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**Masculinity, Sexuality and Japanese sexual slavery system
in World War Two: Discourses of Justification and Dissent**

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List of Acronyms

AWF Asian Women's Fund

NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation (*Nippon Housou Kyokai* in Japanese)

RAA Recreation Amusement Association

STDs Sexually Transmitted Diseases

UN United Nations

Abstract

During World War Two, the Japan's military system of sexual slavery, the so-called "comfort women" system, was established and developed to provide sexual services and pleasure to soldiers of the Japan's Imperial Army, as a part of the military plan of the Empire of Japan. As a result, an estimated 200,000 women and girls from the territories colonized and occupied by Japan and Japan's mainland were taken into the system. This research analyzes and compares documents and arguments issued between the 1930s and 1940s, when the Japan's sexual system was established, with the statements and arguments in today's Japan, specifically in 2013 and 2014. The purpose of the research is to understand how understanding of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood within the Japanese government and Imperial Army played the role of justifying the system. The analysis tells two main findings: first, patriarchal ideas about male (and female) sexuality, the nation and political ambitions, as well as ideas about Japanese racial hierarchies encouraged the Imperial Army to establish and justify the sexual slavery system. Second, many of those ideas remain in the contemporary Japan's politics that continues denying responsibility for the sexual slavery system and survivors. At the same time, new discourses of denial have appeared, linked to the renewed power of nationalism in Japan.

Relevance to Development Studies

Within the last two decades masculinity has become an important subject in development studies and interventions. This interest extended to different issues – from health (HIV and AIDS) to various forms of violence and war. Feminists and scholars of masculinity studies have argued that social justice cannot be achieved without gender equality, and that gender equality is dependent on changing hegemonic notions and practices of masculinity. The militaries and governments, especially in the time of wars, are highly masculinized, which determines and reinforces notions and ideals of gender, sexuality, race and nationality for the sake of wars. In addition, the deep-rooted patriarchy in the militaries and governments

creates the women who have to sacrifice themselves for warring men, nations and wars, and men who are ready to kill and rape for the sake of nation. Peace, justice and equitable development within and between nations, thus, can only be achieved if and when the hegemonic notions and ideals of masculinity are replaced by the egalitarian ones.

Keywords

the Imperial Army, the Empire of Japan, the Japanese government, system of sexual slavery, World War Two, military, masculinity, gender, sexuality, race, nationhood

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

1.1. Research Problem

The sexual slavery system - commonly referred to as “comfort women” system - was established by the Japan’s Imperial Army during World War Two. In the last few decades much feminist research has been conducted on this system, mainly focusing on experiences of the women forced into it and on the issues of absence of gender justice, with the view that neither the Japan’s military nor the state have ever offered a proper apology and reparation to the women. Rather, denial and justification of the system have prevailed. This research is focusing on the justificatory discourses offered by the military and the state, through which Japan has defended its actions. I am analyzing and comparing documents, statements and arguments issued in the time of establishment of the sexual slavery system - 1930s and 1940s – with the more recent ones – in the new millennium, in order to understand the roles of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood in the Japanese government’s and military’s justification of the system.

1.2. Contextual Background:

Establishment of the Japan’s Military System of Sexual Slavery

During war and conflict, women and girls are subjected to many forms of gender-based violence. Sexual slavery is one of the forms. The patriarchal myth that male sexual desire is not controllable is often taken as justification of sexual violence while sacrificing women and girls (Ahn 2008: 44). During World War Two, in the 1930s and 1940s, the sexual slavery system of the Japan’s military was widely spread in occupied countries such as China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Korea, as well as in Japan (Ahn 2010: 213). Although much of relevant official records were destroyed following the Japan’s surrender in 1945, the first confirmed “comfort station” was established during the Battle of Shanghai in 1932 by the Japanese navy as a leisure facility for soldiers (Tanaka 2002: 8). The Battle

of Shanghai, the largest battle between China and Japan, started as Japan needed to divert attention of the West from its plan of establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo in northeastern China (Tanaka 2002: 8, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 43).

The modernization of Japan began in 1868, which is called the Meiji Restoration (Frühstück 2013: 24). It involved control and management of people's bodies and sexuality and creation of new institutions such as mandatory military physical examination for all males that was legally adopted in 1872 to categorize types of individuals into suitable for military service and not suitable like effeminate, syphilitic, hysterical or neurasthenic (ibid: 24). Health examination was introduced for boys and girls at elementary school, too (ibid: 24-25). The Japanese government agencies such as health administration, police and military sought new ideas and notions of sexuality and policies regarding sex (ibid: 24). The Imperial Japanese Army - modern mass military in Japan - was founded in 1872 under the control of the Japan's government, aimed at modernizing Japan by echoing Western ideas of state-building (Frühstück 2005: 76). The imperial military was an important vehicle for the government to promote ideal manhood (ibid: 76). Soldiers were monitored and often had to have a health check, and those who were diagnosed of neurasthenia, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and mental diseases were considered less than "real men" by the military authorities (ibid: 76-77). The idea that these diseases were caused by sexual behaviors was dominant in the discourses about sex and sexuality in Japan. It was believed that problems of sexual behaviors threatened men's health, including soldiers' health, Japan's social order and national security (ibid: 71-73).

These discourses impacted ideas about and practices of prostitution. Prostitution was legal in Japan for centuries, and brothels for military existed long before the Battle of Shanghai and World War Two, but they were privately operated (Tanaka 2002: 9). After the 1900s, however, the abolition movement against prostitution became stronger, often accusing rural fathers for selling their daughters to prostitution, and accusing the state for ignoring it (Frühstück 2013: 31). But, by the 1940s, with Japan's colonization of Southeast Asia (which started in the second half of the nineteenth century) rapidly expanding, most critics of prostitution came to agree that it was better and necessary to sacrifice some women to prostitution, with the belief that this would preserve social order, protect "innocent" women

from men's sexual violence and – in particular - maintain soldiers' morale (Frühstück 2013: 31). Such views have fostered establishment of the military system of sexual slavery and foreclosed any criticism. It was only in the 1980s that Korean and Japanese women's groups opened up the subject, but – with very few exceptions – the Japanese government and media have remained silent through decades. Then in the second decade of the new millennium, with nationalist politicians entering the government, the issue came up again – with justification and denial of wrongdoing. As I will show in this research, much of the rhetoric of the recent years was very similar to those of the 1930s and 1940s.

1.3. Research Questions

The main question is: How notions of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood of the Japan's government and Imperial Army justify the military system of sexual slavery during World War Two?

The sub questions are:

- What notions and practices of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood inform creation of the sexual slavery system by the Japan's Imperial Army in the 1930s and the attitude of the government in the new millennium?
- How these notions inform justificatory rhetoric of the Army in the 1930-40s and of the government in the new millennium?

1.4. Research Objectives

The Japan's sexual slavery system is a sensitive and controversial issue in Japan, especially after the rise of the extreme nationalist prime minister, Abe Shinzo in 2012, who has promoted militarization by adopting new law and policies of diplomacy and security. By seeing the issue of Japan's wartime sexual slavery not just as a "women's issue" but as a political issue as well, I hope to contribute to an alternative form of anti-war politics, against the dominant forms of masculinized, militarized and patriarchal politics currently

pursued by the government. My other objective is to contribute to the studies of masculinity and war in general, and in Japan's involvement in World War Two specifically. In addition, I hope to expose persistence of patriarchal notions of masculinity in Japan from the times of World War Two to today.

1.5. Original Contribution and Justification

Although there is much feminist research about the Japan's military system of sexual slavery and responsibility of the Japanese state and Imperial Army, masculinity and its intersection with sexuality, nationality and race have seldom been addressed. This research focuses on notions and practices of masculinity within the Japan's government and Imperial Army, and the way these have been implicated in justification of the sexual slavery system. The original aspect of the research is the use and comparison of the documents from the 1930s to 1940s and in the present day.

While the focus on women survivors of the sexual slavery system is a necessary element of achieving gender justice, I believe that it is crucial - theoretically and politically - to address patriarchal notions of masculinity as well, if societies are to change towards peace and equality.

1.6. Data and Research Technique

Two sets of documents were used. The first set is from the prewar period and consists of reports of the Japanese military and government officials. I collected official reports because they demonstrated why the Japanese government and Imperial Army needed to establish the sexual slavery system during World War Two and they were written and issued by Japanese political and military leaders. Although it was challenging to read the different writing way of Japanese from that of today's way, I translated it into English. In 1992 and 1993 the Japan's government disclosed the results of its research on the military system of sexual slavery during World War Two. The research was based on the 1930-40s

documents collected from the Japanese authorities such as National Police Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Defense Agency, Ministry of Health and Welfare and foreign governments. Later, in 1997 the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) published five books of collections of the documents, titled *Government's Collection of Materials relating to "the Wartime Comfort Women": Survey of the Japan's Government* (AWF 1997c: 3-98). Most of the material are reports about the numbers of the so-called "comfort stations", i.e. places where women were kept, and about women; information about STDs and medical check to discover STDs among soldiers and women; incidents of crimes perpetrated by soldiers in occupied territories such as looting and rape; and rules of how to use "comfort stations" such as time allocation and price (ibid: 3-98). Some documents explicitly mention purposes for establishment of the sexual slavery system and orders for establishing stations issued by the military and government agencies and officials, such as the police head of the Japan Consulate General in Shanghai and the General Headquarter of Military in China (ibid: 3-98). I have analyzed following nine of these documents in this research:

'Measures to Promote Military Discipline with Experiences of the Battle of China', 'Matters Regarding the Acts of the Army and its Soldiers against Civilian', 'Regulations Regarding the Morikawa Unit's Special Duty, Comfort Stations', 'Peculiar Phenomenon about the Life on the Battlefields and its Measures', 'Matters Regarding the Treatment of Women Who Are Sent to China' dated February 18, 1938, 'Matters Regarding the Treatment of Women Who Are Sent to China' dated February 23, 1938, 'Matters Regarding the Recruitment of Women to Work in Comfort Stations of the Army Within the Shanghai Expeditionary Army' and 'Matters Regarding the Recruitment of Women to Work in Military Comfort Stations' (AWF 1997a: 47, 55, 69, AWF 1997b: 5-6, 21, 43, 55, 327).

