



Factors Affecting Japan In Resolving the Issue of Jugun Ianfu With South Korea Through a ‘Finally and Irreversibly’ Agreement Between Japan and South Korea in 2016

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FACTORS AFFECTING JAPAN IN RESOLVING THE ISSUE OF JUGUN IANFU WITH SOUTH KOREA THROUGH A 'FINALLY AND IRREVERSIBLY' AGREEMENT BETWEEN JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA IN 2016

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Abstract

Jugun ianfu or comfort women is a term for women who are used to meet the sexual needs of Japanese soldiers during the colonial period until the end of World War II. After rejecting the program from the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) which was formed by the Japanese government to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu*, activists and the South Korean government urged Japan to resolve the issue again. However, the Japanese government did not give a positive response. In fact, in 2014 the investigative team under Shinzo Abe stated that the statement acknowledging the direct or indirect involvement of the Japanese military in the creation and management of the comfort station was not based on facts and was the result of negotiations with South Korea. However, in November 2015, the Foreign Ministers of Japan and South Korea met and agreed to resolve this issue by drawing up a 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement. The author uses a qualitative method with the main data source in the form of literature to analyze why the Japanese government finally softened and agreed to resolve the issue of South Korea's *jugun ianfu* by compiling a 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement. The changes that occurred on the part of the Japanese government were caused by various internal and external factors, such as economic problems faced by Japan, decisive action from South Korea, pressure from the United States, the strengthening of the economy and defense from China and the increasing nuclear capabilities of North Korea.

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Introduction

During the Japanese colonial period until the end of World War II, the Japanese government established a system called a comfort station where Japanese soldiers could seek entertainment through *jugun ianfu*. *Jugun ianfu*, in English referred to as comfort women, are women who are used to meet the sexual needs of Japanese soldiers. At first, these *jugun ianfu* were Japanese women who had already worked as sex workers in Japan or also Japanese women who suffered from sexually transmitted diseases. However, to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases from the *jugun ianfu* to the soldiers, women from outside Japan were sought to become *jugun ianfu*. The *jugun ianfu* are placed in a place called a comfort station.

The comfort station, which was established in early 1932 in Japan and in various countries where Japanese troops were stationed, stopped operating until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. Comfort stations can also be used as a sign that the area is under Japanese





control because it was established where Japanese troops were at. According to Soh (1996), the number of women who served as *jugun ianfu* is estimated at around 70,000 to 200,000 people from various countries and it is also estimated that 80% of them came from the Korean Empire at that time.

The issue of *jugun ianfu* came to the fore in the 1990s with the emergence of the women's movement in South Korea. In late 1991, a former South Korean *jugun ianfu* testified about his life as a *jugun ianfu* and filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government for responsibility for the war crimes. According to Soh (2001), since the beginning of 1992, women leaders from both South Korea and Japan, former *jugun ianfu* from South Korea, and legal experts have urged international organizations, including the United Nations, to carry out a series of formal examinations and investigations related to this issue. They wanted a formal apology from the Japanese government, compensation, memorial monument construction, and correction of Japanese history textbooks to teach the truth about *jugun ianfu*.

On 11 January 1992, the Asahi newspaper reported that a Japanese historian named Yoshiaki Yoshimi found official documents that wrote about the involvement of the Japanese military in the creation and management of the comfort station (Soh, 2001). This discovery eventually made the Japanese government admit its involvement in the establishment of the comfort station and then conduct further investigations regarding the issue. After conducting an investigation, Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issued a statement acknowledging the Japanese military's direct and indirect involvement in the establishment and management of comfort stations and the deployment of *jugun ianfu*. Yohei Kono expresses his apologies and regrets on behalf of the Japanese government to all women who suffer from immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological injuries as a result of becoming a *jugun ianfu*. The Japanese government will also face the historical facts regarding *jugun ianfu* and is determined not to repeat it by etching the problem in memory through the study and teaching of history.

This statement gave rise to opposition within the Japanese government. Many think that the former *jugun ianfu*'s main problem is economic compensation. Japan cannot compensate each individual because war crimes compensation has been paid to South Korea along with the signing of the Treaty of Normalization of Relations between the two countries. However, in 1994 Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama formed a coalition with three parties (the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the New Sakigake Party) to convince the other members of the Diet that compensation should be given to every former *jugun ianfu*. Finally, it was decided to form the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) which acts as an institution for delivering compensation for former *jugun ianfu* in the Philippines, South Korea, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and Indonesia through health, welfare, and other projects.

