Japanese and South Korean Aging Populations in Media Narratives, 2006-2015

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Abstract

Rapid aging of the societies and falling birth rates across the world are among the most significant contemporary socioeconomic problems. Meanwhile, in the era of 'Fake News' the construction of the media narratives has become increasingly relevant. As challenges posed by aging population are often framed from the point of view of the competitiveness of societies, years 2006-2015 before, during and after the Global Financial Crisis were chosen for study. The purpose of this thesis was to answer the question of: 'How are the media narratives portraying the aging of Japan and South Korea?' and related sub-questions exploring the potential differences in the aging-related media narratives between the Western and Japanese/South Korean media. By using a mixed-methods approach combining content and discourse analyses, media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging in the Western and English-language Japanese/South Korean online newspapers between 2006-2015 were analysed from constructivist perspective. The findings of the study illustrate the typical aging narratives and focal points in the aging discussion concerning Japan and South Korea and show that except for Korean news, Japanese aging was given more coverage than South Korea's.

Key words: Japan, South Korea, Western, Aging, Narrative, Media, Discourse, Neoliberalism

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

"I have absolutely no worries about Japan's demography" - Shinzo Abe

"We will become extinct" - Jang Geogenti

As the above quotes by Japan's former prime minister from 2016 and by current South Korean MEP citing report about the country's low fertility from 2010 illustrate, the phenomenon of aging attracts attention from various points of view (Sieg & Takenaka 2016, Teller Report 2021). Questions such as *who*, *when* and *why* specify the interests involved in aging. Although Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand all are currently rapidly aging societies (WHO 2010, Kim & Jang 2017, PRB 2020A; 2020B), it is the aging of first two countries which are commonly discussed in the European and Anglo-American newspapers. Because of historical and socioeconomic factors, Anglo-Americans and Europeans are assumed to be more interested in the aging of Japan and South Korea in comparison to Taiwan or Thailand's because the *perception* that former will tell something about their own realities and future. Since the rapidly aging populations and declining birth rates are transforming from the concern of the mostly Anglo-American and European (henceforth referred as Western) developed countries into a more global malady which the East Asian countries in particular are experiencing (PRB 2020A; 2020C, WPR 2021B; 2021D), aging Japan and South Korea serve as examples of economic and social changes possible in every developed society.

1.1. Background Context

Media narratives regarding Japan and South Korea's aging are constructed through the narratives about the countries. Therefore, the evolution of Western narratives about Japan and South Korea are relevant for understanding the current situation. These narratives about Japan and Korea have ranged from the pre-war Orientalist othering and 'Yellow peril' (Said 1978), the post-war Asian 'miracle economies' and resurgence of 'Japan Threat' (Vogel 1979) to the shift to 'Asian kleptocracies' and demographic fearmongering following the Asian Financial Crisis and Japan's economic decline (Pang 2000, Kingston 2013, Seth 2016).

Challenges posed by aging population are often framed from the point of view of the competitiveness of societies (ILO 2009, Goodhart & Pradhan 2020, Lee et al. 2010). The Neoliberal Washington Consensus which emerged during the 1990s together with the "end of history"-thinking is assumed to have influenced the media discourses during 2006-2015

period of the study (Fukuyama 1989). Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and Eurozone Debt Crisis from 2008-2012 challenged this prevailing economic orthodoxy just as the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) of 1997-1998 had challenged the prevailing theories of 1980s and 1990s about 'Asian Capitalism' as an alternative way to combine state and markets (Leftwich 1995, Ronkainen & Sorsa 2018, Tooze 2018). Therefore 2006-2015 era covering periods before, during and after the GFC was chosen for examination of the media's aging narratives.

The original expectation was that the Western media narratives would have initially taken Japan's aging more seriously than South Korea's due to Japan's earlier recognition as equal and thereby as potential future for the Western countries. In comparison, the media portrayal of South Korean aging was presumed to become increasingly negative over time corresponding both to its rising international status and the demographic decline of many Western countries over 2006-2015 period. Similar logic was assumed to hold true for English-language Japanese/Korean media aimed at international audiences with the exception for Korean media prioritizing South Korea over Japan.

Another theoretical assumption was that the potentially differing media narratives over aging could have been related to Japan and South Korea's respective acquiescence to the prevailing Neoliberal market ideology. By this logic, Japan's high standard of living despite its persistent 'stagflation' thwarted the Western zeitgeist by challenging the permanent GDP-growth paradigm unlike the more fiscally orthodox South Korea (Mathews 2004, Lee 2013), thus incentivizing narrative differences. Similarly, Japan and South Korea's demographic problems could have been highlighted in the Western Media not only to maintain the legitimacy of the Neoliberal policies in the West, but also to serve as distraction of the rapidly greying Western countries own demographic woes by focusing on the Asian 'others'. For these reasons, Neoliberalism and International Comparison became relevant categories for analysis, as seen in Chapter 4.

