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CONSIDERING MOTHERS' ANTI-WAR/PEACE MOVEMENTS IN JAPAN FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CARE ETHICS: ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MOTHERHOOD IN THE "MOTHERS' CONVENTION IN JAPAN" AND "ACTION OF MOMS OPPOSING SECURITY-RELATED LAWS"

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Abstract

This study aims to highlight the limitations of feminist research on motherhood, which until now has only focused on the negative aspects. Using the anti-war/peace movements, the "Mothers' Convention in Japan" ("Mothers' Convention") and "Action of Moms Opposing Security-Related Laws" ("Moms Against War"), I take a care-focused feminist perspective to discuss the role of motherhood in women's empowerment and promotion of political participation.

I analyze the role of motherhood that has emphasized in newspaper articles and speeches on the Mothers' Convention and Moms Against War.

In the Mothers' Convention of the 1950s and '60s, the term "mother" symbolized maternal attributes and functioned as an intermediary to unite mothers. However, articles from that period described the movement as pure and nonpolitical. In the Moms Against War movement of 2015, "mom" was often used for the mothers who participated in politics by playing ordinary roles and speaking about their everyday experiences. Such narratives are also reflected in newspaper articles.

This analysis clarifies the representation of motherhood in both movements, its different meanings, and diverse expressions and how it functions as an agent of encouraging participation in each context. In Moms Against War, the ordinary roles of being mother, which have traditionally been regarded as nonpolitical, became the grounds for being political. At the Mothers' Convention, the representation of motherhood encouraged women to become political, although outsiders thought the representation of motherhood should be kept separate from politics.

Key words: Mothers' movements; Motherhood; Mothering; Care Ethics

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1. Introduction

Conventionally, in the field of sociology, the idea of “motherhood,” as it relates to the physical functions of women as creators and nurturers, has had various meanings and social purposes. In feminist research, motherhood has been criticized as a cultural device through which society and the state impose a specific role on women and use it oppressively. In the modern state, at the same time that the “child” has been discovered as a necessary human resource for industrial society, motherhood has been rediscovered. While the value of women as mothers in the modern family has increased, the role has also functioned as a kind of system that confines women (Badinter 1980=1998). For example, the nationally distributed *Mother-and-baby notebook* encourages mothers to build themselves into the desirable image of a mother (Motohashi 2014). Previous studies have also focused on how women are raising themselves into motherhood figures. The best example of this phenomenon is the mothers’ movement during the wartime regime, called the “Women on the Homefront,” in which mothers waved the flag of war to uplift people’s spirits.

In motherhood research, while the joy and hardships associated with giving birth and raising children are uttered by those concerned, the desire to find a form of resistance that positions motherhood in its own actions and choices has also been raised (Funabashi and Tsutsumi 1992). However, the status quo is that there is little evidence from empirical research using a framework that links motherhood to women’s empowerment.

This study aims to reconsider motherhood from the perspective of promoting women’s political participation by examining two anti-war/peace movements by mothers, namely, the “Mothers’ Convention in Japan” and “Action of Moms Opposing Security-Related Laws.” Women’s Liberation Movement has made gendered divisions of labor the object of its resistance. There are various questions and criticisms of the mother’s peace movement, which brings motherhood to the forefront. However, the “ethics of care,” discovered by feminist thinkers, and which has attracted attention in recent years, envisions a society based on care as symbolized by the mother and child relationship. From that perspective, what kind of possibilities can be discovered in the mothers’ reflection and peace movement?

This study first analyzes the movement of women and mothers who gathered at the Mothers’ Convention in Japan, which started in 1955. The Mothers’ Convention in Japan is an annual gathering facilitated by the Mothers’ Convention in Japan Liaison Group, which consists of groups and labor unions. This mothers’ movement, which has continued running since the early post-war period, will be hereafter referred to as the Mothers’ Convention. Next, this study analyzes “Action of Moms Opposing Security-Related Laws” (hereafter, Moms Against War), which was founded in July 2015 to oppose security-related bills. The analysis is conducted with an awareness of identity and distinctions in how each of the movements uses the attributes and experiences of mothers to promote motherhood.

Among the many activities that mothers undertake, there are three reasons for treating the Mothers' Convention and Moms Against War as the primary subjects. (1) They are movements that promote motherhood by emphasizing what it means to be a mother or mom. (2) Their scale and social impact demonstrate they are relatively large anti-war and peace movements. (3) Comparing these mothers' movements' responses to post-war security issues will address a gap in the literature. So far, mothers' anti-war and peace movements have received little scholarly attention. It could appear as if it is only by chance that they were led by mothers (Yamamoto, 2006), among the other anti-war and peace movements led by teachers and trade unions. However, the first popular post-war anti-war and peace movement was the Mothers' Convention. Likewise, Moms Against War was the first to act when security-related laws and constitutional amendment discussions came to a head in 2015. Historically, it has been mothers who take the initiative and raise their voices to form a peace movement.