The second set of documents is different statements of the government officials in the 2013-2014 period. I collected statements of the Japanese officials made after 2000 because they talked about the sexual slavery system indicating purpose, justification and dissent of the establishment. As I explain it in more detail on Chapter 4, I gathered statements from the internet news released from 2013 to 2014 because the Japanese officials were active to make statements about "comfort women" during the period and the Japanese and foreign media reported them. Before conducting data collection, I hoped to also look at statements

in or right after 2000 when the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery (hereafter the Women's International Tribunal) was taken place in Tokyo. However, I was not able to gain any statements and news. It is assumed that there was political pressure of nationalist politicians who had played a role of ignoring Japan’s historical issues, which could stop the media from reporting the issue about “comfort women”. I used the news of both the Japanese and foreign media because the news in the Japanese media were extremely limited. I translated some of the statements from the news by the Japanese media from Japanese into English. Statements of five government officials were analyzed. First, two statement were made by Hashimoto Toru at the on-the-spot interview that were taken place two times on May 13, 2013 when he was the mayor of Osaka city and head of Japan Restoration Party, as an answer to questions about ‘Murayama Statement’ raised by reporters (*Synodos*¹ 2013a). ‘Murayama Statement’ drew controversy at that time because Prime Minister Abe Shinzo expressed his disapproval of that statement in April 2013. Nishimura Shingo, a former member of the House of Representative also made a statement in the meeting of his party on May 16, 2013 in response to the interview of Hashimoto Toru, which was reported by a writer, Elaine Kurtenbach of *USA Today* and a Korean newspaper, *Chuo Nippo* (Kurtenbach 2013). Nishimura belonged to Japan Restoration Party, the party led by Hashimoto Toru. Fourth statement - by Nakayama Nariaki – was also a reaction to Hashimoto Toru, stating about the “comfort women” issue through his *Twitter* account on May 21, 2013 (Nakayama 2013). He talked about the “comfort women” issue during a lecture he delivered in a community on March 8, 2014, too (More details about where the lecture was taken place are not available) (*Naver* 2014). He was a member of the House of Representative and of Japan Restoration Party then, and used to serve as Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism nine years ago and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology twelve years ago. The next statement was made by Momii Katsuo, who is a former chairman of *Japan Broadcasting Corporation* (*Nippon Housou Kyoukai*, *NHK*, in Japanese) appointed by Prime Minister Abe, at a press conference that was taken place when he became a chairman of *NHK* on January 25, 2014. I brought the Momii’s statement

¹ *Synodos* is a company providing frequent web news, mostly about politics.

of a *Time*'s web article written by Kirk Spitzer. Finally, I analyzed a statement by Prime Minister Abe Shinzo on September 11, 2014 on the radio program, reported by two Japanese newspaper companies, the most conservative Japanese newspaper company, *Industrial and Economic Newspaper* (*Sangyo Keizai Shimbun* in Japanese) and *Japan Economics Newspaper* (*Nihon Keizai Shimbun* in Japanese) that favors a mix of both liberal and conservative positions. On August 5, 2014, *Asahi Newspaper Company* admitted that sixteen articles regarding “comfort women” published between September 1982 and March 1997 were false (Tanaka 2017: 174). These articles were based on the testimony of Yoshida who claimed his responsibility of abducting 205 Korean women to force them to be “comfort women” for Japanese soldiers in his book ‘My War Crimes’, and *Asahi Newspaper Company* as well as other major news media published articles based on the Yoshida’s testimony (ibid: 174). The Abe’s statement was as response to the *Asahi*’s admission of its false reports.

To analyze the data, thematic analysis, one of the models of narrative analysis was applied. It has emphasis on the content of a text, what is told rather than how it is told (Riessman 2005: 4). In other words, it focuses on the rhetoric and arguments of the text, rather than on its effects, such as invoking emotional response of the audience. While these effects are relevant, this research is focused on the arguments used in the documents that justify the practice – i.e. sexual slavery system – looking at ideas of masculinity, (male) sexuality, race and nationhood that underpin the arguments. A representational typology helped me to organize material by the themes, searching for common thematic elements across the various documents (ibid: 4-5).

1.7. Scope and limitation

This research data is limited to documents and statements issued by the state/government and its institutions/agencies (such as military and committees) as well as national and foreign media. The use of media for the most recent statements of the Japanese government and military representatives was necessary because in the last decade Japanese officials

have not issued any official written document. Rather, they were forced to address the issue of Japan's wartime sexual slavery by the investigative journalists, most often directly live on camera – and thus were not able to skip the answers. I used foreign media because the government of Japan has ignored to face the issue for decades, and Japanese media mostly followed the same practice and the topic was very seldom present in Japan's own media.

I have not interviewed the current or former relevant politicians or soldiers, nor the women survivors, as there is already quite a rich body of literature on women survivors of the Japan's military system of sexual slavery that includes their voices and experiences.

1.8. Ethical and Political Choices

I have been overwhelmed by many forms of persistent Japan's patriarchal gendered system and its product of gender stigma and discrimination among both of women and men. At the same time, I've witnessed intensification of nationalism and militarization in recent years, causing political tensions between other East Asian countries and Japan, often resulting in sentiment against people from those countries within Japan. On the other hand, Japan as a wealthy country gives me the privilege to pursue a goal of building peace and gender equality in Japan and the world. I am also lucky enough to have my family who gives me lots of support to enable me to keep pursuing the goal. I hope that this research can be a part of preparation to engage myself in Japan's politics that don't apply racialized and gendered hierarchy in order to maintain and expand peace in Japan, Asia and the world.

CHAPTER 2. Theoretical Context

2.1. Current State of Academic Field on the Japan's Sexual Slavery System

Many feminists and historians have contributed to research on the Japan's military system of sexual slavery during World War Two. The existing research has been conducted from two main perspectives: focusing on the survivors of the sexual slavery system, or on the Japan's government and military responsibility for organizing the sexual slavery system. The focus on the survivors mainly addressed victimization of women as sexual slaves of Japanese soldiers and their struggle for recognition. According to Min (2003) the sexual slaves were forced to have intercourse with ten to thirty Japanese soldiers per day (941). They were exposed to many forms of sexual or physical violence such as rape, torture, beating, burning and stabbing (Min 2003: 941). They sometimes died from STDs infected through intercourse, and committed suicide to escape extreme physical and mental suffering or because of shame of being sexual slaves (ibid: 941). Suffering of the women has also lasted after emancipation. Former sexual slaves continue to suffer disease, injury or mental trauma (Hayashi 2001: 575).

Furthermore, social stigma or discrimination as well as physical or mental illness significantly affected the rest of their life. Even though the women could return to their homes, for example, they could not live with their parents because of shame and humiliation of being former sexual slaves (Min 2003: 947). Patriarchal customs were persistent in South Korea, producing shame and humiliation of women (ibid: 947). Also, the survivors have often faced serious problems with their marital partners because of infertility, excessive drinking and fear of men (ibid: 948). Many of them have stayed single or divorced because of suffering caused by humiliating experience, mental and physical illness or have become widows after their husbands who were often much older than them died (ibid: 948-949). Patriarchy played a role in poverty, too. Because of patriarchal orientation in South Korea, many of the survivors were subject to poverty if they were not married, because Korean women were entirely dependent on their husbands for economic

support (ibid: 949). Finally, Korean patriarchal customs encourage the survivors to hide their past from their husband, children, relatives and/or neighbors, thus keeping them silent and stopping them from reporting their experience to seek recognition (ibid: 950).

Patriarchal customs thus “played a key role in preventing the former Korean sexual slaves from maintaining normal family lives and in keeping them silent for half a century” (ibid: 947).

Prominent engagement of two Korean women, Yun Chung Ok and Lee Hyo Chae in the 1980s and 1990s finally delivered success in bringing public attention to the Japan’s sexual slavery system, shifting the patriarchal ideology in South Korea (Hayashi 2001: 575, Soh 1996: 1234). They worked on developing the ground for compensation and raising the issue within the international community (Soh 1996: 1234). It encouraged Kim Hak Sun to become the first Korean woman to speak up about her experience as a sexual slave and give public testimony in 1991 in Tokyo (ibid: 1232-1233). This is linked to another aspect of the research on the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery, which is legal and moral responsibility of the Japan’s government that continued to deny compensation over the issue of Japan’s wartime sexual slavery. Several former sexual slaves from South Korea and other Asian nations followed Kim Hak Sun (Hayashi 2001: 573). The Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan was established in 1990 and demanded that the Japanese government acknowledges the truth about the military system of sexual slavery, apologizes and pay compensation to the survivors (ibid: 573). But the Japan’s government denied involvement, apology and investigation (ibid: 573).

The first publication of official documents on the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery written by a Japanese historian, Yoshimi Yoshiaki in 1992 contributed to temporary change of attitude of the Japan’s government (Hayashi 2001: 573). The documents studied by Yoshimi revealed that the Imperial Army established and controlled the sexual slavery system (ibid: 573). As a result, ‘Kono Statement’ in 1992 was issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary who served in the Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's administration, and the Japanese government admitted the involvement and apologized in ‘Kono Statement’ (ibid: 573). This was the first time that the Japanese government admitted the involvement of the Imperial Army and made an official apology (ibid: 573). However, Japan continued to ignore its legal responsibility for the system and survivors. Although the Asian Women’s

Fund (AWF) was established by the Japan's government for atonement to the survivors in 1995, it nevertheless demonstrated denial of legal responsibility of the Japan's government because it was organized to raise funds from private sources instead from the government itself (ibid: 578). In 1995 the judge of Yamaguchi District Court "ruled that Tokyo had neglected to fulfill its legal duty to repair the anguish suffered by comfort women and ordered the Japanese Government to pay 300,000 yen (\$2,272) to each of the three plaintiffs (Reuters)" (as cited in Park 2000: 210).

After decades of women's activism, in December 2000, the Women's International Tribunal was held in Tokyo. One of its objectives was to end impunity of the Japan's government (Hayashi 2001: 578-579). Japan ignored the invitation and no representative from the government appeared at the Women's International Tribunal (Lévy and Epstein 2014: 134). In 2001 the final judgment issued in The Hague, the Netherlands, stipulated that the emperor and other twenty military and political leaders were guilty of war crimes (Hayashi 2001: 579-580). The Women's International Tribunal had the moral legitimacy at the international level, but it didn't have legal authority to enforce the judgment, and the Japan's government kept silence (Lévy and Epstein 2014: 139).

Japan also ignores the UN. In 1992, the UN Commission on Human Rights raised the issue of Japan's wartime sexual slavery for the first time, but the Japanese government claimed that the UN has no jurisdiction over the issue because the UN didn't come into being at the time of World War Two (Hayashi 2001: 573, 577). In 2013, the UN Committee against Torture issued a recommendation to demand for legal responsibility and investigation of the Japan's government, but the government, Prime Minister Abe and his cabinet, ignored the call claiming that the recommendation has no legally binding force (Tanaka 2017: 171-172). The government insists that the women have no right to claim compensation because Japan has already fulfilled its obligation with the San Francisco Peace Treaty² (Totsuka 1999: 53).