1.2. Aim of Thesis and its Research Questions

Aim of this thesis is to study the media narratives about the aging of Japan and South Korea. This thesis plans to answer its research questions through comparative study of the newspaper articles about the Japan and South Korea's aging between 2006-2015 with a mixed-methods design combining content analysis and discourse analysis. Since the media narratives about aging are socially constructed like all narratives, the components such as identity and perception are interlinked with the process of 'othering'. The historical context

as well as Neoliberalist theories and their critiques during the chosen timeframe complete this theoretical approach.

The thesis seeks to answer the following primary and sub-research questions:

1. ***How are the media narratives portraying the aging of Japan and South Korea?***
2. *Do the narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging in the Western media differ from each other?*
3. *Do the narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging in the English-language Japanese/South Korean media targeting international audiences differ from each other?*
4. *Do the Western and English-language Japanese/South Korean media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging differ from each other?*
5. *If so, how do they differ and why?*

Since terms like 'Western' and 'media' can refer to many things, clarification of their intended meaning is necessary. In this thesis, 'media' is used interchangeably with the newspaper articles accessed online which were selected as a way for operationalizing the study whereas 'Western' is used as synonym for Europe and Anglo-America. Similarly, while the 'Western media' is potentially contested term which can be interpreted in various ways other than the conceptualization chosen here, I use it in this thesis as a shorthand to refer to the American and European newspapers (*Helsingin Sanomat*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal Europe*) selected for the study. Correspondingly, Japanese and South Korean media are used interchangeably when talking about the English-language Japanese and Korean newspapers *The Japan News* and *The Korean Times* intended for international audiences.

1.3. Research Value

Because of the dramatic socioeconomic impact of global demographic change which aging societies are responsible for (Goodhart & Pradhan 2020), discussion of media narratives concerning Japanese and South Korean aging in 2006-2015 are of high contemporary relevance given their aging speed (PRB 2020A, PRB 2021A; 2021B, WPR 2021A; 2021C). Although both Japan and South Korea's aging has attracted considerable media attention (e.g. Reynolds 2017, Steger 2017, Larmer 2018, Takeo & Dormido 2019), the literature review for this thesis has found that the prior research on the aging in the media has seemingly centred on the overall representations about aging in general rather than systematic analysis of aging

narratives concerning individual Asian countries like Japan and South Korea (Ylänne et al. 2012,Ylänne 2015, Clemens et al. 2016, Morton 2017). Similarly, in the research on identity construction and narratives related to Japan and South Korea by constructivists (see section 2.2), the specific combination of aging and media narratives in the said countries has received less attention.

Analysing the aging-related media narratives during the period helps to provide better understanding of how Japan and South Korea are portrayed in online news intended for international English-speaking audiences by their native and Western media. Moreover, in addition to providing country and newspaper-specific information, the analysis of aging narratives about Japan and South Korea could help broadening the academic knowledge of aging discourses in the media.

1.4. Thesis Outline

Like this introduction, rest of the thesis is divided in four parts. Chapter 2 provides its theoretical framework where historical evolution and construction of the Western narratives about Japan and South Korea and their perception involved in 'othering' are used as building blocks for the contemporary media narratives. Similarly, the past literature and research on Japanese/South Korean aging in the media as well as aging as demographic phenomenon and aging's perception in media more generally are also reviewed. Because of its influence during the chosen 2006-2015 period, the links of Neoliberalism to both areas are also explored in Chapter 2. Research design and the methodology used in thesis is explained in Chapter 3, whereas data collection and analysis are illustrated in chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 forms a conclusion after discussing the results including their implications and relation to theoretical framework.

2.0. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Historical overview of the evolution of modern Japan and South Korea's portrayal in the West ranges from the 19th-century Orientalist depictions to contemporary sub-cultural icons exporting popular culture products like Japanese anime, manga, and video games and South Korean music and television dramas to global audiences (Iwabuchi 2002, Lie 2012, Seth 2016). In the Orientalist fashion, the Western narratives about Japan and South Korea have often served to mirror and reflect the beliefs of the observers themselves rather than accurate portrayals (Said 1978). By illustrating how their perception has been constructed, it can be demonstrated how the contemporary narratives borrow from the prior versions when convenient.

The roles of Japan and South Korea as the Asian 'others' simultaneously part and separate of the developed West possesses an important function as the screen of projections reflecting the Western anxieties. This theme of identity construction and comparison serves as central theme throughout the thesis.