In Section 2, based on previous research's critiques of mothers' postwar movements, I examine what the suggestions can derive from arguments about care-focused feminism. Then, I analyze the attributes and roles of motherhood as portrayed in the Mothers' Convention, in Section 3, and Moms Against War, in Section 4. Then, in Section 5, I discuss the strategic use of motherhood in each movement.

2. Limits of the Conventional Framework in Capturing Mothers' Movement and New Perspectives

2.1. Criticism of Mothers' Movements in Motherhood Studies

The post-war mothers' movements, including the Mothers' Convention, have been criticized for the following points:¹⁾ No remorse for war support;²⁾ No criticism of a gender-based division of labor; and³⁾ Not starting with the individual "self."

First, regarding the lack of remorse for war support, the historical research on motherhood that has accumulated since the 1980s has criticized the connection between the concept of motherhood and nationalism and war mobilization. In the modern state, women first gained citizenship by becoming inculcators of patriotic minds and educators of children, as "mothers of a militarized country" (Elshtain 1987 = 1994). In Japan, the "educating mother" was used actively to *fukoku kyohei* (enrich the country, strengthen the armies), and education was patriotic in Japan's Meiji era (Kano 1995). During the war in the 1930s and the age of fascism, motherhood was used to mobilize women, not limiting them to their homes, but sending them out into the street, as in the Women's Defense Association. They dressed in white and wore a sash as they sent their sons to the battlefield (Kano 1995).

The mothers' movements have the problem of motherhood being treated as a symbol of regime cooperation during the war and as a "victim" at other times. There is no remorse toward nationalism, and they seal off the perpetrators who participated in the war (Suzuki

1995, 72). The continuity from the war period into the post-war period is rightly questioned because founders of the mothers' movement, such as Raicho Hirazuka, led from the regime cooperation period through the peace movement period.

Regarding the lack of criticism for a gender-based division of labor, at the start of the mothers' movement, the leaders did not take the perspective of criticizing or changing homemakers or household roles. The movement was evaluated as not having a feminist point of view. Ueno states that for a certain movement to be considered "feminist," it should be, first, an autonomous women's movement, and second, problematize the gendering of women (Ueno 2006, 140-142). The mothers' anti-war and peace movement "does not regard men and men's superiority as their biggest enemy, and in that respect, was different from the feminism of later years" (Yamamoto 2006, 269). After the second wave of feminism, the mother's movement was incomplete in that that lacked that aspect of problem awareness.

The issue of not starting with the individual "self" was a critique of the notion that women could only claim that they are mothers. The second wave of feminism aimed to dismantle the framework of the subject of a "wife," "mother," and "housewife" as the "special seats of women" (Ueno 2006). As well as feeling "as a mother" or "for my child," it was also important to make statements about the individual "self" and take responsibility for what one says (Ishizuka 1991).

The criticism of mothers' anti-war and peace movements in feminist research focused on motherhood. For research on women's liberation from gender roles, the emphasis on motherhood reproduces the female gender role. Some research has shown the potential to develop and strengthen the fact that unknown mothers have grown up as sovereigns committed to politics (Ito, 1995) and highlighted the tendency to criticize women in leadership positions.

Why do many of the women who participate in movements emphasize their motherhood, as in "Moms Against War?" First, since mothers are responsible for caring for others at home, they have been taken away from direct political engagement. The political system was established by keeping caregiving in the private domain. Women who have to take care of and raise their children and housework become mentally and physically separated from political participation. The more they try to respond to their care responsibilities, the farther away they become from politics. In that respect, the mothers' anti-war and peace movements are characterized by mothers becoming more political by emphasizing their motherhood. Previous studies have focused on the movements' leaders and symbols and have not considered what motherhood means to the mothers who participated in the movements.

2.2. Care-focused Feminism on Mothering

Since the 1990s, care ethics has attracted attention due to a trend called care-focused feminism. Care ethics is the code of conduct that develops from a focus on the thinking and practices of people who care for others. Women have been burdened with these roles,

historically, in child-rearing and homemaking. It envisions a society from the standpoint of those who are easily hurt and most vulnerable when others prioritize the type of efficiency and rationality that dominated in the past. While Kittay considers care important and distinguishes the return of care as a role, such as nursing, conventional feminist theory has also placed unique values on freedom and equality, with independent individuals in mind; that is, there is “someone who will do” the traditional roles that women have played (Kittay 2011, 85). In this context, care-focused feminism endeavors not to overcome mothering (such as giving birth and raising a child as women have done) because it is a typical practice of care, but with the principle of social planning.