The establishment of AWF received mixed reactions, not only from Japan itself but also from the countries of origin of the former *jugun ianfu*. Several parties accept the presence of AWF, but there are also those who do not accept it. According to Kimura (2016), AWF received criticism because the funds used were not funds from the Japanese government but funds from the private sector. Of the total 238 former *jugun ianfu* known by the South Korean government, only about 61 people received funds from AWF. In March 2007, AWF disbanded after completing its project. However, in the same year, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that there was no coercion by the Japanese authorities on the victim, and there was also no reliable evidence of such coercion (AFP, 2007). But then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe retracted that statement and said he would uphold the 1993 Kono Statement.



Activists from South Korea continued to hold demonstrations so that Japan would acknowledge and give a formal apology. The South Korean government itself also always mentions the *jugun ianfu* issue at every opportunity to meet with the Japanese government. Then in 2015, the Japanese and South Korean sides held talks on the issue of *jugun ianfu* which later resulted in an agreement to resolve the matter. The Japanese government officially apologized and acknowledged its military involvement in the establishment and management of the comfort station. The Japanese government will also provide funds that officially come from the government budget to institutions formed by South Korea. This fund will be used to help heal former *jugun ianfu* from South Korea. This agreement is declared by both parties as the final agreement and cannot be changed. According to Kim (2015), both parties also agreed to stop criticizing each other regarding this issue of *jugun ianfu*.

There has been a change in the attitude of the Japanese government, especially Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, toward the South Korean *jugun ianfu* issue. Therefore, the writer wants to analyze why the Japanese government finally softened and agreed to resolve the issue of South Korea's *jugun ianfu* by compiling a 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement. By examining these problems, we can understand what factors influence a decision or policy on a problem.

Method

The author uses a qualitative method with the main data source in the form of literature to analyze why the Japanese government finally softened and agreed to resolve the issue of South Korea's *jugun ianfu* by compiling a 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement. Qualitative methods are research conducted to understand a phenomenon based on the participants' point of view so that researchers can identify problems directly because they are involved in participant activities or by investigating with a narrative approach and collecting stories from participants (Creswell, 2014). The data used to analyze is literature books, journals, reports, and internet articles. The data collected will be limited to the process of resolving the *jugun ianfu* issue since most of the former South Korean *jugun ianfu* refused to receive assistance from the Asian Women's Fund until a 'Final and Irreversibly' Agreement was formed between Japan and South Korea.

The data that is prioritized is Japan's attitude towards the South Korean *jugun ianfu* issue from 2007 to 2016. The data obtained are the efforts made by South Korea to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu*, the attitude of the international community regarding the issue, the response of the Japanese government regarding urges to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu*, as well as matters that influence the change in the attitude of the Japanese government in responding to the issue.

The Emergence of the *Jugun Ianfu* Issue and the Establishment of the Asian Women's Fund as a Form of Japan's Responsibility

Women activists in South Korea staged a demonstration demanding that the *jugun ianfu* issue be raised after a presentation by an Ehwa Women's University student named Yun Chung Ok about the relationship between *jugun ianfu* during the colonial period and *kisaeng* tourism in modern-day Korea (Soh, 1996). This presentation was held in April 1988 at the International Conference on Women and Tourism on Jeju Island, South Korea. *Kisaeng* is a professional entertainer who in the early 1960s, was used to entertain overseas visitors. According to Soh (1996), on 6 June 1990, a member of the upper house of parliament in Japan asked the government to investigate the issue but was rejected by the government who insisted that the comfort station was a private enterprise.



Women's organizations in South Korea are constantly holding demonstrations. Then in November 1990 several women's organizations joined forces and formed *Chongdaehyop*, or in English called the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (KCWS) under the leadership of Yun Chung Ok and Lee Hyo Chae (Soh, 1996). KCWS is an organization created to focus on fighting for justice for former *jugun ianfu* from South Korea. One of the famous demonstrations from KCWS is the Wednesday Protest, a demonstration every Wednesday by KCWS and several former *jugun ianfu*. This Wednesday Protest was first held on 8 January 1992 when Prime Minister Miyazawa visited South Korea, with a demand for the Japanese government to carry out a full investigation and fulfill its responsibility to restore the rights and dignity of the victims. However, until the late 1990s, the response given by the Japanese government was not a good response.