During the catch-up phase of the second-generation industrializing countries - including Germany and Japan - the states channelled savings into key industries or protecting domestic production until they had matured to be competitive. German and Japanese "anti-liberal" varieties of capitalism minimized market risks of key companies by cross-owning between commercial banks and firms (Hall & Soskice 2001, Streeck et al. 2005).

This "Non-Liberal" capitalism of Japan and Asian tiger-states including South Korea faced globalization of investments and money movements since the 1980s, culminating in the AFC in 1997-1998. In general, Neoliberal globalization set limit for national economic and social policies. Industrial sites had to compete for investments by means of low corporate and individual taxation, cheap and flexible workers, few regulations and retrenching the welfare systems (Harvey 2005, Slobodian 2018). Neoliberalism did not dissolve states but re-tasked them to oversee privatization and marketization. Instead of enlarging middle classes to guarantee social peace, Neoliberalism allowed cut-throat competition that polarized global workforce, dropping many blue-collars and white-collar workers doing repetitive tasks into precarious existence. (Peck 2010, Mirowski 2013).

Examining the media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging are therefore connected to the heightened concerns about various socioeconomic challenges greying

populations of the Western and East Asian countries pose to their governments which has become increasingly urgent problem due to the demographic decline (Ogawa et al. 2006, Coulmas 2007, Fu & Hughes 2009, Shi & Ku 2009, Goerres, and Vanhuysse 2012, Goodhart & Pradham 2020).

2.1. Historical Evolution of Japan and South Korea's Perception in the Western Narratives

Japan and Korea had the same 19th-century starting point despite their diverging depiction trajectories in the Western narratives. Both were viewed as exotic yet barbaric Oriental inferiors to the supposedly more civilized Western nations duty-bound to 'educate' them (Said 1978, Sakai 2006). As China's subjugation throughout the Opium Wars of 1839-1842 and 1856-1860 proved, such 'education' was carried out by force when necessary. Japan's enforced opening by the coercive American gunboat diplomacy in 1853 and the subsequent unequal treaties imposed on it resulted in Japan' successful attempt at modernization. Imperial Japan formed by the Meiji Restoration of 1868 managed to distinguish itself from the other Asian countries in the Western perspectives by defeating Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, which also shook the contemporary narrative of white racial superiority (Kowner 2007).

Yet, Japan's search for Western recognition and its successful entry into the contemporary power politics came at the expense of its Asian neighbours including Korea (Suzuki 2005, Sakai 2006, Samuels 2007:13-28, Hagström and Gustafsson 2015). Despite Korean attempts of lobbying for independence, Korea's colonial status as Japan's 'civilizing' project remained acknowledged by the West and Korean's Orientalized depiction unchanged until WWII. Even then, such support arguably came for strategic and geopolitical interests of Western countries rather than change in the perception of Koreans themselves: the notions of Korean backwardness and inferiority persisted until South Korea's economic take-off during 1960's and 1970s (Sakai 2006, Seth 2016).

Japan also discovered that despite its success as a catch-up country, its 'othering' by the Western countries transformed instead of disappearing. Although Japan became one of the Great Powers of the first half of 20th-century, Japanese bid for racial equality during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was rejected as Japan's rise had increased the friction between Japan and the US (Togo 2005, Manela 2007, Pyle 2018). Moreover, the changing socioeconomic and geopolitical conditions of the interwar era fuelled the construction of the

'Japan Threat'-narrative among Anglo-American countries which combined with Japan's aggressive response culminated into the Pacific war and Japan's defeat (Henning 2007, Samuels 2007, Pyle 2018). While Japanese imperialism was undeniably brutal and its colonial baggage remains a thorn between Japan and its Asian neighbours even today (Lawson & Tannaka 2011, Seth 2016, Lee 2018B), it should be noted that Japan's unquestionable atrocities were likely emphasized as part of the original 'Japan Threat'-narrative and used to justify the costs of the US' 'unconditional surrender'-strategy (Pyle 2018). Apart from helping to justify the US' strategic goals, 'Japan threat'-narrative also served to make the Western Imperialists' colonial legacy look better in comparison by othering Japanese imperialism as a particularly horrible exception from the more 'moderate' Western colonial norm akin to the King Leopold's 19th-century Belgian Congo. This view has been challenged by researchers such as Michael Mann (2012), who argue that Japanese imperialism in all its awfulness was qualitatively no different from the European version: the techniques used by Japan were developed by the Europeans themselves with the primary difference being Japan's later starting point. Regardless, the narrative about war against Japan being just was consequently reified in the West and especially the US (Pyle 2018).