The Japan's government justifies its refusal of legal responsibility while rejecting moral responsibility as well. As a number of researchers have shown, this denial is related to

² The San Francisco Peace Treaty, commonly known as Treaty of Peace with Japan, was signed by 48 nations including the US on 8 September, 1951 in San Francisco, the US in order to pursue the Japan's responsibility for war crimes. As a result, Japan regained its sovereignty and diplomatic relations with other nations.

Japanese notions of racial hierarchy, patriarchy and nationalism linked to the ideology supporting Japanese monarchy and the Emperor. Firstly, Japan wanted to protect the notions of racial superiority vis-à-vis other Asian countries and their women (Park 2000: 203, Kumagai 2015: 147). The majority of sexual slaves were from Korea and Taiwan, especially Korea, colonized by Japan (Min 2003: 944). Secondly, one of the neo-nationalists, Fujioka Nobukatsu, an educational scholar who has been significantly engaged in history textbook reform of Japan, claims that giving voice to the survivors is to disgrace Japan by conveying Japanese children the idea that only Japan did something wrong and Japan was inferior because of failure to show and prove ability of maintaining the sexual slave system (Ahn 2008: 42, Nozaki 2005: 12). Lastly, the patriarchal ideology supports the Japan's government justification of its actions. Japan does not consider having responsibility for the sexual slavery system because it sees the survivors as "fallen" women who accepted to sell their bodies (Park 2000: 204). But the Army did not use Japanese virgins or Japanese "pure" women, arguably in order not to anger the Japanese public and to prevent the loss of trust in the Imperial Army (Min 2003: 944).

Women's experiences as sexual slaves or survivors of the Japan's military system of sexual slavery and the government's responsibility for the involvement in the sexual slavery system, the suffering of the women during and after capture, struggle of the survivors to seek for public or official recognition, and the government's denial of legal and moral responsibility have all been examined in literature, and gender perspectives have often been applied. However, attention to masculinity has been lacking in this research. Masculinity of Japanese soldiers is sometimes analyzed, but exploring notions of masculinity embedded in the institutions of the state and the Imperial Army that were responsible for the establishment of the sexual slavery system seems still missing. My research will be contribution in this direction.

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives Relevant for this Research: Masculinity, Sexuality, Race and Nationhood

Nira Yuval-Davis has explained that “women are treated as the keepers and reproducers of ethnic, cultural and biological boundaries of a nation” (Lauenstein, Boos and Reicher 2015: 313). Consequently, patriarchal gender roles are important in nationalism for the sake of reproduction of bloodline and existence of the nation. Nations therefore control reproduction of population through control of women’s bodies, regulation of women’s sexual activities and reproductive options, such as abortion, family planning and sex education (Mole 2011: 546). Nationalists have often likened the nation and family (Lauenstein, Boos and Reicher 2015: 311). A family, which is commonly understood through biological ties or bloodline, is seen as a fundamental structure of society, and thus of the nation (ibid: 311-312). A “strong nation” is often related to a “strong family”, strong and dedicated wife and mother responsible for reproduction of bloodline (ibid: 313). On the other hand, men are expected to perform a role of protecting the honor of the family and fighting for interest of a nation (Uğurlu and Özdemir 2017: 512). Patriarchal gender power relationships of the protector and protected is legitimized through giving men and women these different roles (Ashe 2012: 236-240). Both women and men, and their different gender roles are thus deemed necessary to pursue nation-building.

But this also means that nations which often define themselves in ethnic or racial terms and emphasize a shared bloodline, are defined through notions of heterosexuality, and thus concerned about the presence of gay men and lesbian women who defy patriarchal gender roles (Mole 2011: 548). Exclusion of homosexual men, in particular, is legitimized in the name of national security against threat to the continued existence of a nation (ibid: 541, 546). Gay men are understood not to possess masculine virtues and are seen as “less man” or potential subordinates (Sundevall and Persson 2016: 125, Mole 2011: 548). This is especially relevant in the military, where gay personnel or officers are perceived as potentially undermining male bonding which is required to build a nation and pursue it militarily (Mole 2011: 548). These ideas make masculinity – and its relations to sexuality and nationhood – especially relevant.

Connell (2005: 68) has argued that the concept of masculinity is relational, hierarchical and plural, sustained through contrast with femininity as well as other masculinities, and that the concept of both masculinity and femininity vary depending on history and culture.

This means that masculinity is diverse, and that there are actually many different, hierarchically organized masculinities, interacting with other social relations of power such as race and class (Connell 2005: 76). Hierarchical masculinities based on race are confirmed within military systems, too, for example, in various military prostitution policies (Enloe 2000: 56-57, Enloe 2014: 161-162). During the Vietnam War, prostitution for African American and white American soldiers was separately organized (Enloe 2000: 66-67, Enloe 2014: 162). As I will show in detail on Chapter 4, the same was relevant in the Imperial Japanese Army and its sexual slavery system in relation to Korean women. Japan has established racial hierarchies throughout its empire, and colonized nations were placed at the lower ranks of that hierarchies. Colonization thus created interplay of gender, race with sexuality. This is especially relevant for Korea, as Korean women formed majority of those forced into the sexual slavery system and they were forced to serve for lower-class soldiers.

Nagel argues that nationalism resonates with masculinity, and associates it with honor, cowardice, bravery and duty (Nagel 1998: 248-252). Nagel quotes Enloe who emphasizes that “the real actors [of the nation] are men who are defending their freedom, their honor, their homeland and their women” (Nagel 1998: 244). Nagel also quotes Mosse who “describes modern masculinity as a centerpiece of all varieties of nationalist movements” (ibid: 249). Mosse describes the oppositional duality of social perceptions of women: the honorable women are assumed to be innocent and chaste, and other women need to be sexually available to provide pleasure and enjoyment to male warriors while they are also seen as undermining and dishonoring the nation and nation’s men (ibid: 256). The embodiment of women’s sexuality enables military to control male soldiers’ sexuality in the way women are compelled to undergo a genital examination for the sexually transmitted diseases, which is part of the project of nation-building (Enloe 2000: 54-55). Also, military is worried that women who have STDs would jeopardize soldiers’ capability and loyalty to the nation and undermine the nation (ibid: 54-55).

Looking at history, Nagel notes that the modern forms of masculinity emerged in the nineteenth century in Europe, and were accompanied by the new nationalist movements (Nagel 1998: 249). In order to pursue nationhood, nationalism required masculine institutions. A masculine institution - in other words, the male-dominated vehicle of decision-making - is necessary to control legal authority over issues of female rights, labor and sexuality (ibid: 251).

CHAPTER 3. History of the Japan's Military Sexual Slavery System

In order to answer the second sub-question (about notions and practices of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood that informed creation of the sexual slavery system in the 1930s, and the attitude of the government in the new millennium), and contextualize the justificatory discourses used by the Japanese government and military that defend the sexual slavery system during World War Two (which will be addressed in the next chapter), it is important to provide some brief socio-historical context. In this chapter, I will start with short reflections on the Japan's colonial history and its underpinning racial hierarchies, as well as on the history of prostitution. I will also reflect on dominant gender ideologies within Japanese society, and how these underpin ideas of male sexual desire and female sexual purity. Those hierarchies and ideologies are important for understanding why the sexual slavery system is still largely seen in Japan as voluntary prostitution, and not as a war crime. Finally, I will engage with the history of the sexual slavery system and government's actions from its establishment to the present day.

3.1. Colonialism and Racial Hierarchy

Japan has begun occupation of neighboring territories towards the end of the nineteenth century, and then expanded its Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century by occupying Taiwan and Korea, and islands in the Pacific (Hechter, Matesan and Hale 2009: 39, 42). By the eve of World War Two it also occupied a Chinese territory, Manchuria, and during the war it took hold of Indonesia and other South-East Asian countries.

Colonization has been part and parcel of processes of creating Japan as a modern nation-state that started in the nineteenth century, and both have been accompanied by creation of racial hierarchy (Yamashiro 2013: 148). Ethnic and racialized nationalism of Japan is believed to have risen as a means to respond to the problem of social and cultural

invasion by the West (Doak 1997: 308). Although throughout its history Japanese did not have high consciousness of themselves as an ethnic nation, it had been mobilized to oppose westernization (ibid: 307-308). Doak (1997) argues, however, that the modern Japanese national identity that produces racial hierarchy began with the Meiji Restoration in 1868 – i.e. the period when Japan abandoned isolation and started building a modern nation-state following the Western model, by reorganizing government, judiciary, military and education, as well as economy (286). The state sought national identity through ideology of the emperor system, emphasized nationalism based on ethnicity identity such as a common language, way of life, religion and physical appearance (Doak 1997: 297-298).

Racialized nationalism, and colonial racial hierarchies have had grave consequences for women in occupied territories, and especially Korean women, as their low ranking in the racial hierarchy, in combination with dominant ideas about female and male sexuality, has made them the main target of the Japanese military that created the sexual slavery system.

Many women and girls from South-East Asia, China and other occupied territories were mobilized, abducted and forced into sexual slavery but the largest population was Korean (Kumagai 2015: 154, Min 2003: 944). From 1937 to 1945, Korea, colonized by Japan, was used to supply food and war materials for the Japanese military in Manchuria (Min 2003: 943). More than 100,000 Korean farmers were taken to Manchuria for labor (ibid: 943). Around 668,000 Koreans were also taken to Japan as labor force in the military and war industry between 1939 and 1945, which included 200,000 unmarried women and girls who worked at aircrafts or warship factories (ibid: 943). But Japanese racial hierarchies excluded these Koreans from membership in the Japanese nation (Doak 1997: 294-298).

Furthermore, colonial racial hierarchies can be identified in the Japan's sexual slavery system as well, as the payment for sex with the interned women followed racial hierarchies. Majority of the interned women were from Korea, with Japanese women considered to be in significantly less numbers. But the prices for sex with Japanese women were two to three times higher than for Korean and other Asian women (Lie 1997: 255). Most of those

Korean women and girls were young in the teens or twenties, unmarried, virgins from poor (often rural) background (Min 2003: 944, 951).