In mid-1991, the situation changed drastically when Kim Hak Sun, a former *jugun ianfu* from South Korea, told the public about her bitter experience as a *jugun ianfu* (Hayashi, 2008). Kim Hak Sun along with two others former *jugun ianfu* then filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government at the end of 1991. Kim Hak Sun's courage to tell the public about this *jugun ianfu* aroused the courage of other victims. In 1992, a former *jugun ianfu* from the Netherlands named Jan Ruff O'Herne came forward to testify because she was inspired by the courage of Kim Hak Sun. Activists from both South Korea and Japan, former *jugun ianfu*, and legal experts urged international organizations, including the United Nations, to carry out a series of formal examinations and investigations related to the issue. In addition to KCWS's efforts to gain international support in order to pressure the Japanese government to take responsibility, the issue of *jugun ianfu* has attracted the attention of the international community, especially feminists. According to Kimura (2016), in August 1992, feminists from Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and other Asian countries held the Japanese Military's 'Comfort Women' Asian Solidarity Conference in Seoul.

Not only are feminists interested in this issue of *jugun ianfu*, Japanese historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki is also interested in investigating the issue further. Finally, on 11 January 1992 Yoshimi Yoshiaki managed to collect official documents stating the involvement of the Japanese military in establishing and managing the comfort station (Soh, 2001). Yoshimi Yoshiaki's discovery finally made the Japanese government, which was then led by Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, admit to the public about the involvement of the Japanese military in the *jugun ianfu* system. The Japanese government then also began to conduct a deeper investigation into the issue. Finally, on 4 August 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono issued a statement containing the results of an investigation into the *jugun ianfu* case. That statement acknowledged that the Japanese military was directly or indirectly involved in the establishment and management of comfort stations and the deployment of *jugun ianfu* (Asian Women's Fund, 2007). In addition, most of the recruitment was carried out by the private sector at the request of the military where the recruitment process itself was not in accordance with the will of the *jugun ianfu*, for example through persuasion, coercion, and so on. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono also expressed his apologies and regrets on behalf of the Japanese government to all women who suffered from immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological injuries due to being *jugun ianfu*. The Japanese government will also face the historical facts regarding *jugun ianfu* and determined not to repeat it by engraving the problem in memory forever through the study and teaching of history.

In 1994, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama formed a coalition with three parties (the Liberal Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the New Sakigake Party) to convince the other members of the Diet, the national legislature of Japan, that the Japanese government needed to compensate each former *jugun ianfu*. Finally, it was decided to form



the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) which acts as an institution for delivering compensation through health, welfare, and other projects for former *jugun ianfu* in the Philippines, South Korea, the Netherlands, Taiwan, and Indonesia. The establishment of AWF as a form of Japanese responsibility regarding the issue of *jugun ianfu* has received various responses. At first, many thought that the main thing pursued from the emergence of this issue was economic problems where Japan had to compensate each victim. In fact, the victims want justice in the form of the Japanese government's acknowledgment of its military involvement, an official apology, and the writing of the history of *jugun ianfu* in Japan's history textbooks, not just money.

In 1997 and 1998, The South Korean and Taiwanese governments also provided financial support to former *jugun ianfu* in their countries, equivalent to reconciliation money or compensation from the Japanese government, so they did not have to accept the money that would be disbursed from the AWF. Although there were quite a number of rejections, not a few of them finally accepted the reconciliation funds from AWF. The victims and activists were divided into two sides, those who refused and those who accepted. AWF made its first assignment in the Philippines on 13 August 1996 followed by South Korea on 11 January 1997, Indonesia on 25 March 1997, Taiwan on 2 May 1997, and the Netherlands on 25 July 1998 (Asian Women's Fund, 2007).

