

## Women's Activisms for Comfort Women Survivors

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### Research Questions

Social movement research should examine an alternative theory from the perspective that the previous literature on social movements has been underestimated the gendered structure in relation to women's activism as well as women's lives. Contemporary social movement studies since the late 1970s have been developed along with recognizing and conceptualizing repertoires that become a unit of analysis for protest-event analysis. Also, methodology of media-content analysis using newspapers laid a solid foundation of empirical social movement research by constructing the quantitative and qualitative dataset that catalogs a series of protest-events. Thank to protest-event analysis that based upon obviously recognized and well-conceptualized repertoires, the established social movement literature have contributed to understanding the conditions that determine the occurrence and duration of social protests and founding and disbanding of Social Movement Organizations (SMOs).

The starting point on which this research should be based is that gender-blinded perspectives on protest-events or repertoires hinder the balanced recognition on women's activism, despite a great amount of important contributions which the established social movement studies have made. Stepping along with development of feminist theories, gender-sensitive and feminist approaches are a noteworthy progress in recent social movement theory. The established social movement literature has focused on male-dominated and disruptive repertoires as a unit of analysis in understanding protest-events. Disruptive actions, which are distinguishable from institutionalized and routine political events, have been considered primary feature of social movements. However, this conceptualization has produced an unexpected consequence in theorizing women's movement. Women's movements, with a few exceptions, have shown quite different characters from disruptive, sometimes involving radical violence, activism and those are largely hard to grasp through the lens of the established social movement theory. Also, since the 4<sup>th</sup> UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the institutionalization of women power and gender mainstreaming of the state has been one of the salient repertoires in women's movements. Nonetheless, without

appropriate considerations on the nature of women's movements and their repertoires, the established social movement literature produced a biased conclusion that women's movements have been withering out.

The feminist approach to social movement theory can offer an alternative theory in explaining women's movements that have been in abeyance in the eyes of the established social movement literature. Specifically, I will argue that organized struggles for recognition constitute the substantial body of the (semi-)peripheral women's movements in the contexts of women's activism for comfort women survivors in South Korea from 1980 to 2010.