Okano (2015) argues that by focusing on mothering, the ethics of care is positioned to counter the logic of “security,” the dominant political view in modern Japanese society and worldwide. The argument of “security” is that modern political thought or philosophy sees war from the attacker’s side and tries to build “peace” from the war perspective. Underlying it is Thomas Hobbes’ “Leviathan,” which states that human beings have a philosophy and perspective where: humans dominate people due to competition and appeal for violence, and when surrounded by others, humans turn to violence to secure safety. Therefore, the logic of security is ultimately to create a chain of violence in the name of peace.

Okano raises care ethics as a possible way to stop such a chain of violence. That is, the practice of care is a “conflict” between the caregiver and the one receiving care. The care practitioner is required to act “how a person of power should behave towards someone powerless or weaker than himself without being sued for violence” (Okano 2015, 210). Those who take on mothering have relationships with people who are unable to survive without their care and thus, are vulnerable. Therefore, they can be sensitive to and consider the vulnerability of others and the danger they should not have to experience (Okano 2015, 214).

Okano (2015)’s argument is that care, which is, conventionally, considered private and personal, has not been seen as mothering and that the transition is a principle of transforming political views. Mothering in care-focused feminism does not suppress people’s existence as individuals. Rather, it criticizes the traditional framework that only recognizes the individual as a subject, by maintaining the perspective that each mother should begin with the “self.” When looking at the mothers’ movement, such a shift in the position of motherhood in care-focused feminism enables a transformation of the concept of motherhood, one which recognizes it can build new political and social relationships based on the appropriateness of mothers as individual political agents.

From the perspective of ethics care, this study examines the role of motherhood in mothers’ anti-war and peace movements as a form of self-empowerment. In this study, political participation(1) will be treated as one axis. This paper will examine how the leaders of the movements emphasized motherhood, based on their respective discourse, and how society received and evaluated that emphasis, based on newspaper reports.

3. Motherhood and Political Participation in the Mothers' Convention

3.1. The Rise of the Mothers' Convention

The Mothers' Convention in Japan, which carried the slogan, "mothers who give life seek to nurture and protect life," was held for the first time in July 1955 and has continued for more than 60 years. At the convention, there were sessions, appeals, and the main event, a lecture. The first stage of the Mothers' Convention was the "World Mothers' Convention," which was scheduled after the Daigo Fukuryu Maru Incident on March 1, 1954, where a tuna fishing boat got caught up in a large-scale US hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. To select representatives, the Mothers' Convention in Japan was also scheduled. Hence, there was a nationwide call to gather at the Mothers' Convention in Japan and a fundraising campaign, where souvenirs, like hand towels and fans, were sold. Invitations were sent to all regional affiliates of organizations across the country, such as Japan Teachers' Union, Labor Union, and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). An Executive Committee of the Mothers' Convention was created and organized in each prefecture (Refer to Table 1).

The second Mothers' Convention was held due to the success of the first convention. The third convention promoted the movement and determined its four pillars, namely: (1) raise our children happily, (2) let us be happy together, (3) let us protect peace, and (4) let us further develop the mothers' movement. The policy "discuss before taking action" was also announced (Mothers' Convention in Japan Liaison Group 2009, 44). During the fourth convention, the movement expressed opposition to a government policy of a regular grade evaluation for faculty members (the "service rating" problem). Then, during the conflict over the Japan-US security treaty of the 1960s, the mothers' movement spread further. After the fifth convention, there was a "Mothers' Assembly to Prevent the Security Treaty Amendment," and an "Appeal to Mothers," which was directed at mothers all over the world. That same year, the issues of prevention and introduction of the vaccine for infantile paralysis were discussed at the convention, and petitions, requesting actions, learning seminars, and regional organizations, were developed.

Table 1. Chronological Timeline of the Mothers' Convention (1954-1960)

1954.3	Daigo Fukuryu Maru Incident	
1954.9	Raicho Hiratsuka and 5 others make an "Appeal to ban the hydrogen bomb" at the Women's International Democratic Federation	
1954.11	World Mothers' Convention is scheduled.	
1955.6.7-9	1 st Japan Mothers' Convention	Tokyo, 2000 participants.
1955.7.7-10	World Mothers' Convention	Held in Lausanne, Switzerland; 1060 participants from 68 countries.
1956	2 nd Japan Mothers' Convention	Tokyo, 4000 participants.