Changes in the Attitude of the Japanese Government

South Korea is the only country out of the five target countries for the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) program that strongly rejects the agency's program. Activists in South Korea, especially the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (KCWS) rejected the AWF program because the funds used in the program were not purely a budget from the Japanese government rather raised funds from various groups of Japanese society. When AWF came to South Korea to run the program, there was seven former *jugun ianfu* who signed up to receive the program. After receiving the compensation money and the letter, the seven former *jugun ianfu* received criticism from South Korean activists as well as other former *jugun ianfu* who did not want to accept the AWF program. Due to the enormous pressure from activists in South Korea who rejected the program, AWF finally suspended its program and tried to find ways to improve its program so that South Korea could accept it.

However, under the leadership of Kim Dae Jung, the South Korean government decided not to ask for compensation money from the Japanese government. The South Korean government and KCWS will provide subsidies for living expenses to former South Korean *jugun ianfu* who refuse the AWF program. The South Korean government then gave the subsidy to 142 people but did not give it to former *jugun ianfu*, who had received compensation money from AWF. AWF made various efforts to get the South Korean government to accept their program, but the response from the South Korean government did not change until finally on 1 May 2002 the program was terminated. The South Korean government and activists continue to demand better accountability from the Japanese government. Wednesday Protest is still being run by KCWS. President Roh Moo Hyun, who was initially less active in the issue of *jugun ianfu*, also began demanding the Japanese government to immediately resolve the issue since 2003. In addition, the Center of Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility (JWRC) issued an Appeal on the Issue of Japan's Military Comfort Women on 23 February 2007 which contained facts about the military's involvement in the system establishment, control, and management of the comfort



station and also concluded that the system is a more overt and detailed sexual slavery than licensed prostitution in Japan (Hayashi, 2008).

In 2007, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe issued a statement that there was no evidence of coercion of women in Japanese colonies during World War II to become *jugun ianfu*. It was even reported that the Japanese Diet at that time decided to change the part of Kono's statement that acknowledged the direct or indirect involvement of Japanese soldiers in the recruitment of *jugun ianfu* where the recruitment was carried out by force. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's statement received criticism from the international community, including the United States, which then forced Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to withdraw his statement and apologize to the victims. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did the same when he was re-elected to be Prime Minister of Japan in 2012. On 20 June 2014, an investigative panel commissioned by the Shinzo Abe government announced that Kono's Statement was drafted under pressure from Seoul and was a by-product of diplomatic negotiations, not the discovery of precise facts. This also caused a negative response from the international community (Kim, 2014).

But after that, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's attitude towards the issue of *jugun ianfu* changed. In 2015 during a visit to Washington, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe clearly stated his commitment not to change Kono's Statement and to try to avoid provocative remarks on the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II (Sneider, 2016). This problem finally found light after a meeting held by the Foreign Ministers of Japan and South Korea at the end of 2015. In the meeting, both parties agreed to resolve this issue by drawing up a 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement in which Japan will provide funds from their state budget. Then, South Korea will form an institution that will provide welfare programs for former *jugun ianfu* in South Korea. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also apologized to the victims who had been injured and suffered both physically and psychologically.

Decision-making approach in Japan's decision to resolve the *Jugun Ianfu* issue with South Korea in 2016

A decision-making approach is an approach used to analyze why a country takes a certain action. Richard C. Snyder's decision-making approach explains that the state is an actor who acts in certain circumstances where the action depends on the interpretation of the situation in which they are (Allison, 1971). In this approach, it is explained that there are two factors that influence the decision-making process. First, everything that is in the state, such as society, culture, domestic politics, social groups, political elites, public opinion, and the mass media. The first factor is referred to as the internal factor. Second, everything that is abroad or what is commonly referred to as the international system, such as friends, foes, international organizations, diplomatic regulations, policies of other countries, and so on. This second factor is referred to as the external factor. The Japanese government's decision to finally settle the *jugun ianfu* issue with South Korea in 2016 was also influenced by various factors. These factors are divided into two, internal factors and external factors.

Internal factors in Japan's decision-making to resolve the *Jugun Ianfu* issue with South Korea in 2016

According to Ku (2016), trade relations between South Korea and Japan continued to decline, from 108 billion U.S. dollars in 2011 to 95 billion U.S. dollars in 2013 and declined again in 2015 to 72 billion U.S. dollars. Meanwhile, exports and imports with China continued to increase. China even became the first export destination for South Korea. Therefore, in Japan's eyes, South Korea seems to prefer China as its strategic partner. When Shinzo Abe



took office as prime minister in 2007, Japan's economy was still doing well and is still the second-largest economy in the world. But in 2010, China finally surpassed Japan and was ranked as the second-largest economy in the world. Japan itself is experiencing serious economic problems, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is trying hard to fix them. Therefore, with an agreement to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu*, Japan can improve its economic relations with South Korea. It is hoped that increasing trade relations with South Korea will help the Japanese economy.