3.2. Military and Masculinity, Family and Nation

Modernizing education and the military in Japan went hand in hand with the creation of the modern nation-state. Education that made young men and boys tough and strong enough to become soldiers had rapidly developed by the time of the Sino-Japanese War³ of 1894-95 (Frühstück 2007: 166). Frühstück (2007) argues that Japanese military masculinity had been constructed since childhood through education system that introduced the core goal of creating the spirit to defend the nation (166). Japanese boys learned it in schools, through school textbooks and children's magazines that had an emphasis on toughness and embraced militarist values (Frühstück 2007: 166). The School Ordinance that introduced 'playing soldiers' (*heitai gokko* in Japanese) was implemented in 1887 and promoted in textbooks and magazines (ibid: 166). Military songs at school claimed that Japan's boys would become proper Japan's men as soldiers, and bloodstained uniforms and real weapons were shown to children in schools (ibid: 166). By the peak of World War Two in the early 1940s, interventions into the Japanese military masculinity had been further pursued by the state and military. In 1940, the National Physical Strength Management Law was set up targeting all young men and boys to measure height, weight and chest circumference for creating a criteria of healthy men (Algozo 2011: 247, McVeigh 2016: 136). The conscription examination system also helped to define the ideals of Japan's masculinity, measuring the degree of endurance for long distance march and military training and degrading those who were evaluated as short or fat, had STDs, or physical or mental illness (Algozo 2011: 248). It also expelled those who were diagnosed with having "abnormal" sexual characteristics such as serious urethral deformity, hermaphroditism and urinary fistula because they were perceived as feminine men (ibid: 249-256). Military training was modernized, designed to acquire toughness and strength, including harsh treatment,

³ The Sino-Japanese War was conflict between Qing (China in the present day) and Japan for dominance of the Korean Peninsula.

humiliation and corporeal punishment to make soldiers violent and aggressive (Ahn 2010: 219-220).

In Japan, military is also likened to the family. The traditional ideal of a Japanese father was to be a stern father who disciplines his family members, especially wives and daughters (Ahn 2010: 217). Fathers were allowed to even maltreat and abuse their wives and daughters in the name of discipline (ibid: 217). Military commanders were seen as fathers, sub-officers as mothers, and soldiers as children (ibid: 216). This parent-child relationship in the Japanese military system utilized and naturalized patriarchal gender relations and hierarchies and subordination of women, ultimately sustaining the use of violence against women as well as men. In addition, the nation was always associated with the family that has the Emperor as the father of Japan (ibid: 216). This family-state system enhanced superiority of fathers and men.

In addition to being used to create modern Japanese gender relations and hierarchies, and military masculinities in particular, both educational system and the military were also used to emphasize “Japanese race” and develop racial hierarchy by asserting its superiority over other nations and racial groups in Asia (Yamashiro 2013: 148-149, Ahn 2010: 216). By the 1930s Japanese schools taught students to believe that Japan had position of superiority in Asia, and to view China as declining civilization (Eykholt 2000: 14), while Japanese government’s war propaganda secured popular support by emphasizing the Japan’s role in the region as a modernizer and leader (Kushner 2007: 15-16).

3.3. Prostitution: Gender, Sexuality and Race

Japan has its long history of prostitution. Licensed prostitution was already confirmed in the Muromachi era, the fourteenth century (Kimura 2016: 82). In the early seventeenth century, licensed prostitution districts developed, and Yoshiwara (Tokyo in present-day Japan) is notable for it (Kovner 2012: 10). Along with the development of licensed

prostitution, private prostitution also grew (Lie 1997: 252). The Meiji shogunate⁴ that lasted from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century began to reorganize licensed prostitution to emulate the West by replicating Western regulations regarding sex work such as adopting mandatory medical examination of prostitutes (Lie 1997: 252-253). Also, the development of licensed prostitution during the Meiji era created *karayukisan*, Japanese prostitutes who went abroad to work in prostitution (ibid: 252-253).

In the past, brothels in Japan were called *yukaku* (place of pleasure) and prostitutes were called “women of pleasure” (*yujyo* in Japanese). However, with the modernization of Japan, prostitution, although already licenced, taxed and controlled enterprise, started facing stronger regulation by the state, and in the pre-war period also moral arguments were used by the abolitionists against prostitution. Sexual morality and purity of women has been a strong element in perceptions of prostitution. The Japanese patriarchal ideology assumes that women are inferior to men and women who have sex with men who are not their husbands are less valuable. Chastity and virginity are valued, thus women who are paid for sex have very low standing in the society. This is evident through the language that is used for prostitution and for women sex workers. One of the terms for brothels and the women is “public toilet” (Park 2000: 208). The term originates from the prewar government officials who regarded licensed prostitution as “public latrine” (Soh 2008: 40).

The ideas that conflate sexual slavery and prostitution is evident in the fact that during World War Two, Japanese soldiers use the term “public toilet” for what the Japanese military called “comfort stations” (Soh 2008: 39-40). Aso Tetsuo, a military doctor who drafted the rules and regulations of the sexual slavery system and conducted physical examinations of women, is believed to be a contributor of using the term “public toilet” (Soh 2008: 40). He argued that “comfort stations” must not be a place for pleasure but rather must be like a “hygienic public toilet” (ibid: 40). A few decades later, in the 1970s, male college students still continued to use the word “toilet” to refer to women who had recreational sex with men (ibid: 40). Soh argues that “it reflects a generalized male

⁴ Shogunate is a style of Japanese government controlled by *shogun* (the chief of military commanders).

contempt for prostitutes, rooted in the conventional attitude of male superiority and the right of men to public sex” (ibid: 40). But in case of the sexual slavery system, such terms do not only reflect male attitude to women and female sexuality, but also Japanese attitude to women who were perceived as belonging to the lower races, and for whom Japanese society, military and the government had only contempt.

In January 1946 Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers abolished licensed prostitution in Japan for the pursuit of ideal democracy and individual freedom (Kovner 2012: 30). Following the Japan’s defeat, the US occupation lasted until Japan signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty and regained its sovereignty in 1951 (Lie 1997: 256). However, the abolishment of state controlled licencing just stimulated the development of private prostitution. After the Japan’s defeat, there were rumors about American soldiers’ brutalities. Many Japanese feared that American soldiers would do the same to Japanese people as what Japanese soldiers did to the colonized people during the war, and the Japanese government sought the way to protect “pure” Japanese women from sexual violence by American soldiers (ibid: 256). It is believed that access of soldiers to prostitutes would reduce sexual violence and the government subsequently created the Recreation Amusement Association (RAA) which was officially instituted to provide organized prostitution for “comforting” American soldiers (ibid: 257).

Through the post-war prostitution system, the patriarchal logic of sacrificing some women and protecting “pure” women functioned once again. In addition to recruiting women who were already involved in licensed and unlicensed prostitution in Japan, the Japanese government also recruited women who faced postwar corruption and poverty and had no other means of sustaining their livelihoods (Lie 1997: 257-258, Tanaka 2002: 134). The Ministry of Labor estimated that there were half a million women involved in prostitution for American soldiers at the time (Lie 1997: 258). In April 1958, prostitution became illegal in Japan (ibid: 259). However, it just shifted to privatized from licenced, managed by the Japanese mafia and gangs (ibid: 259). In short, in wartime Japanese leaders used a great number of colonized women for their Japanese soldiers, and in a postwar period they used “fallen” Japanese women to serve American soldiers, arguably to protect the “chaste and

respectable” Japanese women. The post-war prostitution system continued to use some women (this time, Japanese lower-class and “fallen” women) to “comfort” American soldiers, thus further conflating (post-war) prostitution with (wartime) sexual slavery.

The Japan’s government, which continues to deny the involvement of the sexual slavery system of the Japan’s Imperial Army, has always employed the term “comfort women” and “comfort station”. However, “comfort women” (*ianfu* in Japanese) continues to be another euphemistic term for prostitutes which helps hide the wartime forced enslavement and suffering of the women and conveyed the idea that women were voluntary sex-workers (Moshan 1998: 162, Nozaki 2005: 2, 6).

The persistent conflation of the sexual slavery system with prostitution in today’s Japan is supported by the widespread use of the term “comfort women”, nationally and internationally. Among many scholars the term is accompanied with the quotation marks, to underline the non-voluntary nature of the sexual slavery. But the quotation marks seem inadequate solution to me. Because many women were abducted and subjected to constant violence and sex against their will, and control of the Japan’s Imperial Army, in this paper I use the term “the sexual slavery system”, and “survivors” of the sexual slavery system.

3.4. Japan’s Military System of Sexual Slavery: From Establishment in the 1930s to Arguments in the 2010s

In March 1932 the Japan’s Army began to establish the sexual slavery system based on the navy’s model, which was initiated by Okamura Yasuji, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army who believed that prostitution would prevent rape of Chinese local women (Tanaka 2002: 10, Yoshimi and O’Brien 2000: 45). He requested the governor of Nagasaki Prefecture of Japan to dispatch a group of women to Shanghai (Tanaka 2002: 10, Yoshimi and O’Brien 2000: 45). The choice of Nagasaki is related to its historical background, as there were many so-called *karayukisan*, Japanese women who were born in Nagasaki and became prostitutes because of poverty, who were sent to

prostitution in overseas (Tanaka 2002: 10, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 45). The Okamura's idea to establish what he called "comfort stations" is associated with his experience of the Siberia Intervention between 1918 and 1922. During the period, Japanese soldiers widely committed looting and rape, increasing the rate of soldiers with STDs (Tanaka 2002: 10-11, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 46-47). It was reported that 1109 soldiers had STDs compared to 1399 killed and 1528 injured between August 1918 and October 1920 (Tanaka 2002: 10-11, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 46-47). In order to address this problem, the Japanese military police force was authorized to regulate private prostitution, and required women to gain permission from the military police and to have medical examinations before working in prostitution (Tanaka 2002: 10-11, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 46-47).

The number of "comfort stations" rapidly increased after 1937 (Tanaka 2002: 12-13). In July 1937 Japan started to invade China on a full scale, bringing a vast number of soldiers (ibid: 13). It was followed by crimes including rape committed by soldiers, which became a big problem among leaders of the Imperial Army (ibid: 13). Believing that this would prevent rape of Chinese local women, the sexual slavery system expanded (ibid: 13). Rape was a big concern for military leaders because it would promote anti-Japanese sentiment among Chinese. Okabe Naosaburo, the Chief of Staff of the North China Area Army stated in 'Written Notification of Warnings on the Treatment of the Local Population by Military Unit and Personnel' in July 1938 that rape not only breaks the criminal law but also "undermine public order and obstruct the combat activities of the military as a whole" (as cited in Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 55). Rape was seen as a threat to Japan because it was considered to be the worst and outrageous act by Chinese who highly value honor and respect wives (Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 49, 55). It is estimated that in total around 200,000 women and girls from Korea, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, East Timor, Burma, the Netherlands, Australia and Japan were forcibly involved in the Japan's sexual slavery system to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers (Ahn 2010: 213, Hayashi 2001: 577).