1957	3 rd Japan Mothers' Convention	6000 participants; Created a prototype of the subcommittee based on a questionnaire and the policy of "Discuss before taking action."
1958	4 th Japan Mothers' Convention	15000 participants; the Mothers' Convention becomes active in opposing teachers' performance rating and takes a critical stance on the government.
1959	5 th Japan Mothers' Convention	12000 participants. Discusses the amendment of the Japan-US Security Treaty in all sessions. Mothers' March is held for the first time.
1960	6 th Japan Mothers' Convention	29500 participants.

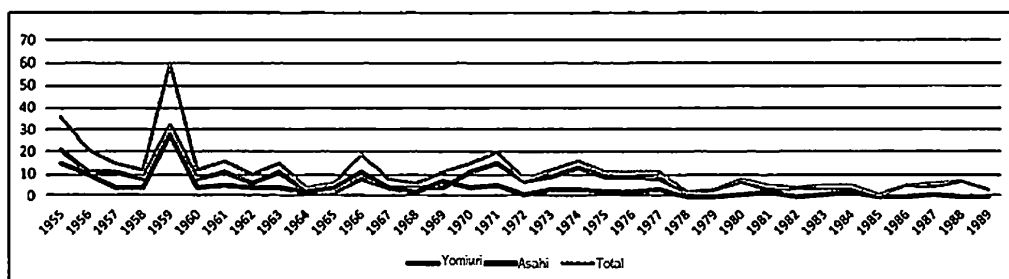


Figure 1. Number of Articles about the Mothers' Convention (1955-1989)

The number of participants at the Mothers' Conventions has generally increased since the beginning, and there was a particular rise during the security conflict. According to the databases of both the *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun*, which reported on the Mothers' Conventions at the time, there was a year when the number of articles with the keywords "Mothers' Convention" increased (Figure 1). There were many articles around 1955, after the convention started, and in 1959.

The number of participants for several years from the start of the Mothers' Convention expanded and then, in the context of the security conflict, it narrowed from the period when it gained the most attention from the media. Next, I examine how the Mothers' Convention emphasized the term "mother."

3.2. The Role of "Mother" at the Mothers' Convention

Two aspects of the term "mother" were emphasized at the Mothers' Convention: (1) as a symbol of protecting and nurturing the life of children, and (2) the call for unity with other women by focusing on children. The first one, as symbolized in the slogan for the Mothers' Convention, is directly linked to protecting children and calling for peace. In the "appeal to Japanese mothers," which was the calling card for the first Mothers' Convention, it was asked, "Why is the call for the Mothers' Convention inspiring people's excitement and support like this? It is because there is nothing more disturbing to a mother's heart than that which threatens the life and happiness of her child" (Mothers' Convention in Japan Liaison Group, 2009, 257). Hideko Maruyama's "A New Beginning of the 'History of the Mother,'" which serves as a record of the first Mothers' Convention in Japan, begins, "Mothers, who have

given half their lives to their children, consider them the most important thing and are the most worried about them. Those mothers who have lost their voices and covered their faces are thrilled to be gathering in the middle of Tokyo” (Mothers’ Convention in Japan Liaison Group, 2009, 238). Mothers worry the most about those who threaten the lives of their children to whom they have given birth and with whom they have shared their lives. Protecting that life and taking action toward peace are for a mother one and the same.

The second aspect of “mother” was that it served as a call for all mothers to unite. In the midst of preparations for the Mothers’ Convention in Japan, an “Appeal to Japanese Women” (See Reference 1) was issued by 60 women’s groups, national organizations, and circles, such as Japan Teachers’ Union, JNR Women’s Department, Coalminers’ Housewives Council, Fudanren, Association to Protect Japanese Children, Women’s Democratic Club, PTA in Tokyo, Atago Haha no Kai. The “Declaration of the World Mothers’ Convention” states, “half of humankind are women. We must be fully aware of the great responsibility we bear to all the people of the world’s children. This call to all of motherhood, to all mothers: let us all take part and make a wish for peace. Let us speak to the hearts and minds of those who cannot. For all those who do not realize that loving their children is just not enough, let us appeal that we must save our children from the war.” Natsu Kawasaki, who has been involved in the mothers’ movement as a Diet member, stated in her speech at the twelfth conference: “if the mother changes, society changes.” As symbolized in these words, she strongly urged that if mothers hold hands together and unite, “if they combine their powers,” then the country will change, and the social situation surrounding mothers and their children will improve (Hayashi 1974).

“Mother” was a call not only to those who carry out that role but also to all women in general. At the third Mothers’ Convention, in 1957, there was a discussion over the interpretation of “mother,” and it was said that “a mother’s name is the most beautiful and nostalgic, and embraces all human beings with love. At present, mothers, those who should be mothers, young people, and old people—everyone should be included” (Mothers’ Convention in Japan Liaison Group, 2009, 42).