Japan itself has a desire to take a leadership role in the international arena. However, the issue of *jugun ianfu*, which has spread internationally and involves various international organizations and other countries to urge the Japanese government to take responsibility, has damaged Japan's image in the international arena. The Japanese government insists that the war crimes issue has been resolved through the normalization of relations agreement and even denies any evidence that the recruitment of *jugun ianfu* uses force. This makes Japan get a bad image from the international community. The head of the United Nations Human Rights Commission who praised Japan's active role in preventing violence in the conflict also criticized and urged Japan to immediately resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* because if not, it would mean that Japan would continue to violate the human rights of the victims (United Nations, 2014). Therefore, with an agreement to resolve this issue, Japan can slightly improve its image in the eyes of the international community and can also pave the way to achieve its goal of taking a leadership role in the international arena. In addition, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also wants the next generation of Japan to not have to keep apologizing for the previous generation's actions. This can be realized through the 'Finally and Irreversibly' Agreement because with the final and irreversible agreement; the South Korean government also promised not to discuss this issue again at any high-level meeting they will attend.

External factors in Japan's decision-making to resolve the Jugun Ianfu issue with South Korea in 2016

External factors that influence Japan's decision-making to resolve the *jugun ianfu* issue with South Korea in 2016 can be divided into two. First, a change in the strategic environment in the region affects Japan's geopolitics and geostrategy. Second, there is *gaiatsu* or external pressure on the Japanese government to immediately resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea. According to Cornett (2016), Jakub Grygiel defines geopolitics as a human factor within geography and geostrategy follows geopolitics by describing the foreign policy response to geopolitical context. Brzezinski (1986) explains the distinction between geopolitical, strategic, and geostrategic as:

The words geopolitical, strategic, and geostrategic are used to convey the following meanings: geopolitical reflects the combination of geographic and political factors determining the condition of a state or region and emphasizing the impact of geography on politics; strategic refers to the comprehensive and planned application of measures to achieve a central goal or to vital assets of military significance; and geostrategic merges strategic consideration with geopolitical ones.

The strategic environment is the relationship of situations or phenomena that are currently occurring and their development in the scope of a global, regional, and or within a country. This situation is related to strategic issues in order to achieve the national interests of various countries. Changes in the strategic environment that influence Japan's decision-making are



China's increasing economic and defense capabilities and the increasing development of missiles in North Korea.

China's growing economy followed by an increase in the defense sector is often said to be an effort to balance power against the domination of the United States. China continues to send naval and armed patrol boats into surrounding waters to assert its control over territory claimed by Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and others. In addition, China is also starting to develop its missile technology. At that time, China was also expanding the capacity of the Yulin Naval Base on Hainan Island and will introduce submarines equipped with missiles with a range of 8,000 kilometers. With such a large range, China is able to attack U.S. bases in Asia and Hawaii (Spitzer, 2011). When fired from the ground, the farthest distance China's missiles can reach Darwin, Australia. If the missile is fired from the sea, then the missile can reach Guam, United States. According to The Washington Post, Guam is an important base in the Pacific for nuclear submarines and aircraft, and there is about 5,000 US military personnel there (Bender, 2016). Meanwhile, if the missile is fired from the air, it can reach Hawaii. This, of course, is a matter of concern not only for the United States but also for Japan and South Korea. Japan and South Korea are alliances with the United States and are geographically closer to China.

In addition to threats from China's growing economic and defense sector, North Korea also continues to develop missiles and nuclear weapons. According to Choe (2015), North Korea, which in May 2015 had successfully carried out a missile test they were developing, said that they had conducted a missile test again in November 2015. North Korea already has the capability to attack the United States, U.S. military bases in the Pacific, and U.S. alliances, South Korea and Japan (Klingner, 2015). The development of nuclear and missile weapons is enough to worry the international community, especially the United States and its allies, South Korea and Japan. Changes in the East Asia region's strategic environment made the United States pressure Japan to immediately resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea.

