identities are socially constructed with an emphasis on fluid, multiple features of identities (Neumann, 1999; Callahan, 2004; Klotz, 2004; Abdelal et al., 2006; Klotz and Smith, 2007), the literature on collective memory also highlights that the core of collective memory involves the fluid, multiple, arbitrary, and transitory nature, as well as its dynamic process. Also, contestation is another shared theoretical assumption of identity scholarship and collective memory scholarship. Abdelal et al. (2006) have proposed that contestation is a process of identity construction.⁶ Then, competing accounts of past events and contestation of collective memory can usefully be incorporated into the state identity literature.

Although literature in constructivist IR began to pay attention to the notion of collective memory as a source of identity, it has not yet specified in what way the notion of collective memory can be incorporated into IR theory. Moreover, although burgeoning literature has suggested the link between collective memory and identities, it has seldom

⁶ Contestation refers to “the degree of agreement within a group over the content of the shared category” (Abdelal et al., 2006: 695).

tacked the ways in which collective memory has an impact on state behavior. Additionally, while collective memory literature has demonstrated the existence of competing narratives, it has seldom grappled how such competing narratives have been constructed and when collective memory becomes contested. In this paper, I seek to examine the ways in which collective memory is constructed and contested in the case of Japan's victimhood and aggression.

3) Actors and Subcultures

As I discussed earlier, the literature of state identity, which emphasizes domestic dimension, has suggested that domestic culture and norms inform domestic source of state identity, which in turn informs the range of possible actions that the state can take in dealing with foreign relations (Katzenstein, 1996b; Jepperson et al., 1996; Weldes, 1996; Berger, 1998; Hopf, 2002; Klotz and Smith: 2007). Domestic culture in many cases has been rather treated as a somewhat homogenizing force. Culture, however, can be viewed as being composed of subcultures which are sometimes conflicting and competing. For example, Bateson (1997) argues that contrasting, dissonant themes coexist in a culture which still provides a set of normative values as "a given axis in which alternatives may be formulated" (40). In fact, some scholars have suggested that the notion of culture does not necessarily imply a homogenizing, single force (Verweij et al., 1998).

Moreover, although existing identity literature has expanded our understanding of the extent to which domestic sources have an impact on the construction of state identities and foreign policies, studies in most cases tend to equate cultural norms with *legal*, *institutional* domestic structure, paying less attention to domestic *actors*. To put it

differently, prioritizing the legal, institutional framework tends to neglect actors involved in the process of identity construction, thus rendering domestic source of identity static rather than dynamic.

Adler (2002) has suggested that “not only leaders of states, but also other state and non-state actors bargain about who gets to impose meanings on material realities and thus to socially construct the situation in their own image” (110). Similarly, as I discussed previously, Phillips (2004) has noted that “whose memories are inscribed into the broader public” (5) needs to be taken seriously. These accounts then raise the importance of actors in constituting domestic culture. Indeed, struggles over collective memory and meaning can add to our understanding of domestic culture and subcultures. Thus, recognizing the domestic dynamic process which is still linked to the international context, in which actors are involved, can broaden our understanding of the lively aspect of culture beyond the legal, institutional framework. Considered together, I examine the ways in which collective memory has been constructed and contested with a particular emphasis on the linkage between international and domestic realms and the role of actors and subcultures. I also explore ways in which collective memory informs state interest and state actions regarding Japan’s war responsibility toward Asia.

2. Methods and Data

I use discourse analysis as a primary method to address the questions raised in this paper.⁷ Discourse is representations of reality through which knowledge is produced (Neumann, 2005; Dunn, 2005). The central focus of discourse analysis is to analyze language to examine how meaning is created as a system of relations. Thus analyzing language used

⁷ I will also employ interviews and public survey data to supplement this method later.

for a targeted audience can allow me to delineate relations of speakers and audience.

Moreover, collective nature of remembering takes place in and through language, narrative, and dialogue. Thus, language itself can be seen as “a memory system” (Olick, 1999: 343).