Reference 1: An Appeal to Japanese Women

To the mother who is worried about how her family will live tomorrow. To the mother who suffers from the strict rules of the household and the habits of society.

Like the mother who works, with all her heart poured into her children's growth, Japanese mothers are walking this unhappy road.

(Omitted)

Half of humanity is composed of women. To protect our children from every single threat, if we succeed in uniting all mothers in the name of humankind, we will have immeasurable power.

The World Mothers' Convention will be held in the beginning of July. Many mothers from all walks of life will gather from distant countries.

Mothers who cannot forget their fear of war, mothers who have lost their homes and property, mothers who have sacrificed their sons to the war, mothers who cannot send their children to school, mothers who are unable to provide their children's meals and meet their medical needs satisfactorily, unemployed young mothers, mothers who are unable to find work, and mothers who are happy but wish for the happiness of many other mothers--all these mothers will assemble.

We are afraid of the production of atomic weapons, hydrogen bomb testing, and the possibility of another war. To protect our children's happiness, let us have a discussion with all the mothers of the world. To win back the rights of women, let us talk among ourselves. To create a world where mothers and children can live in peace, let us combine our powers. Let us all gather at the Japan Mothers' Convention.

At the Mothers' Convention, as a symbol of protecting and nurturing children's lives, "mother" was used as a call for women to raise awareness and unity. The first Mothers' Convention in Japan was considered as the "crying convention" because of the symbolic figures of mothers who gathered from all over the country to talk about poverty, their experiences of war, and misery as they cried (Mothers' Convention in Japan Liaison Group, 2009). The Mothers' Convention became a place where mothers could discuss and solve their problems on their own; it has been dubbed the "place where mothers discuss" and "talk honestly" (Mothers' Convention in Japan Liaison Group 2009).

3.3. Newspaper Coverage of Mothers' Conventions

How did society at the time receive the emphasis on motherhood? The 1955 newspaper coverage at the time of the first convention suggests there was much interest in the World Mothers' Convention and the Mothers' Convention in Japan. For the representative selection, it was emphasized as an unconventional, "grassroots" movement that would involve more than famous people (Evening Asahi Shimbun, Feb 24, 1955). Even at the first Mother's Convention in Japan, there were reports of a "Mother who came from Amami Oshima while carrying a baby on her back," who was "able to finally join this movement because fellow townspeople donated 1 yen each" (Evening Asahi Shimbun, June 9, 1955). There were calls for mothers from all over the country to assemble to "defeat the troubles of mothers all over Japan" (Evening Yomiuri Shimbun, June 11, 1955). Hideko Maruoka's impressions of Suzu Kuboyama crying while speaking of her husband's death and of the mothers talking honestly while simultaneously laughing and crying were captured as "the tears they held back during and after the war flow freely" (Evening Asahi Shimbun, June 10, 1955).

However, after the first one, the Mothers' Convention became the focus of newspapers again in 1959, due to the movement's opposition to security reforms and its relationships with party

organizations. It was reported that LDP leader Shojiro Kawashima was to “take appropriate measures after an investigation” regarding the movement’s third launch when the Mothers’ Convention made a “Security Treaty Amendment Prevention” resolution (Evening Asahi Shimbun, July 24, 1959). Concerns about the political behavior of the Mothers’ Convention were reported; one took the form of a letter from an unemployed man in Fukushima, “I have doubts on the resolution in such a case. I wonder if all the mothers know enough about these resolutions and seriously want them. If something of such political content is resolved inadvertently, for such an important problem, that is unmistakable negligence. Though the Mothers’ Convention itself is not taking any sides, whether or not it is on their agenda, it is only a matter of time before that happens, and then, the Mothers’ Convention will come to represent the political slogan of a party” (Evening Yomiuri Shimbun, July 17, 1959).

Secretary-General Kawashima stated at a press conference that the subsidy was cut off and that “the Mothers’ Convention will be overrun next.” Further opinions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) included that the Mothers’ Convention was part of the international communist organization and that its administration and facilitation is supported politically by the Japanese Communist Party (Evening Asahi Shimbun, July 25, 1959).

The opposition to the LDP’s criticism is another characteristic: the emphasis on the “simplicity” and “purity” of the Mothers’ Convention. The Socialist Party’s opposed, saying that “the Mothers’ Convention is a forum for mothers who wish for the happiness of their children, and it is a well-known fact that they do not have a specific political color. There is a lot of fear that naive mothers may disturb our country (Japan)’s peace through opposition to security reform issues and efforts and criticism of the government’s policy” (Evening Yomiuri Shimbun, August 13, 1959). Newspapers also published the response of Natsu Kawasaki, the first chairperson of the Mothers’ Convention, that “I will continue to study this steadily without conflict with the LDP” (Evening Asahi Shimbun, August 21, 1959).