According to Ku (2016), the United States needs good cooperation with South Korea and Japan, including sharing important military-related knowledge, in order to form an effective missile defense system to weaken China's missile capabilities and also as a deterrent to North Korea's missile and nuclear threats through the missile defense system in Northeast Asia. In 2007, the United States House of Representatives passed Resolution 121, which stated that Japan must recognize and be held responsible for the sexual slavery of young women (also known as *jugun ianfu*) during its occupation from 1930 to the end of World War II, official apology through a public statement by the Prime Minister of Japan, strongly and repeatedly refuting all claims that the *jugun ianfu* system never existed, and must educate current and future generations about this horrific crime while following the recommendations of the international community with respect to *jugun ianfu* (Wolfe, 2014). President Obama himself also tried to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* by discussing it directly during his visit to Japan and South Korea after briefly mentioning the issue at the trilateral nuclear security meeting held by President Obama in March 2014 (Sneider, 2016).

Gaiatsu (外圧) literally means foreign pressure or pressure applied from one country to another. According to Miyashita (1999), *gaiatsu* is an attempt by another country, either explicitly or implicitly, to make Japan do things it would not do. Japan's biggest *gaiatsu* is the United States, Japan often follows what the United States wants even though the interests of the two are not the same. Japan's response to pressure from the United States stems from the gap in the interdependence relationship between the two countries. It can be seen that Japan is more dependent on the United States than vice versa. This dependence relationship



gap then gave the United States great bargaining power over Japan. However, *gaiatsu* to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea did not only come from the United States government. Wednesday Protest continues to be carried out by Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (KCWS).

According to Ku (2016), the Korean-American community in the United States has also involved by constructing several *jugun ianfu* monuments in various places, including Glendale, California, and Palisades Park in New Jersey. International organizations also urged Japan to recognize and immediately resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu*. On 6 August 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, criticized a report by the Government of Japan in June 2014, which stated that it was impossible to confirm that the women who became *jugun ianfu* were forcibly recruited (UN, 2014). Pressure on Japan also came, of course, from the South Korean government. If President Roh Moo Hyun and President Lee Myung Bak held the Japanese government accountable regarding the *jugun ianfu* issue through statements at every meeting with Japan, President Park Geun Hye took firmer action against the Japanese government. President Park Geun Hye does not want to hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe if there is no understanding between the two countries regarding the issue of *jugun ianfu*. Even at the 2015 South Korea-China-Japan meeting in Seoul, President Park Geun Hye did not include Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a meal with Chinese leaders (Tisdall, 2015).

Conclusion

Japan's decision to resolve the *jugun ianfu* issue with South Korea through the 'Final and Irreversibly' Agreement in 2016 was driven by internal and external factors. The internal factor that drives Japan's decision is the existence of economic problems. By improving relations with South Korea, Japan hopes that it can improve trade relations that had previously been declining. In addition, wanting to take a leadership role in the international arena and the desire for the next generation of Japan to stop apologizing for the previous generation's mistakes were also factors driving this decision. This agreement is referred to as the Finally and Irreversibly Agreement so this agreement is indeed the last agreement between Japan and South Korea on the issue of *jugun ianfu*. So that if later the two countries change leadership, which may not be of the same mind as the current leader, the agreement cannot be changed again. The two countries also no longer criticize each other regarding the issue of *jugun ianfu*. Negative views on Japan due to this issue can be an obstacle for Japan in taking a leadership role in the international arena.

The external factor that influenced Japan's decision was the change in the strategic environment in the East Asia region, where China experienced significant economic growth, which also boosted its defense sector. In addition, North Korea is also continuously developing its missile weapons. These conditions affect the geopolitics and geostrategy of Japan. Japan itself is also still dependent on the United States in the defense sector. With the increase in missile weapons technology from both China and North Korea, this can become a threat to Japan. Resolving the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea can further strengthen the Japan-US-South Korean alliance relationship. Various external pressures or *gaiatsu* were also one of the factors driving the decision to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea. Pressure to immediately resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* came from women's activists in South Korea, international organizations, the Korean-American community in the United States, and also from the South Korean government itself. Through the explanation above, it can be concluded that external factors in Japan's decision-making to resolve the issue of *jugun ianfu* with South Korea were the most influential factors.



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