After the surrender of the Empire of Japan in 1945, General Douglas MacArthur from Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers took the responsibility for punishing Japanese war criminals and established the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in January

1946 (Futamura 2006: 472, Witt 2016: 28). Prosecutions were issued for twenty-eight people defendants, among whom former Prime Ministers, ministers and military officers, and twenty-five of them were found guilty for criminal conspiracy to wage wars of aggression and serious war crimes against the Allied Powers and civilians in China (Futamura 2006: 473). However, sexual violence against women was not included in trials (Witt 2016: 29-30, 32). The Emperor of Japan was also not tried although he was a significant actor in planning and waging wars of aggression. The US government did not attempt to prosecute the Emperor because it was concerned that Japanese people, who believed that they fought the war in the name of the Emperor, would react with violence or suicide, which would create chaos that would make America's occupation of Japan difficult and lose opportunity to use Japan as a capitalist ally in the Cold War (Witt 2016: 31-32, Wanhong 2006: 1675, Futamura 2006: 474).

Several decades passed before the issue of Japan's sexual slavery was addressed in public. The 1970s movement against sex tours by Japanese men to other part of Asia (Hein 1999: 347). In 1973 Christian feminists in South Korea began to criticize Japanese sex tours, together with Japanese feminists working closely with their Asian counterparts (ibid: 347). They addressed the connection between contemporary sexual practice of sex tourism and wartime "comfort women" (ibid: 348). Alice Yun Chai argues that Japanese military expansion and economic expansion had resulted in the same consequences for many poor Asian women (ibid: 348). During the wars, Japanese soldiers used the power with their weapons, took colonized women to occupied territories for sexual exploitation (ibid: 348). Today, Japanese men in business suits use the monetary power to sexually exploit women when traveling to other Asian countries and through trafficking (ibid: 348).

In the 1980s, attention to human rights was an important element of domestic political organizing in many countries including South Korea (Enloe 1994: 225). Consequently, in the 1990s, many feminists within and outside Japan wrote about Japan's wartime sexual slavery, collected testimonies, spoke in the media, wrote legal briefs, designed law, and petitioned the UN to investigate these issues (Hein 1999: 348). These efforts attempted to create public opinion of viewing sexual slavery as serious human rights violation (ibid:

348). In Japan, feminists used the history of sexual slavery to criticize wartime and postwar Japan with the goals of reforming public opinion of violence against women and making it public rather than private concern, along sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, and gender discrimination at workplace (ibid: 349). They saw a commonality between the wartime sexual slavery issue and contemporary women's issues (ibid: 349).

Meanwhile, there had been movement against sexual slavery and human rights violation at the international level, too. During the time of the Vietnam War, no public attention was paid to rape (Enloe 1994: 223). However, in 1982, seven years after the end of the war, the Australian women organized a historical march against rape that had taken place during the Vietnam War, which led to media news amplifying voices of women rape survivors (ibid: 223). Women became not just victims, but gained positions within evolving political systems in their society (ibid: 223-224). At the same time, feminists started to work on revealing international social structures to produce racial stratification that needs particular forms of sexualized violence for its survival (ibid: 224). In addition, by using rape as a starting point, feminists explored military structures that heavily rely on misogynist forms of masculinist soldiering (ibid: 225).

In early 1992, human rights groups such as Amnesty International's London and the US based Human Right Watch devoted themselves to violation of women's human rights at the international level (Enloe 1994: 226). During the same time, feminist activists began to conceptualize their campaigns in terms of international human rights. Furthermore, the issue of rape in Bosnia documented by women's organizations and brought up to the international community and then the United Nations in the 1990s, made a difference in feminist perspectives.⁵

These enormous efforts by feminists and women's and human rights groups from inside and outside of Japan and Asia made some progress for the issue of the Japan's wartime sexual slavery system. It resulted in the first acknowledgement and apology of the Japanese

⁵ Referred to an advance copy of the author. The author, Zarkov, D. has given me an advance copy ahead of envisaged publication: Zarkov, D. (2017) 'Sexual Violence in Post-Cold War Global Context', in Karen Hagemann et al (eds) *Gender, War and the Western World since 17th Century*, Oxford University Press.

government known as ‘Kono Statement’. It was released by the then Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei on August 4, 1993 on a basis of the results of the government research on the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery during World War Two (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: 1993). Japan officially admitted that women from its colonies were forcibly taken into the system to sexually serve Japanese soldiers and that the Japanese military was involved in the establishment and management of the system (Hayashi 2001: 573, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: 1993):

Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then 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 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993⁶).

In the statement, Kono Yohei, the then Chief Cabinet Secretary sincerely apologized for these acts, acknowledging the relevance of colonial relations for the violence against women:

The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days, and their recruitment, transfer, control, etc., were conducted generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.

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 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1993⁷).

⁶ <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>

⁷ <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/women/fund/state9308.html>

Almost two years later, on August 15, 1995, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi released ‘Murayama Statement’, officially titled ‘On the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the War’s End’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan: 1995). Although Murayama admitted the Japan’s wrongdoing, such as colonial rule and aggression over other Asian nations and expressed his sincere apology for those mistakes, he never mentioned either “comfort women” or sexual slavery (ibid).

But the survivors and feminists did not stay silent. They organized the Women's International Tribunal in December 2000, bringing together survivors, witnesses and activists from all over the world to address the sexual slavery system using existing international legal tools (Hayashi 2001: 578-579). In the following year, 2001, the Women's International Tribunal found the Japan’s Emperor and other twenty military and political leaders guilty of war crimes (ibid: 579-580). However, the Women's International Tribunal had no enforcement power. Furthermore, the Japanese media kept silence and never reported about the Women’s Tokyo Tribunal, while the foreign media did so (ibid: 580). It is important to note that there was political pressure on media not to cover it. The case of Japan Broadcasting Corporation (*NHK*) is interesting in this respect. *NHK* is the only Japan’s public national broadcasting organization (among many private ones). In January 2001 *NHK* produced a program that was supposed to talk about the Women's International Tribunal, the verdict and the sexual slavery system, but instead gave a heavily edited discussion that did not mention the verdict and sexual slavery system (Tanaka 2017: 166-167). A few years later, in 2005, *Asahi Newspaper Company*, one of the largest newspapers in Japan, reported that there was political intervention by nationalist politicians in Liberal Democratic Party of Abe Shinzo who served as Prime Minister from 2006 to 2007 and has also been Prime Minister since 2012 and Nakagawa Shoichi (ibid: 166-167). Both had been vigorously engaged in activities of a committee (which they created) in order to examine and reconsider historical events and issues, including the “comfort women” (Suganuma 2014: 70).

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo had actively spoken about the “comfort women” issue (using these terms) since he was elected as prime minister on September 26, 2006, until he

resigned on August 27, 2007 (Tanaka 2017: 168-170). For instance, he asserted on October 5, 2006, that no evidence is found to prove that coercion was involved in recruiting women, and on March 16, 2007, that there was no evidence to prove the involvement of the Japanese military in recruiting women, although ‘Kono Statement’ clearly proves otherwise (ibid: 168). Prime Minister Abe returned to the office of Prime Minister on December 26, 2012, and began to discredit ‘Murayama Statement’ as well as ‘Kono Statement’ in April 2013 (Tanaka 2017: 170).

In July 2013, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo gained the landslide victory in the election of the House of Councilors and confidence of having power because Liberal Democratic Party was also leading the House of Representatives at that time (Tanaka 2017: 172). Soon after, in October 2013, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo organized his new cabinet that made of those who shared his nationalist ideas (ibid: 172). He appointed Momii Katsuto as the chairman of Japan Broadcasting Corporation (*NHK*) and other nationalists as the board of directors of *NHK* and started to accelerate nationalist campaign to address Japan’s conduct in World War Two, including the “comfort women” system with his nationalist associates (ibid: 172-174). As my research in the next chapter shows, this mostly means denial of responsibility, informed by sexism, racism and nationalism. In that, these recent discourses on the Japan’s wartime sexual slavery system are similar to those of the 1930s and 1904s. I address their similarities – and differences – in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. Discourses of Denial and Justification

To explore justification of the Japan's government and Imperial Army for establishing the military system of sexual slavery, this chapter will examine the documents written and issued by the Japanese officials between the 1930s and 1940s and the statements of Japanese officials in the period of 2013-2014 reported in national and international media. The chapter is organized around the thematic narratives addressing first those that are specific for the earlier period, moving to those that show remarkable similarities in both periods, and then to those that are specific for the later period.

As my analysis shows notions and ideals of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood figure prominently in both periods. Ideas about the nature of men's sexual desire is strongly related to soldiers' mood and health, as well as to the ability of officers to maintain discipline. The early period narrative indicates the relevance of the military goals of the war, and military discipline as crucial to accomplish the goals and preserve the honor of the Imperial Army. All of these ideas underpin justification of the establishment of "comfort stations".

Narratives of the later period bring some change: in place of the honor of the Imperial Army, now the focus is the honor of the nation and Japan's superior position in international society. Finally, the later period also brings up the narrative that shifts and belittles Japan's responsibility for the sexual slavery system.

4.1. Military Goal and the Relevance of Military Discipline

The main reason for the establishment of the sexual slavery system was that Japanese leaders believed it would help with achieving the Japan's political and military goal of expanding the Empire across Asia. The logic was the following: to achieve its goal Japan needs healthy, satisfied and disciplined soldiers; to make soldiers happy and disciplined, soldiers need sex;

if sex is not provided in organized and controlled manner, soldiers will rape civilian women. I will address ideas about male (and female) sexuality in the next section. Here first I look at the documents directly linking the achievement of the Japan's expansionist goals to the sexual slavery system.

In a document 'Measures to Promote Military Discipline with Experiences of the Battle of China' issued by the adjutant of the Ministry of the Army dated September 19, 1940 (AWF 1997b: 43), he says, "military discipline is a crucial thread of life for military" (ibid: 48), and explains:

Despite the great achievement that the Imperial Army has made since the Battle of China, Japanese soldiers have committed lots of crimes such as rape, looting, arson and brutal murder of prisoners. Because these crimes are against of the essence of the principles of the Imperial Army, they can make it difficult for us to achieve the goal of the sacred war by increasing anti-Japanese sentiment outside and within Japan. This should not happen, if we are to achieve the goal of the sacred war that is establishing the eternal peace and order in the East by overthrowing the enemy of Japan and any acts against Japan. It is important to note that civilians should never be target of attacks (AWF 1997b: 48-49, Tanaka 2002: 24).