The fifth Mothers’ Convention in 1959 was a success and had more participants. The newspapers reported that the “chaos” was eventually due to the Mothers’ Convention being about “pure” wishes and can be evaluated because it was a “mothers’ sidewalk meeting.”

The problem lies in the course of the Mothers’ Convention. It departed from being an “open place for discussion” after its participants and leaders were lectured for having ideals that differed from the daily life of mothers and for being drawn into hysterical emotions by the LDP’s criticism. Thus, it was anticipated that they would not endorse any of LDP’s accusations” (Morning Yomiuri Shimbun August 22, 1959).

According to newspaper reports, although the “Mothers’ Gathering” itself was evaluated positively, it and “political activity” must remain separate. The movement must not intervene with political parties or national politics to maintain its “naiveté” and “purity.” While the “mother” is a symbol of a child’s life at the Mothers’ Convention and is accepted as a form of internal enlightenment and a calling due to its simplicity, that logic means the mothers’

movement should not be involved in government affairs apart from everyday life.

4. Motherhood and Political Participation in Moms Against War 5.

4.1. Expansion of the Moms Against War Network

Moms Against War was launched in July 2015, with the catchphrase, “no children will be killed,” to oppose the legislation of “Security-related Laws” (2). It began with a call for signatures from one mother living in Kyoto. Moms Against War is a network type of movement that utilizes social networking sites; it does not have ties to political parties or organization, and anyone who agrees with the slogan, “no children will be killed” can become a member. A banner with the design attributes is shared over SNS; both members and non-members can print it out individually and use it anywhere. A “Moms Against War @ (Area name)” can be launched by even one person without any permission from anyone, and there is no rule on reporting activities. Hence, although there is membership for each Moms Against War meeting, the boundaries between who is a member and who is not are vague. Moms Against War spread throughout the country as a movement in less than a month, and as a result, it became a circuit of political participation for nonpartisan women, especially mothers with children.

On July 13, 2015, a press conference was held with the founder and volunteer members in the House of Councilors, and a declaration of its launch was made. Next, the “July 26: We are against the war legislation! Moms’ Shibuya, Jack!” event happened, and the organizer announced that 2000 people had mobilized. The specific contents of the activities that followed differed depending on the Moms Against War affiliates in other areas, but there were many street announcements, leaflets, learning sessions, demonstrations, and petitions sent to politicians. However, Moms Against War is an organization that was established to oppose Security-related Laws. In March 2016, the organization decided on a policy of not promoting specific support for a political party or candidate.

Section 4.2 describes to whom and how the term “Mom” is applied in Moms Against War. I discuss the network’s activities and movements based on my participant observation and interview surveys of a July 2015 Moms Against War meeting in a small city and a speech’s content, which was published on Facebook. I analyze how the activities of Moms Against War was received by society based on newspaper reports (3).

4.2. The Role of “Mom” in Moms Against War

“Mom” and “Mother” are emphasized in Moms Against War as (1) symbols of nurturing children and keeping them safe and (2) expressions of their motivation for political affirmations and actions in society.

The slogan of Moms Against War is “no children will be killed.” It has no specific subject,

and being a mother is not the point. Many participants of Moms Against War meetings are not mothers, and some areas changed the name from “Moms Against War” to “Moms and Dads Against War.” However, the slogan “no children will be killed” is premised on a mother’s message of “protect your own children.” Everyone has a mother, and everyone is the child of someone who is a mother. Hence, “Mom” refers not only to the mother but has a message of possibility, that “no children will be killed.” If “Mom” is not the subject of the slogan, then anyone, including those who are not mothers, can use it.

However, it is mainly mothers with children who are active in the Moms Against War meetings. Members emphasize their “being a mom” in their activities. When members talk about their feelings in town declarations and speeches, their reason or motivation for speaking up as a member of Moms Against War are related to protecting and raising their children.

I think the information given by the government since March 11 has been strange, and I have begun to think that I need to think and act by myself even for things like radiation and food safety. At the time, my children were in high school and junior high, so I began to participate in activities as a citizen to protect my children. (Omitted) I am a mere housewife. However, it is my source of pride to have brought up my two children well and poured all my love into them. When I imagine a scene where my beloved children must get involved in the war, my heart hurts.