For this paper, in particular, I examined Asahi Shimbun, one of the major newspapers in Japan, to investigate the ways in which collective memory has been constructed and contested.⁸ Specifically, I restrict my analysis to examining speeches of the Japanese Emperor and Prime Ministers which have been delivered on the anniversary of the end of the war, August 15th. The reason that I have chosen to analyze the Emperor’s speeches will be detailed in the subsequent discussion.⁹ Analyzing speeches of leaders will enable me to look at whether leaders have used repeated, selective language to frame and justify the notion of a particular memory. Leaders’ speeches can be seen as an activity to construct collective memory and culture in the sense that these speeches are directed at the domestic audience and that language shapes how people see the world, producing public consensus (Collins and Glover 2002). Although I limit my analysis to leaders’ speeches on August 15th, I examine memory of the public by investigating news coverage of Asahi Shimbun about the public’s perception of the war on the same day of the anniversary of the end of the war in order to see whether there has been any gap in perceptions of leaders and the public. The time frame of the research of this paper is from 1945 to 2005. I researched secondary literature to supplement my empirical findings also.

⁸ I collected the data in March 2008 during the Spring Break at the National Diet Library in Tokyo, Japan. Although I limit my analysis to examining Asahi Shimbun for this paper, I will supplement my analysis by investigating different sources of discourse which include government documents, novels and museum archives.

⁹ See pp. 14-15 of this paper.

3. Preliminary Findings

I have found that collective memory of Japan can be categorized into three phases in the postwar era. The Phase 1 is from 1945 to 1981, characterized by coherent collective memory of victimhood. The Phase 2 is from 1982 to 1992, featured by contestation of collective memory of victimhood and aggression between the state and the society in general. The Phase 3 is from 1993 to 2005, which can also be defined as contestation of memory. Although the Phase 2 reveals coherent memory among the Emperor and Prime Ministers which highlighted victimhood of Japan, the Phase 3 shows that there has been contestation even among state actors.

Phase 1: Coherent Collective Memory of Victimhood, 1945-1981

I have found that collective memory of victimhood was present in a coherent way after the Japan's defeat in the war up until 1981. The news coverage of Asahi Shimbun focused on domestic dimension which highlights how Japanese war dead were sacrificed in the war. The Japanese government began to sponsor an annual ceremony at Nippon Budokan Hall in Tokyo on the day of the anniversary of the end of the war on August 15th to mourn the Japanese war dead in 1963. Therefore, the speeches of the Emperor and Prime Ministers are available from 1963. Before then, non-official ceremonies took place in many places in Japan to give condolences to the domestic war victims and to pray for peace. The narrative of victimhood of Japan can best be understood when considered in connection with the international context, which is consistent with my theoretical background of the bridge between international and domestic realms in constructing state identity. I offer an

overview of international context before I analyze the discourse of the speeches of the Emperor and Prime Ministers.

1) International Context

Atomic Bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On July 26, 1945, the U.S., Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union proclaimed the Potsdam Declaration, which demanded Japan the unconditional surrender of all Japanese armed forces. However, it was rejected by the Japanese government two days later. Faced with this rejection, the U.S. government decided to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Igarashi, 2000). The bombing had a devastating effect on Japan, killing 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki (Ogawa, 2000). After experiencing the horrible effect of the atomic bombs, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito decided to end the war by accepting the Potsdam Declaration, with the single condition that the imperial institution would be retained (Igarashi, 2000; Hicks, 1997). The Emperor declared the end of the war on radio on August 15, 1945, and this was the first time in history his voice was heard to common people (Igarashi, 2000). The Japanese cabinet which had directed the war until the last phases was replaced by one headed by Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko, a member of the imperial clan and husband of an aunt of the emperor (Hicks, 1997). The Prince Higashikuni demonstrated to the allies the need to maintain the role of the Imperial House as a guarantee of social stability. Japan was aware of the approach of the Cold War and hoped to turn it to Japan's advantage, and this demand was accepted by MacArthur (Hicks, 1997).