In order to address the issue of those crimes, he claims that "comfort stations" are an "immediate and significant" means (AWF 1997b: 50-51). Moreover, he describes "comfort stations" as a beneficial tool for prevention of not only rape but also STDs (ibid: 50-51). In the document issued on June 27, 1938, 'Matters Regarding the Acts of the Army and its Soldiers against Civilian', Okabe Naozaburo, the chief of the North China Area Army is concerned that the crime of rape committed by Japanese soldiers against Chinese civilians has been widespread in many places in China and has caused anti-Japanese sentiment among Chinese people (AWF 1997b: 21-25, AWF 1997c: 50, Tanaka 2002: 16). He repeatedly stresses the risk of damaging security in the document, and explains that this can become a problem that prevents from carrying out the military plans of the Army and can bring a big trouble to the nation (AWF 1997b: 24-25, Tanaka 2002: 16). He then proposes a solution to the issue of the crime of rape: "it is therefore considerably important to strictly

manage soldiers and promptly set up facilities for providing sexual comfort in order to stop soldiers from breaking the law” (AWF 1997b: 23-26).

In addition, the Japanese Army is concerned with the spread of STDs among soldiers, contracted through rape of, or sex with women who have STDs. The nation therefore had to manage STDs of soldiers through controlling women’s bodies by forcing them to undergo a genital examination for STDs (Enloe 2000: 54-55). At that time, STDs was a really critical problem among Japan’s military leaders and doctors because of its influence on losing fighting power (Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 68-69). According to the report of the North China Area Army, ‘Procedures for the Hygiene Education of Key Officers’, it required 91 days on average to recover from gonorrhea, 58 days from early-stage syphilis, 76 days from syphilis and 1012 days from lymphogranuloma venereum⁸ (ibid: 69).

All of the above documents make direct link between the crime of rape, the accomplishment of the war goals and the establishment of “comfort stations”. Rape was not seen as a problem about violence against women and girls, but a problem of the military carrying out its plans of building the ideal Empire of Japan in the East. Stories of rape are an influential factor for a nation to balance its position in patriarchal international politics (Enloe 1994: 220). To protect its military goals the Japanese Army and the state established the facilities that delivered women’s bodies and sexual pleasure to their soldiers. They believed that this was the way to protect Japan from anti-Japanese sentiments in occupied territories caused by Japanese soldiers’ rape, and thus the way to achieve the goals of the Imperial Army.

⁸ Lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) is a sexually transmitted disease caused by *Chlamydia trachomatis*. “Early stages of LGV are characterised by a marked bubonic disease in the groin after a painless papule or a shallow ulcer. Late manifestations include strictures and fistulas when the rectum is involved, and disfiguring conditions of the external genitalia, such as elephantiasis and esthiomene (as cited in Nieuwenhuis, R.F., J.M. Ossewaarde, W.I. van der Meijden and H.A. Neumann 2003: 453).”

4.2. Nature of Men's Sexual Desire: Soldiers' Mood and Health

During World War Two, Japanese soldiers' mood and health were seen crucial for maintaining military discipline, in pursuance of the military goals. Satisfying sexual desire of soldiers was seen as a main issue in keeping soldiers happy, next to keeping them healthy. Men's sexual desire is seen as an inherent biological need of men, and sex is seen as vital for men to maintain well-being of manhood (Schotten 2005: 232). It is therefore believed that men's sexual desire can never be inhibited (Ahn 2008: 44).

This is evident in the documents. According to 'Regulations Regarding the Morikawa Unit's Special Duty, Comfort Stations' dated November 14, 1939 issued by the unit commander of Morikawa, easing soldiers' mood for preservation of military discipline is a crucial purpose of "comfort stations" (AWF 1997b: 327):

The purpose of establishing the special duty, comfort stations is to ease and mediate soldiers' mood in order to contribute to promoting military discipline, and therefore the strict management is necessary to contribute to promoting military discipline by easing and mediating soldiers' mood (AWF 1997b: 329).

In the earlier mentioned document 'Measures to Promote Military Discipline with Experiences of the Battle of China', sent to every unit of the Army by the adjutant of the Ministry of the Army on September 19, 1940, the adjutant emphasizes multiple benefits of "psychological effect" of "comfort stations" (AWF 1997b: 43, 1997c: 51):

In particular, psychological effects of using sexual comfort stations on soldiers is the most immediate and significant, and therefore it must be considered that promotion of soldiers' morale, maintenance of military discipline, and prevention of crime and STDs depend on whether supervision of comfort stations is adequate or inadequate (AWF 1997b: 50-51).

The first lieutenant and psychiatrist, Torao Hayao also links ideas about male sexual desire

and “comfort stations” in the document issued in June 1939, ‘Peculiar Phenomenon about the Life on the Battlefields and its Measures’ (AWF 1997b: 55-57, 66): “Inhibiting sexual desire for a long period would naturally lead to violence against Chinese women, and comfort stations were therefore established immediately” (ibid: 66). He further explains that there are still a great number of rape incidents by soldiers because of insufficient supply of women who sexually serve them, and continues to note that the unit commanders of the Army see rape as inevitable and they pretend not to recognize it (ibid: 66-67, 73).

These documents reveal that Japan’s military leaders considered that sexual desire of soldiers cannot be inhibited, linked it rape of Chinese women and saw the establishment of “comfort stations” as a rape-prevention measure.

Patriarchal ideas of gender and sexuality are part of the myth of men’s sexual desire that allows women to be seen as the most convenient tool to prevent the crime of rape and STDs. Patriarchal ideas that women’s sexuality is there to serve men’s sexuality, and especially to support soldiers and nation’s men are noted by Mosse and Nagel in their work on gender and nationhood. They criticize nationalist ideas that sexual “comforting” is the way that women can contribute the nation and nation’s men while men are assigned to be soldiers to defend the nation (Nagel 1998: 256).

Men’s sexual desire is also described as an essential element of manhood in the Torao Hayao’s statement:

Sensible soldiers who know what comfort stations are used for sneer at military authorities and leaders, while there are military officers who insult soldiers who don’t go to comfort stations (AWF 1997b: 73).

The statement means that soldiers are insulted for not using “comfort stations” because sex is associated with manhood and sexual practice with women is believed to be a vehicle to affirm and prove a status of being “a real man” (Ahn 2010: 215).

He also argues about reasons why rape against Chinese women continues even after the establishment of “comfort stations”:

The idea of soldiers that they can freely do things to enemy women, which they are never permitted to do within Japan, greatly functions when they see young Chinese women. Hence, those who were arrested are simply unlucky, and it is difficult to know the real number of soldiers who committed rape (AWF 1997b: 66-67).

Enemy’s women are characterized as more available, and this is part of national war policies (Nagel 1998: 257-258). Women and girls are seen as part of property of their husbands, fathers or male guardians (Duriesmith 2016: 56). Japanese men are entrusted to protect Japanese women from being raped because their women are their property. However, they don’t have to protect Chinese women because Chinese men are enemy of Japan. Japanese soldiers thus can rape Chinese women and also show Chinese men that they are incapable of protecting their women. Nagel argues that men don’t rape women from their own community in war because rape in war is “ethnosexual phenomenon” (Nagel 2003a: 181):

“Differences in nationality, race, or ethnicity separate the combatants and identify the targets of aggression in military operations” (ibid: 181)

In the case of Japan’s wartime sexual slavery, Korean and other East-Asian women’s place in the racial hierarchy – as perceived by Japanese understanding of their own racial superiority – has made these women the target of sexual slavery. But racial hierarchy has also been important within the system of sexual slavery. An Army diary dated from March 1 to March 31, 1938, notes the price list in using “comfort stations” (AWF 1997b: 241). The price for a Chinese woman is 1 yen⁹, compared to 1.5 yen¹⁰ for a Korean woman and 2 yen¹¹ for a Japanese woman (ibid: 244). In addition, most Asian women, including Korean women, were forced to serve for lower-class soldiers while Japanese and European women

⁹ 1 yen is nearly equal to 0.9 cent in US dollar.

¹⁰ 1.5 yen is nearly equal to 1.45 cent in US dollar.

¹¹ 2 yen is nearly equal to 1.8 cent in US dollar.

were assigned to high-ranking officers:

“Most of the European women were Dutch [often of mixed ancestry] who were imprisoned in a prisoner of war camps in the Netherlands East Indies” (Nagel 2003a: 181-182)

The myth of men’s sexuality is still important in the Japan’s public discourses about the sexual slavery system, even in the twenty-first century. This is evident in the statements by Hashimoto Toru, the then mayor of Osaka city and head of Japan Restoration Party who mentioned the issue of “comfort women” when he answered a question about ‘Murayama Statement’ raised by reporters waiting in front of Osaka City Hall, at the first on-the-spot interview on May 13, 2013 (as reported by *Synodos*¹² 2013a). Hashimoto Toru argued about the reason why the system of “comfort women” was necessary in Japan and many other nations:

No wonder that it was necessary. When soldiers are running around at the risk of losing their life in a rainstorm of bullets, their mood is growing excited. Then they should be able to have a rest somewhere. If you think that you want them to rest, you will understand and anybody will understand that the comfort women system was necessary (Synodos 2013a¹³).

At the second on-the-spot interview on May 13, 2013, Hashimoto Toru also explains the reason by responding to a reporter’s question whether he meant in the first interview that the “comfort women” system was necessary even though women were taken into the system against their will (*Synodos* 2013b). He answered, “Regardless of whether or not it’s against the women’s will, it was necessary at that time to maintain the military and military discipline” (ibid).

When a reporter asked him if his argument about the necessity of the system under the war is valid today (*Synodos* 2013b), he linked male sexual desire, sex industry and war:

¹² *Synodos* is a company providing frequent web news, mostly about politics.

¹³ <http://synodos.jp/politics/3894>

It's not allowed today, but I think that the sex industry is necessary. When I visited the Marine Corps of the US in Okinawa, I told the officer that the US Marines should make use of the sex industry in Okinawa. The officer immediately became silent, made a bitter smile and said, "The US Marines are prohibited from using such a business." But I believe that things get more complicated because people are hypocritical. The sex industry is legally allowed to operate in Japan. Japan has a legalized place to release sexual energy. The US Marine Corps should be able to use it. Otherwise, sexual energy of the wild Marines cannot be controlled (Synodos 2013b¹⁴).

The patriarchal myth that men's sexual desire cannot be controllable has been still dominant in the political field in Japan almost seventy years after the end of the War. Hashimoto Toru has no doubt that men are not able to control their sexual desire and that sex is crucial to maintain men's good mood. These same ideas have inspired the establishment of the sexual slavery system during the war and have supported the sex industry around military barracks in today's Japan, as elsewhere in the world (Enloe 2014: 157-169).