(Mrs. A from the Moms Against War @Saitama Speech, April 20, 2016, at the rally)

I am a “Ka-chan”(mom) of a 2-year old boy. That one running slowly around is my son. (omitted) I saw the photo of a baby lying in a wreck during Syria’s airstrike. His mom once lovingly kissed those ashen cheeks; I know this through my son. I also saw the picture of a boy squeezed inside a crumbling building in the Gaza Strip. That blood-soaked hair was once lovingly stroked by his mom; I know this through my son. The US soldier returnees who are forced to commit suicide, and the suicide bombers with those empty eyes—all of them used to be children with mothers who used to hold them. Let’s stop doing this. Let’s make it stop. (Omitted)

(Mrs. B from the Moms Against War @Tokyo Speech, May 5, 2016, at the Moms’ Shinjuku Jack)

There are various ways of linking the content of the claims of “being a mom,” but in the speeches at the Moms Against War meetings, the experience of everyday childrearing was relayed concretely, and it continues to be the basis of the opposition to security-related laws and anti-war claims. When mothers speak of the joys and hardships of raising their children every day while protecting their lives, they use the subject “I.” “Being a mom” is used in the context of the acquired idea or claimed through the experiences of “the mother, who is me (I).”

Moms Against War was not intended to unite the genus called mother or combine mothers' powers, but the point they all agree on is opposition to security-related laws. Hence, rather than being meant for other mothers and women, the narrative of "being a mom" is aimed at people outside of Moms Against War and society in general; they narrate motivations in demonstrations, speeches at town activities, and individual SNS announcements. Their reasons for participating and speaking up are told from their experience as mothers.

4.3. Newspaper Coverage of Moms Against War Meetings

Section 3 discusses why the Mothers' Convention attracted attention in the press. This section will discuss the public's reception of Moms Against War. When newspaper reports mention Moms Against War, it is often introduced with the question: "why are ordinary mothers who never had any interest in politics voicing their opinions?"

Comments from mothers who first participated in demonstrations, stands, and appeals were often published as ordinary and nonpolitical; "Moms Against War @Hiroshima's' Chie Uchino, 29, of Nishi Ward, Hiroshima City, who is against security-related laws, states, 'I am an ordinary mom...' (omitted)" (Morning Asahi Shimbun, Sept 15, 2015); and "a wife from Hakusan City (48) sat down to participate for the first time today.(...) She had no interest in politics and has never been active, but she felt that there was a crisis now" (Asahi Shimbun, Sept 19, 2015, Morning).

The main points include: (1) they were ordinary mothers who were not involved in politics; (2) they had anxieties over the war and security-related laws but never took action; (3) their relationship with their children and experiences in child-rearing led them to decide to take action, and they began to raise their voices in Moms Against War and expanded their activities. Examples of numbers (1) through (3) are illustrated in the stories of the participants of Moms Against War in the articles below.

(1) "Everyone, I am an ordinary mother. I have never appeared in the middle of the street like this. To be honest, I am scared" (Asahi Shimbun, Sept 28, 2015, Tokyo, Morning). "I've been busy working and raising my children, and I've always thought politics was 'done by people who always study'" (Morning Asahi Shimbun Sept 20, 2015).

(2) "When I was pregnant with my youngest son in July of last year, the debate over the Security law heated up in the Diet. I was fearful that the child in my belly would be sent out to the battlefield" (Asahi Shimbun, June 20, 2016). "I was anxious that with the Security Law, we are slowly inching closer toward war" (Asahi Shimbun 2015 Sept 28 Tokyo Morning).

(3) "I began to have a strong desire to protect my children as well as the children of others" (Asahi Shimbun 2016 June 20, Tokyo, Morning). "I realized I am the only one who can speak up on my son's behalf" (Asahi Shimbun 2015 Sept 28, Tokyo, Morning). "I think that because I'm a mom, I should take action" (Asahi Shimbun 2015 Sept 20, Tokyo, Morning). "I'll take

action so that when my child asks me one day, ‘what were you thinking at that time, mom?’ then I can answer” (Asahi Shimbun 2016 Jan 21, Tokyo, Morning).

The above quotes illustrate how Moms Against War gained attention and was evaluated amid growing interest in and protests against security-related laws. They were depicted as “normal mothers who have never been interested in politics but are now making their voices heard.” Their motives for speaking up are “for the sake of their children.” However, the focus was not on the self-sacrifice of the mothers but that they had started speaking up.

5. Motherhood as a Political Subject

5.1. *Strategies Embedded in Motherhood*

This paper examined the emphasis on motherhood through the use of terms such as “mother” and “mom” in the anti-war and peace movements of two eras. It analyzed the annual Mothers’ Convention and Moms Against War based on newspaper reports and speeches and comments from members. While both the Mothers’ Convention and Moms Against War connect to movements and make appeals by emphasizing motherhood, what aspects they emphasize and how they do it differs depending on the task and strategy of each, their eras, and their conditions.