According to Igarashi (2000), the bombing by the U.S. produced a foundational narrative, which highlighted that the United States rescued Japan from the menace of its militarists and that the Japanese Emperor's decision to end the war brought about peace in Japan. The Emperor's decision to end the war was contrary to precedent, because the Emperor had refrained from any initiative to end the war. Igarashi notes that, in creating this narrative, the Japanese government focused on how Emperor Hirohito's intervention in ending the war brought peace and saved people in Japan. Notably, when the Emperor read the rescript announcing the end of the war on radio, he emphasized that innocent civilians had been killed by atomic bombs. His logic was that the Japanese people were the victims of the war and he risked his life to protect them, because if he did not intervene, the Japanese people would be made extinct (Igarashi, 2000). The government leaders created and circulated a narrative that the decision to end the war was due solely to Emperor Hirohito's divine intervention (Igarashi, 2000: 26) or "Emperor's gracious benevolence" (Hicks, 1997: 5). In this way, although the emperor was "more concerned with the fate of the imperial institution than with the devastation of the country" (Igarashi, 2000: 22), he was portrayed as the person who saved Japan from further devastation which might be caused by the continuation of the war.¹⁰

The dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan imparted a victim mentality upon Japan. In fact, studies have shown that Japan's characterization of the war is one-sided, emphasizing Japan's victimhood while repressing the aggression upon Asia (Dower, 1993; Field, 1995; Igarashi, 2000; Ogawa, 2000; Schalow, 2000; Cohen, 2004). Indeed, due to the bombing and the emperor's announcement, the Japanese people have come to perceive Japan primarily as a victim of the Pacific War, not as a perpetrator or aggressor (Ogawa,

¹⁰ In this context, I have decided to analyze the speeches of the Emperor as a leader of Japan.

2000; Schalow, 2000). It is true that the war brought enormous casualties and suffering to Japanese soldiers and citizens. However, the death and suffering endured by other Asians at the hand of the Japanese during the war has been neglected instead.

The Cold War: Shift of the U.S. Policy

While the atomic bombing had an impact on Japan's creation of a domestic narrative of the war at the point of the end of the Pacific War, the Cold War context, which was intensified during the U.S. occupation of Japan, provided another momentum to maintain and strengthen this domestic narrative which focused on Japan's victimization, neglecting its relation with Asia. Indeed, scholars have addressed that it is essential to recognize the role of the U.S. in shaping postwar Japan. Scholars have noted that the reason that the Japanese government has been very reluctant to take responsibility in any concrete way for the suffering of fellow Asians is because the postwar American policies shifted from Japan's democratization to its economic recovery (Dower, 1993; Field, 1995; Hicks, 1997; Schalow, 2000). The so-called reverse course marked the shift of the U.S. policy toward Japan. The core of this policy change lies in the U.S.'s geopolitical interest in the Asian region in the face of contestation with the Soviet Union. And this policy shift was firmly set following the Communist victory in China in 1949 (Hicks, 1997). In the Cold War context, thus, Japan was defined as a "strategic outpost" of the U.S. against communism within a broad framework of the U.S. anticommunist policy. Japan transformed from "savage enemy" to "freedom-loving ally" of the U.S. Instead, the communists were portrayed as the savages who were conspiring to conquer the world (Dower, 1993: 157).

Due to the shift of the U.S. policy, many of the initial democratic reforms did not yield meaningful fruits. For example, at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal following the war, the emperor and many of the war criminals were exempted by being segregated from the military leadership such as General Tojo Hideki (1884-1948) who was sentenced to death (Field, 1995). I have shown that Japan's demand to maintain its imperial system was accepted by MacArthur. The reason that MacArthur accepted the Japanese government's demand and rejected other demands to have Emperor Hirohito brought to trial was because it was regarded that the retention of the imperial system was advantageous to Japanese stability and rehabilitation (Ogawa, 2000; Schalow, 2000). This was thought of essential to confront communism in East Asia, as was expected by the Japanese state. Thus, while the U.S. did try some Japanese leader for war crimes, the nature of reform was eroded by sparing the emperor, the man in whose name the war was fought. Also, the U.S. protected the leaders of Japan's infamous Unit 731 in exchange for data on biological warfare (Hicks, 1997; Kristof, 1998).