4.3. Honor of the Imperial Army and the Nation

Honor as an ideal has been hugely important for the Imperial Japanese Army in its expansion in Asia before and during World War Two. This is why Japanese officials who were responsible for organizing the sexual slavery system were concerned that it should be conducted in a specific – “proper” – way, so as not to damage the honor of the Army. Many documents relate “recruitment” (which in practice meant abduction and force) of “comfort women” and organization, maintenance and control of “comfort stations” to the Army's honor.

¹⁴ <http://synodos.jp/politics/3894/2>

The chief of the Police Affairs Bureau of Ministry of Home Secretary mentions “honor” in the document entitled ‘Matters Regarding the Treatment of Women Who Are Sent to China’ on February 18, 1938 (AWF 1997a: 55). He explains procedures and rules of “recruiting” women such as age limit of more than 21 years old, absence of STDs and issue of identification to women, and expresses his concern (ibid: 61-66).

Inappropriate management of procedures of recruiting women can damage the honor of the Army and prestige of the Empire of Japan. It’s also the act that cannot be accepted by Japanese people, especially soldiers’ family (AWF 1997a: 58).

In a second document on the same matter (under the same name: ‘Matters Regarding the Treatment of Women Who Are Sent to China’) issued on February 23, 1938, he repeats that inappropriate management can damage the honor of the Army and prestige of the Empire of Japan (AWF 1997a: 69-70).

Similarly, the governor of Ibaraki prefecture argues the importance of the prestige of the Imperial Army while explaining issues regarding “comfort women” in a document entitled ‘Matters Regarding the Recruitment of Women to Work in Comfort Stations of the Army Within the Shanghai Expeditionary Army’ (AWF 1997a: 47). He says:

The act of revealing the real purpose that comfort stations are the place of prostitution is inappropriate to public order, and mentioning this when recruiting women can damage the prestige of the Imperial Army (AWF 1997a: 49).

This document was sent to officials such as the Minister of Home Secretary, Minister of the Army, each governor of prefectures and each police chief of prefectures on February 14, 1938 (AWF 1997a: 48-49).

The fourth document is a notice entitled ‘Matters Regarding the Recruitment of Women to Work in Military Comfort Stations’, which was issued by the adjutant of the Ministry of the Army on March 4, 1938 to the chief of the North China Area Army and Central China

Expeditionary Army (AWF 1997b: 5-6). In the document, the sender also directly relates the honor of the Army to the way of “recruiting” women for the “work” in the stations:

Regarding recruiting women who work in military comfort stations in the areas affected by the Battle of China, there is fear that some people act to recruit women by claiming they have the military's consent, which may damage the honor of the Army because of their inappropriate ways of recruiting women such as abduction and this could cause the misunderstanding among civilians (AWF 1997b: 6).

He mentions “rounding up” and “kidnaping” women, and asserts that, in order to avoid such problems:

In the future, the Army will take control over the recruitment of women and selection of people who recruit women in cooperation with the military police or local police of the areas (AWF 1997b: 6-7, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 59).

He continues:

You are hereby notified of the order [of the Minister of War] to carry out this task with the utmost regard for preserving the honor of the army and for avoiding social problems (AWF 1997b: 6-7, Yoshimi and O'Brien 2000: 58-59).

Honor is one of the central aspect of dominant patriarchal notions of masculinity, and it is part of men's responsibility to defend their own honor and that of the women by controlling women's bodies as a symbol of male honor (Duara 1998: 297, Nagel 1998: 256). If men are not able to manifest their ability to control women's bodies, they feel that their masculinity is destroyed because women's bodies are a symbol to embody the masculine honor of the family and nation. In this particular case, the bodies to control are not the nation's bodies, Japanese women's bodies. Nevertheless, the Japanese Army defined its honor through the way non-national women were “recruited” into the sexual services for the soldiers. While this “recruitment” included force and violence, the army documents deny that this violence

is perpetrated by the military, blaming “some people”. Soldiers of the Imperial Army appear behaving properly, while women “recruited” into sexual slavery by the Army appear to have joined voluntarily.

The discourse of honor is sustained – this time in the name of the nation rather than in the name of the Imperial Army - in present-day Japan. Mosse describes, that unlike men, women are seen as undermining and dishonoring the nation and nation’s men while they also need to be sexually available to provide pleasure and enjoyment to male soldiers (Nagel 1998: 256). Such ideas are still present in Japan today. Nakayama Nariaki, a member of the House of Representative and of Japan Restoration Party who has experience of serving as Minister of Land, Infrastructure & Transport nine years ago and Tourism and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology twelve years ago said through his *Twitter* account on May 21, 2013 (Nakayama 2013):

I told a woman reporter from Asahi Newspaper Company who visited me for an interview: South Korea spreads abroad the argument that the government authorities of Japan abducted Korean women to force them into sexual slavery, but it was only one woman in a hundred women [who was abducted] with the whole population of Korea being twenty million people. Did Korean parents just look on while their daughters and young women in their neighborhood were being taken? Were they such cowards? Let’s stop insulting each other’s ancestors (Nakayama 2013¹⁵).

Nakayama Nariaki uses the term “cowards” to describe Korean people who were not able to protect “their daughters” from the enemy, Japanese. Cowardice, as honor, is closely associated with manhood and as such is an important discourse in nationalist politics (Nagel 1998: 251-252). Men are measured against bravery and cowardice within nationalism, patriotism or militarism, which determines their manliness (ibid: 251-252). Because issues of women’s bodies - such as rape - are interpreted not only as violation of

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/nakayamanariaki/status/336748102151200768>

women but also threat to manhood and nation, men have to aggressively address those issues by demonstrating their ability to do protect “their women” from rape (Enloe 1994: 220, Enloe 2004: 80). Nakayama Nariaki also sees failure of protecting women or dealing with issues of women’s bodies as “insult” because “insult” is also an important component of manhood. “Insult” is seen to probe manhood and men see “insult” as reducing their honor in social relationships and interaction (Cooper 2009: 679, 691). Enloe says that violence against women’s bodies including rape has been imagined by masculinized national leaders to be an insult to or humiliation of the entire nation (Enloe 2004: 81). Nagel also explains that insult against the sexual virility of others who are outside the nation and calls to defend the sexual honor of the nation’s own members are among the strongest “fighting words” that nationalists can utter (Nagel 2003b: 148-149). This is reflected in the way Nakayama calls Korean men “cowards”.

Failure of making women silent about stories of violence against them - including rape - can also damage men’s honor within nationalism. Nationalist leaders across the world have attempted to stop “their women” from speaking out about being raped by the enemy in order to keep consolidating patriarchal power over women (Agathangelou 2000: 15). In Japan, politicians praised Japanese women survivors of the sexual slavery system for remaining silent about their experience (Enloe 1994: 228, Kumagai 2015: 152). Nakayama Nariaki does the same during a lecture he delivered in a community while making racist comments in which he compares Japanese and Korean women (Naver 2014):

You don’t see any Japanese women coming forward to say, “I was a comfort woman.” Things are different for Korean women. They have no shame and do nothing but lie. The only explanation is that we are from different races (Yoo¹⁶ 2014).

Patriarchal nationalism assumes honor as the men’s responsibility and shame as the women’s responsibility, and this honor can be achieved with “shame” of rape being silenced and hidden (Nagel 1998: 256).

¹⁶ Byunghun Yoo is a writer of the Diplomat.
<http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/confucianism-fails-to-explain-sewol-ferry-tragedy/>

Nakayama's statements confirm that nationalism is a gendered, sexualized and racialized system of values, which provides specific locations for both women and men within the nation, identifies desirable and undesirable members by creating gender, sexual and ethnic/racial hierarchies within the nation and establishing criteria for judging good or bad performances of national masculinities and femininities (Nagel 2003b: 146). These racialized and sexualized depiction of "the other" is a common strategy, not only by extreme nationalists but also by many governments, particularly during wartime (ibid: 143).

Honor is also emphasized by the Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo who contrasts insult and humiliation presumably caused to Japan by public attention to the issue of Japan's wartime sexual slavery. On September 11, 2014, he claimed on the radio program named 'The Voice: You Say That Much!'¹⁷ that wrong information on "comfort women" damaged the honor of Japan (*Japan Economics Newspaper 2014, Industrial and Economic Newspaper 2014*).

I shouldn't make any comment on whether the news content of a specific news media is right or wrong, but for example, many people got distressed by the erroneous report regarding the comfort women issue of Asahi Shimbun, and it is true that the honor of Japan was damaged in the international society. In general, reporting brings great impact within and outside of Japan and can damage the honor of Japan. The media should consider it and be responsible of reporting accurate and reliable contents of the news. This would be what the people of Japan want (Industrial and Economic Newspaper 2014¹⁸).

Stories about war rape matter in today's globalized world because they affect a nation's place in the patriarchal international community (Enloe 1994: 220). Thus having been accused of war rape is important, especially among national leaders who (want to) play a

¹⁷ The radio program, 'Za Boisu: Sokomade Iuka! (The Voice: You Say That Much!)' is a Japanese news program that is broadcasted in the evening from Monday to Thursday by Nippon Broadcasting Company that holds a conservative position (*J-Cast 2014*).

¹⁸ <http://www.sankei.com/politics/news/140912/pl1409120006-n1.html>

role at the international level because they see that it can harm reputation of both national leaders and their nations. In Japan, the case of “comfort women” is seen as such a damaging story (Melander 2015: 41-44). In his statement Prime Minister Abe attacks *Asahi Newspaper Company* because *Asahi Newspaper Company* issued sixteen articles related to “comfort women” based on the (later proved) false testimony of Yoshida Seiji who claimed he was involved in abducting 205 Korean women for the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery during World War Two (Tanaka 2017: 174). It was noticed by some historians and journalists by the late 1990s that there were discrepancies in the testimony of Yoshida Seiji (ibid: 174-175).

With the “comfort women” issue gaining publicity, conservative nationalist leaders such as Prime Minister Abe felt that their sense of superiority to other Asian nation and to women is injured, and that the honor of Japan is damaged (Kumagai 2015: 147). Prime Minister Abe seems to use three interlocking elements of nationalist narratives: the glorious past, degraded present and utopian future (Levinger and Lytle 2001: 178, 186). Nationalists invent and emphasize the glorious past, such as flawless and powerful Japanese Empire, and categorize its loss that is caused by either external or internal factor such as military defeat, loss of language and moral corruption (ibid: 179-181). In categorizing loss, the nation is identified as a unified community (ibid: 181). Bringing up the issue of Japan’s wartime sexual slavery is seen as inflicting damage and degrading present-day Japan. As a solution, a utopian future is imagined to be achieved through revival of the conditions that have been degraded or lost (ibid: 185). Prime Minister Abe demands that the media report “accurate” contents of news to regain the honorable Japan because the honor of Japan was lost by the “irresponsible” reporting about the Japan’s role in the sexual slavery system. The utopian future of Japan depends on the erasure of the stories about the sexual slavery system.