Motherhood at the Mothers’ Convention was a life-giving symbol that mainly served as an internal call for mothers and women to come together and participate in the convention. Motherhood, in this case, included the attributes of “producing life,” common to women, and the calling of being a mother.

The Mothers’ Convention’s activities were rooted in the participants’ own experiences as mothers, but the attributes of their strategic use of the concept of motherhood extend beyond mothering. In the 1950s and ‘60s, uniting mothers and women monolithically was considered politically powerful, and hence, emphasizing motherhood as an abstract attribute was effective. Conversely, the practice of care that mothering referred to at the time was “naturally perceivable” and invisible. The abstract value of being a mother was higher than it is in the present era. Although the issue of mothers being accused of meddling with the government is limited to newspaper reports, there may have been situations where the mothers were told that they would be allowed to be heard. Here is where the mothers were criticized for having a “special seat prepared by the modern nation” (Ueno 2006).

Meanwhile, in Moms Against War, from 2015, motherhood is emphasized as a concrete act of raising a child. It functioned as a narrative of motivation for why women were speaking up and why they opposed security-related laws. The participants expressed their political nature, not in terms of attributes, but in a form that reflected their own experiences in caring for their children as “moms.” Hence, motherhood here appears as each one’s own narrative of

mothering.

In Moms Against War, the aim is not monolithic unity but a network-like connection between individuals. The narrative of their personal processes driven by mothering has led to political action, becoming the output of their will to act. Rather than an attribute of mothering, the narrative is brought to the forefront. Amid the very limited conditions under which women can speak actively and participate in politics even today, for an individual to become a political subject is not even a premise. If the process of becoming a political subject is spoken of and shared, then those acts become forms of empowerment. Thus, the narrative of the process recaptures the very nature of politics from motherhood and becomes the strength of the participating women's activities.

However, in Moms Against War, since the attribute of "being a mom" is not emphasized at all in comparison to mothering, the movement has difficulty connecting people just by being mothers. At present, becoming a mother is a personal choice, and the abstract value of being a mother is not considered high. However, for the participants of Moms Against War, as mothers who work hard at "mothering" every day, they are probably aware that appealing with all their power is valuable.

5.2. *Summary*

In this paper, the mothers' movement, which has been regarded negatively in conventional motherhood research because of the way it emphasizes motherhood, was discussed in terms of the relationship between motherhood and political participation.

Although women have traditionally advocated motherhood, it has been considered a dangerous, sloppy, and anti-modern Utopian idea (Nishikawa 1985). However, this paper clarifies motherhood's alternative context, where it is positioned and used as a strength for its own purpose and as a task in the process of mothers raising their voices and becoming political subjects in two movements. Although the Mothers' Convention and Moms Against War recapture the attention of society with their experiences as mothers, and there are inherent care ethics, there are differences in the two movements' strategic uses of motherhood. The Mothers' Convention emphasizes the attribute, while Moms Against War emphasizes mothering. Using research on care-focused feminism, I elucidate this difference.

This paper has the following limitations. It did not cover the two mothers' movements in their entirety. For the Mothers' Convention, the discussion was limited to the 1960s, whereas the Liaison Group continues to be held all over Japan. It would be productive to analyze what kind of changes have occurred in the style of the movement and its motherhood strategies. For Moms Against War, the issues continue to develop and are not limited to security-related laws. In terms of the social reception of Moms Against War, there is a lot of slander and bashing on the Internet, in part because the movements' participants are mothers. These points could not be incorporated into this paper. To discuss the use of online media in more detail, the issues

need to be better understood, and the results and framework of social movement theory should be used.

Movements of “military mothers” during wartimes involved totalitarianism, and the peace movement of post-war mothers had age restrictions and limitations. Even nowadays, mothers, who are held back from being political subjects by their responsibilities as such, continue to use motherhood for their own purposes. Further research on this type of motherhood and how women advocate for it is worth undertaking. With these points of insufficiency in mind, the author will review this draft once more for completion.

Notes

- 1) The political nature is not governmental politics, such as partisan politics or election behavior, but refers to politics in a broader sense, such as what Arendt states when using the plurality concept: that which occurs in “the coexistence and combination of humans with differences” (Arendt 2005 = 2008, 124).
- 2) The official name is Legislation for Peace and Security.
- 3) Using the five main newspaper databases and the keywords “Moms opposed to security-related laws” or “Moms Against War” from July 2015, when Moms Against War was formed, to August 2016, the following results were found: Asahi Shimbun, 213 items; Mainichi Shimbun, 12 items; and Yomiuri Shimbun, 17 items.

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