Moreover, the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which was signed by Japan and the delegates from 48 countries in September 1951 and which went effect in April 1952, gave priority to Japan's economic rehabilitation and stabilization. This treaty served to officially end World War II and to formally terminate Japan's position as an imperial power. Although it affirmed Japan's obligation to pay material reparations to its former colonies, which was stipulated by the Potsdam Declaration, Japan's economic recovery was considered more important than its democratization. Therefore, only two of the 48 signatory nations reserved their right to demand reparations to Japan. Consequently, although Japan made arrangements for payments with Burma, the Philippines, South

Vietnam, and Indonesia between 1954 and 1959, significant portions of the payment took the form of loans and credit that paved the way for the penetration of Japanese capital, which was crucial for the recovery of Japanese economy. As I noted earlier, the reparation did not make its way down to citizens who suffered greatly by the war (Field, 1995). Additionally, the U.S.'s emphasis on building an alliance against communism had solidified the relationship between the U.S. and Japan. Consequently, the U.S. did not pay much attention to the relationship between Japan and Asian countries, and the suffering of its Asian allies during the Pacific War.

This shows that the Cold War context and the subsequent shift of the U.S. policy toward Japan played a critical role in exempting the Emperor from the war responsibility, rehabilitating prominent war criminals and investing massively in Japanese economic recovery. This can be contrasted with the case of Germany which was forced to confront its past right after the war. For example, victim countries like France and Israel scrutinized every German statement and protested when they are dissatisfied. Unlike Germany, however, Japan was not burdened by a sense of national guilt for its wartime crimes (Ogawa, 2000). Instead, the Cold War context contributed to maintain and intensify the domestic narrative which was produced at the end of the war, emphasizing the notion of Japan's victimhood while repressing Japan's atrocities committed in Asia.

2) Analysis of Discourse

The Speeches of the Emperor Hirohito

The messages that were delivered by Emperor Hirohito provide a consistent theme, without showing any variations or changes in the content from 1963 to 1981.¹¹ I have found two main recurring themes. First, he emphasizes that he feels tremendous pain and sorrow for the Japanese war dead and their families. By expressing emotional baggage, he gives a meaning that he is not a person who has the responsibility of waging the war but a person who is detached from the responsibility. Duffy and Lindstrom (2002) have suggested that leaders unite their constituents emotionally by providing solidary incentives, which include relational goods. Indeed, the Emperor's account united the Japanese people in a way to view themselves as a victim of the war. Also, the very annual presence of the Emperor at the anniversary of the end of the war suggests that he is attending the ceremony as the third person who is not involved in the war. The second theme is that he prays for peace and Japan's prosperity. This gives a meaning that he is not the person who devastated Japan in the war, but the person who brought in peace within Japan. In fact, my analysis supports Igarashi (2000)'s account that the Emperor Hirohito was portrayed as a person who brought in peace and saved Japanese people from the war when Japan was defeated in 1945. The Emperor's mourning toward Japanese war dead reinforces the memory of victimhood of Japan.

The Speeches of Prime Ministers

I have found three main recurring themes which focus on victimhood of Japan from the speeches of Prime Ministers as a whole irrespective of individual Prime Ministers. First, Prime Ministers consistently emphasized that Japan's prosperity and peace were built on the sacrifices of Japanese war dead. Second, Prime Ministers expressed condolences to

¹¹ In fact, the messages sent out by the Emperor have been consistent throughout the postwar era from 1963 to the present.

domestic war victims. The first and the second themes suggest that the discourse of Prime Ministers focus on how Japan was victimized and devastated in the war. The third theme is that Japan will work toward world peace. Put together, the end of the war, war victims, and peace are conceptualized in a linear term.

The speeches suggest that the Japanese leaders, including the Emperor and Prime Ministers, highlight the memory of victimhood and construct a one-sided memory and culture. What is obvious is that victim mentality was so persistent that there was no single indication about Japan's role as an aggressor in Asia. They used repeated, selective language such as "sorrow", "pain" "sacrifices" of domestic war dead. This is consistent with Duffy and Lindstrom (1992)'s notion of elite's manipulation of social representations. Their silence on Japan's wartime actions in Asia reinforces the memory of victimization. In the Phase 1, domestic society as well as leaders features the memory of victimhood. Domestic civic organizations also expressed mourning toward Japanese war victims.

Phase 2: Contested Memory of Victimhood and Aggression, 1982-1992

The Phase 2, from 1982 to 1992, demonstrates contestation of collective memory of victimhood and aggression. Although the Phase 1 illustrates stable memory of victimhood at both the state and the society levels, the Phase 2 reveals that there were diverse voices raised from the society, which addressed Japan's role as an aggressor and its war responsibility. Another important fact in this Phase is that the Emperor Hirohito, who waged the war, passed away in 1989 and his son Akihito became the Emperor of Japan.