4.4. Japan's Superior Position within the International Community

The issue of women's bodies and wartime rape is not just a domestic affair in Japan, but is seen as directly influencing and accumulating anti-Japanese sentiments outside of Japan and consequently damaging image and position of Japan within the international community. Nishimura Shingo, a then member of the House of Representative argued on May 16, 2013 that the issue of "comfort women" could produce anti-Japanese sentiment (*Chuo Nippo*¹⁹ 2013, Kurtenbach²⁰ 2013):

The term "comfort women" for military has been misunderstood and translated as "sex slaves" by the foreign media, which can produce anti-Japanese sentiment. We should fight back against the misunderstanding by emphasizing that "comfort women" and "sex slaves" are different and that there are lots of South Korean prostitutes roaming in Japan (Chuo Nippo 2013, Kurtenbach 2013).

He further added:

When I go back to Osaka today, I can go to an entertainment district in Osaka and tell them, 'Hey, you, a South Korean prostitute!' (Chuo Nippo 2013, Kurtenbach 2013)

Nishimura Shingo later said that the remarks above were inappropriate (Kurtenbach 2013). However, in this statement he denies that sex slavery and coercion were involved because Japan's fallen image and standing in the international community may be caused by anti-Japanese sentiment among people in other countries, accumulated by the "misunderstanding" about "comfort women". Nishimura Shingo equates wartime sexual slavery with voluntary prostitution – rather than violence - by arguing that today – as in the past - Korean prostitutes are common in Japan. Racism and patriarchal ideas about female

¹⁹ *Chuo Nippo* is a Korean newspaper company based in Japan.
<http://japanese.joins.com/article/740/171740.html>

²⁰ Elaine Kurtenbach is a writer of USA Today.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/05/17/more-controversy-for-japan-party-over-sex-comments/2193269/>

sexuality and sexual morality, and discrimination against women, especially non-Japanese women those who work as sex workers are all evident in his statement.

The patriarchal logic is working in multiple ways to secure manhood. Women are expected to have a role of sexually comforting men while at the same time they are valued for being “pure” and “virgin” for the sake of the honor of both men and the nation. Women who have sexual relationship outside marriage or recreational sex are viewed as “fallen” women. In the above statements, Korean women are equated with prostitutes, saving Japanese women from being seen as such. At the same time, wartime sexual slavery is equated with prostitution, thus denying violence and its long-term consequences for women. The main worry of nationalist politicians of today is the long-term consequences for Japan’s image in the international community.

4.5. Shifting Responsibility: “Everyone Has Done It”

The new narrative to justify the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery today is to belittle its uniqueness and avoid to face the responsibility by shifting it to and equating it with others. Hashimoto Toru, the then mayor of Osaka city and head of Japan Restoration Party repeatedly argued at the first on-the-spot interview on May 13, 2013 that not only Japan but also many other states have had the “comfort women” system during wartime (*Synodos*²¹ 2013a).

*I wonder why only the Japan’s system of comfort women has been treated as a problem at the international level while lots of states also had the comfort women system for military during the wars (*Synodos*²² 2013a).*

He brings the following examples:

²¹ *Synodos* is a company providing frequent web news, mostly about politics.

²² <http://synodos.jp/politics/3894>

It is the undeniable fact that military around the world had similar systems. There were similar systems even in the Korean War and Vietnam War that occurred even after World War Two (Synodos 2013a).

These remarks of Hashimoto Toru were made to answer a question by reporters during the first on-the-spot interview on May 13, 2013. In the second on-the-spot interview on the same day, Hashimoto Toru again argues that militaries of other states “had” similar systems to the Japan’s “comfort women” system by raising examples of the US military in Okinawa and the Korean war (Synodos 2013b).

Momii Katsuo, the chairman of *Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK)* justified the “comfort women” system at a press conference that has taken place when he became a chairman of *NHK* on January 25, 2014. He also asserted that similar institutions to the Japan’s military system of “comfort women” was everywhere in countries at war (Spitzer²³ 2014). He insists that it’s morally wrong in the present day (ibid). On the other hand, he speaks:

Can you say that there was no such institution in Germany or France? It was everywhere in Europe. So why are there still red light districts in the Netherlands? (Spitzer 2014²⁴)

But he soon retracted his statement (Spitzer 2014).

The narrative constructed by Hashimoto Toru and Momii Katsuo justifies the Japan’s military system of sexual slavery by bringing other states whose military was involved in prostitution during wartime. This way they equate the Japan’s system of sexual slavery that was organized, maintained and controlled by the Imperial Japanese Army to prostitution rings in peace and war alike. However, Japan has invested huge military, financial and logistical resources to organize the sexual slavery system during World War Two, while

²³ Kirk Spitzer is a writer of *Time*.

²⁴ <http://world.time.com/2014/01/29/comfort-women-japan-us-wwii-katsuto-momii-nhk/>

most often prostitution is privately controlled by criminal gangs. Although prostitution everywhere often involves coercion and violence against women, the large scale of violence within the wartime sexual slavery system can in no way be equated with prostitution.

Thus, saying that Japan did what everybody else did and shifting the responsibility to others is important because the Japanese government can then ignore the issue or the calls for apology. An apology is associated with masculinity and nationhood, and seen as bringing insult to masculine and national honor (Melander 2015: 44). Moreover, apologizing would be costly. Acts and behaviors like apologizing for historical wrongdoing is costly both in monetary and in political terms, and risky for the ideal “peace” of nationalist leaders. It influences whether they can mobilize support of conservative nationalists for a future war as well as whether they can continue to defend ideas about Japan’s superiority in Asia (Melander 2015: 44, Park 2000: 203).

CHAPTER 5. Conclusion

This research started by asking how notions of masculinity, sexuality, race and nationhood of the Japan's government and Imperial Army have justified the military system of sexual slavery – both during World War Two and today. In order to answer this question I analyzed and compared the documents from the period of World War Two and the most recent time. My analysis shows two things: first, patriarchal ideas about male (and female) sexuality, about the Empire and the nation and their political ambitions, as well as about race and racial hierarchy have informed establishment, organization and justification of the military sexual slavery system. Second, my research shows that many of those ideas are still dominating political field within which Japanese politicians deny responsibility for the wartime sexual slavery system.

The Japan's military system of sexual slavery, the so-called military system of “comfort women”, was the product of the notions and ideals of masculinity, masculine sexuality, nationhood and racial hierarchy. In the 1930s and 1940s, to carry out the combat plans for the military and political goals of expansion, preservation of military discipline was essential. Military leaders believed that male sexual drives have to be satisfied and that keeping soldiers sexual desire fulfilled would help keep discipline and prevent spread of rape. Rape was seen problematic as it could create anti-Japanese sentiments. STDs - that contracted through rape - were also an obstacle as they could reduce fighting power of soldiers. “Comfort stations” were thus established to provide sexual service and pleasure to soldiers in order to keep them in good mood and good health. “Comfort stations” were thus involved in controlling men's sexual desire, understood as vital part of manhood. This system was also supposed to guarantee the honor of the Imperial Army by making the Army appear disciplined and not involved in crimes against occupied population. The Imperial Army violated women's bodies and sexuality by creating and managing the military system that delivers women's sexual service to soldiers. The women were lower at the racial and gender hierarchy, and thus they mattered very little beyond their main task: to serve sexual needs of soldiers. Thus, next to the patriarchal myth of men's sexual desire

and honor, patriarchal gender roles were at play, where women are assigned to “comfort” men who fight for the nation. Men were expected to be strong and aggressive protectors of the Empire, and the military system of sexual slavery in World War Two was supposed to sustain their discipline, health, and good mood.

Seventy years later, the myth of men’s sexuality and ideals of gender roles are still valid, identified in the ways that today’s government of Japan refers to the wartime military system of sexual slavery. Men’s sexual desire is still seen as something uncontrollable, that needs to be satisfied, and women’s role is to “comfort” men. The ideal of “honor” continues to prevail within the Japanese government after 2000 although the subject of honor shifted from the Imperial Army to the nation. According to the Japanese government officials the honor of the nation can be saved by aggressively denying and belittling the issue of the use of women’s bodies, that is considered as insult or humiliation for “real men” and the nation. At the same time the old racist discourses embedded in Japan’s colonial racial hierarchies still reflect discrimination.

Two new narratives of justification and dissent are found after 2000. First, Japan wants to save its superior position and positive image in the international society. To do so, politicians argue that raising the issue of wartime sexual slavery is a matter of anti-Japanese sentiment. Secondly, the argument that “everyone does it” is practiced to avoid the responsibility. This is the new narrative after 2000, but the same ideals and notions about race and male sexuality conflate wartime prostitution that regularly follow armies everywhere in the world, with very specific, military organized and sustained Japanese system of wartime sexual slavery. Employing these discourses Japan still strives to shift the responsibility so that the government can ignore the calls for apology and restitution to those whom it still defines as inferior.

Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who had denied Japan’s aggression over other Asian nations during wartime including the establishment of the “comfort women” system, admitted the involvement of the Japanese military authorities and made an official apology to all survivors of the “comfort women” system in the agreement reached between the South Korean and Japanese governments in December 2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2015). He also promised to establish government fund for survivors. But, his position and

attitude about the Japanese war crimes already fed the tension between neighbor nations and Japan. At the same time, I have witnessed that Prime Minister Abe has rapidly remilitarized Japan, especially in the past few years. He introduced new security legislation despite opposition from a large group of Japanese citizens, civil societies, and the opposition parties and actively challenged the Japan's so-called pacifist constitution in order to enable Japan to have its military force, in the name of international and national security. In addition, I have observed many forms of gender stigma and discrimination caused by the patriarchal system of society at school, workplace, community and through media, and I have seen lots of women, girls and sexual and racial minorities who suffered from gender-based and racist violence in Japan and some other societies where I lived. All of these experiences pushed me to study patriarchal notions of masculinity in Japan and its link with the war and military policies.

I hope that the findings of this study can contribute to an alternative form of anti-war politics, against the current dominant forms of masculinized, militarized and patriarchal politics, and the studies of masculinity and war in general, and in Japan's involvement in World War Two specifically. Finally, I hope that Japan as a both perpetrator and affected nation of war will play a leading role of building peace in Asia and then the world through non-violent means. I hope for society in which women and girls do not need to face gendered and racialized stigma and discrimination, don't need to feel fear of violence and don't need to give up in pursuing their own choice because of gender, race or sexuality.

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