1) International Context

What inspired the contestation of domestic collective memory in Japan came from outside, China and South Korea. Thus, international context should be taken seriously. In 1982, China and South Korea revealed that Japanese high school history textbooks portrayed Japan's wartime actions as "advance," not as "aggression" or "invasion." Not only the governments of China and South Korea but also the general public and civic organizations in these countries criticized Japanese textbooks, which triggered contestation of the memory of the war within Japan. Stimulated by severe criticism from China and South Korea, Japanese opposition parties, which include Social Democratic Party, Democratic Socialist Party, and Komeito Party, as well as Japanese scholars criticized Japan's history textbooks and demanded their revision.¹² Moreover, the end of the Cold War in 1989 strengthened the role of civic groups. Indeed, Japanese civic voices for Japan's war responsibility had been heightened especially in 1990.¹³ Additionally, the end of the Cold War stimulated comfort women to give testimony about what happened in the war, which became an important issue in 1992. The contestation can be contrasted with Phase 1, when civic groups and the public only focused on domestic war victims without paying attention to Asian victims and Japan's war responsibility.

2) Analysis of Discourse

I have found that the speeches of the Emperor Hirohito, the Emperor Akihito, and Prime Ministers have delivered consistently the same, repeated, and selective messages as sent out in the Phase 1. In other words, they did not mention anything about Japan's wartime

¹² Asahi Shimbun, 1982.

¹³ Asahi Shimbun, 1990.

actions in Asia and its role as an aggressor, focusing on Japan's victimization in the war. In spite of the confrontation of criticism from governments of China and South Korea, civic organizations and the public from inside and outside, the Japanese leaders had been silent on admitting Japan's war responsibility. I have found that Japanese public also demanded Japan's acknowledgement of its war responsibility. Asahi Shimbun offered discussion about Japan's war responsibility in 1982, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1992 and covered news coverage on its role as an aggressor in 1982, 1984, 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1992.

Phase 3: Further Contestation of Memory of Victimhood and Aggression, 1993-2005

1993 features a significant year in the sense that Prime Minister Hosokawa of the Japan New Party admitted Japan's war responsibility for the first time after Japan's defeat in the war in 1945.

1) Analysis of Discourse

The Speeches of the Emperor Akihito

I have found that the speeches of the Emperor Akihito reveal three consistent themes as was shown in previous years in the postwar era. First, he emphasizes that he feels tremendous pain and sorrow for the Japanese war dead and their families. Second, he prayed for world peace and Japan's prosperity. The third theme is that he offers condolences to "those who died on the battlefield and fell victims to the war." This suggests that the Emperor still makes himself detached from the war. What should be noted also is that he never mentioned Asian victims and Japan's war responsibility, leaving his term "those who died" ambiguous.

The Speeches of Prime Ministers

Since Prime Minister Hosokawa's acknowledgement of Japan's wartime actions in Asia, Prime Ministers have mentioned Japan's war responsibility in their speeches. They offer five recurring themes. Three themes are consistent with Phases 1 and 2, which highlight victimhood of Japan. The first theme is that Japan's prosperity and peace were attained through the sacrifices of Japanese war dead. Secondly, Prime Ministers expressed condolences to domestic war victims. The third theme is that Japan will contribute to world peace. Two new themes pertain to Japan's war responsibility. The fourth theme is that the war caused pain to people in many countries, particularly those in neighboring parts of Asia. The fifth theme, thus, is associated with offering remorse and regret. Although Prime Ministers have consistently addressed the fact that Japan caused pain to Asian people, they never mentioned the term such as "aggression" or "invasion."

In sum, the Phase 3 reveals further contestation of collective memory of victimhood and aggression. While Prime Ministers began to acknowledge Japan's wartime actions, the Emperor has continuously emphasized victimhood of Japan, staying silent on its war responsibility. Different accounts of the past event among leaders can be contrasted with the Phase 2, when the Emperor and Prime Ministers demonstrated collectively similar account of the past.

4. Theoretical Implications

The analysis of discourse of the Emperor and Prime Ministers of Japan provides three distinctive phases regarding collective memory and state identity. My preliminary findings suggest that the reason that it took almost a half century for the Japanese state to

acknowledge its war responsibility is because Japan's state identity had been constructed as a victim country out of stable collective memory of victimhood. The construction of the collective memory of victimhood can best be understood when illuminated in nexus of domestic and international realms. The international context of atomic bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Cold War provided an environment where domestic leaders, the Emperor and Prime Ministers, constructed a one-dimensional memory, which prioritized a narrative of victimhood. This reveals that constructivist theorizing of state identity needs to break the domestic and international divide and to take seriously the role of actors in constructing domestic memory and culture.

My empirical findings also suggest that collective memory is not necessarily stable and coherent. Collective memory is also fluid and multiple, contested by actors who struggle for inscribing a particular view of the past into the present identity. Significantly, the Japanese case offers that the contestation of memory was triggered by outside states, China and South Korea, as well as outside civic groups. This also supports that the theorizing of state identity needs to take seriously interactions between domestic and international arenas. Given that contestation of collective memory of victimhood and aggression occurred through acts of actors, whether they are civic groups, the Emperor, and Prime Ministers, these actors are providing competing accounts of the past. This suggests that domestic culture can be conceptualized not as a homogenizing force, but as composed of subcultures, beyond institutional structure which has often been considered as providing cultural norms by constructivist literature. This allows me to suggest that competing accounts of the past constitute conflictual identities as suggested by Bell (2006). Given this, contested collective memory informs conflictual identities, which can explain

why the Japanese government is still reluctant to confront the past even after it acknowledged its war responsibility.

Conclusion

I tackled the question of Japan's reluctance to admit wartime actions from the theoretical lens of constructivist accounts of state identity. I argue that construction and contestation of collective memory informs construction of state identity, which in turn informs state actions in dealing with foreign relations. I suggest that the literature of collective memory can nicely be incorporated into the theorizing of state identity. I also suggest that collective memory, which include construction of remembering and forgetting and contestation of competing narratives, is a conscious act of agency. By offering a theoretical framework, I hope to contribute to studies about Japan's war legacy which rather focused on descriptive, normative analyses, as well as identity scholarship. Since I restricted my analysis to examining leaders' speeches, this paper presents a limitation in measuring collective memory of the public and civic groups. Examining diverse discourses of varied actors will be avenues for future research.

Appendix. Collective Memory of Victimhood and Aggression in Japan

Year	Messages		Significant events	Collective memory
	Emperor	Prime Ministers		
1945-1954	N/A	N/A	- Japan bombed and defeated in the war (1945)	Phase 1 Coherent memory of victimhood
1955-1962	N/A	N/A	- Non-official ceremonies for Japanese war dead	
1963-1981	- feel tremendous pain and sorrow for the Japanese war victims and their families - pray for world peace and Japan's prosperity	- Japan's prosperity and peace were built on the sacrifices of Japanese war victims. - express condolences to domestic war dead - Japan will work toward world peace.	- The Japanese government officially began to sponsor annual ceremony to mourn the Japanese war dead (1963). - Prime Minister Miki visited Yasukuni Shrine for the first time in the postwar era (1975).	
1982-1992	- feel tremendous pain and sorrow for the Japanese war victims and their families - pray for world peace and Japan's prosperity	- Japan's prosperity and peace were built on the sacrifices of Japanese war victims. - express condolences to domestic war dead - Japan will work toward world peace.	- China and South Korea criticized Japanese history textbooks (1982) - Civic organizations and the public from Japan, Korea and China demanded revision of textbooks and asked for Japan's war responsibility. - Comfort women issues disclosed (1992)	Phase 2 Contested memory of victimhood and aggression between state and society
1993-2005	- feel tremendous pain and sorrow for the Japanese war victims and their families - pray for world peace and Japan's prosperity	- Japan's prosperity and peace were built on the sacrifices of Japanese war victims. - express condolences to domestic war dead - Japan will work toward world peace. - Japan caused pain to Asian people. - express deep remorse toward Asian victims.	- Prime Minister Hosokawa first mentioned Japan's war responsibility (1993). - Japan established Asian Women's Fund (1995).	Phase 3 Further Contested memory of victimhood and aggression

Source: Asahi Shimbun, 1945-2005.

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