After WWII, the Western narrative about Japan briefly converged with South Korea: both were seen as civilizational projects and parts of the 'Free World' in the Cold War against Communism, albeit in Japan's case there was also the element of keeping the vanquished threat down through reforms including its new 'peace constitution' (Constitution of Japan 1946, Dower 1999, Samuels 2007, Seth 2016). Although the American influence had formative influence over both Japan and South Korea (Sakai 2006, Samuels 2007, Seth 2016, Pyle 2018), they leveraged their dependence into economic advantage by using the US support and access to the American markets as spark for the 'economic miracles' of 1960s and 1970s.

Japan took advantage of its US-written constitution's prohibition of war to avoid getting entangled in the US' Cold War-adventures while prioritizing its economic development, a strategy termed as the 'Yoshida doctrine' (Samuels 2007, Pyle 2018). Alongside the growing economic success came new Western narratives of East Asian modernization miracles: South Korea's depiction changed from a third world country and inferior half of its North Korean rival to an 'Asian Tiger' and superior Korea (Seth 2016). Meanwhile Japan's rising status as the world's second largest economy and pioneer of the Asian 'development state'-model of capitalism made Japan admired and envied. With increased international clout and narratives

about Japan as a model also came the revival of the old "Japan Threat"-narratives which became especially prevalent in the 1980's US as Japan transformed from the derided 'transistor salesman' of the 1960s to an economic superpower (Vogel 1979, Dohse et al. 1985, Friedman & LeBard 1991). Comparatively, although the Western narratives about South Korea had elevated it above third-world countries, it was seen as merely another authoritarian Asian 'tiger economy' emulating Japanese model gradually catching up with the West. In comparison, democratic Japan had not only become recognized as equal with the developed Western nations but had also simultaneously become a source for positive and negative narratives as a potential model and a threat.

When the bursting of Japanese economic bubble and the AFC of 1997-98 halted the economic growth of the Asian developmental states which had continued during the 1980's and 1990's, the emergent Neoliberal free market thinkers - particularly among Anglo-American sphere - who had viewed the developmental state and the supposed Asian model of capitalism as heresies felt vindicated. The "Asia-bashing" levied against Japan and South Korea during and following the collapse of the former's bubble-economy and the devastation AFC inflicted on the latter echoed the themes of 19th-century Orientalism. The '[East] Asian model' of capitalism colloquially known as the 'developmental state', was lambasted as kleptocratic 'crony capitalism' and likened to both the 'Eastern despots' of Orientalist mythos and Neoliberal West's own dark past alike (Said 1978, Leftwitch 1995, Hall & Soskice 2001). In both cases, Japan and South Korea were portrayed in need of radical reforms before reaching enlightenment, whether that be the modernized 18-19th-century nation-state or the post-1989 Neoliberalist market orthodoxy. However, as economic historians like Eichengreen (2007) have pointed out, the so-called 'Asian model' had always been a misnomer reflecting the contemporary narratives and their distortions: most of the 'developmental state'-model's core components had been universal across Western countries back when they had industrialized, making its supposed 'Asian' credentials dubious.

As result of their respective economic collapses, Japan entered a protracted period of economic stagnation stemming from deflation ('stagflation') with the 'Japan Threat' being replaced by narratives about its weakness and decline (Nakamura 2013, Yoshino & Taghizadeh-Hesary 2015, Ronkainen & Sorsa 2018) whereas South Korea succumbed to the IMF's Neoliberal reforms in exchange for bailout which earned Western praise for ideological orthodoxy (Pang 2000, Haggard 2004: 55-64). Ironically, those Asian countries afflicted by the AFC that followed the IMF's Neoliberal remedies - Indonesia, South Korea,

and Thailand - fared worse than Malaysia that had rejected the proposed treatments. This emboldened the critics of Washington Consensus and Neoliberalism and strengthened the counter-narratives against them (Haggard 2004, Piketty 2014), although Japan's plight served as convenient warning for the consequences of straying.

In the Neoliberal discourse dominant during the Washington Consensus free trade period (1989-2019), the mutual trust in business in Eastern Asian economies represented an anomaly from the ideal type of capitalist efficiency and productivity: the laggards had to endure purifying suffering to emerge as "modern" and competitive economies. Thus, the AFC was seen not as a product of excessive supply pressure of international investments, but as a cultural lag in adapting to the free market. The greying populations of Eastern Asia were also associated with stagnation caused by inability to overcome the vested interests of under-performing businesses and the reluctance of banks to let their long-terms customers fail. However, the GFC which since 2008 had transformed into a systemic crisis of Transatlantic finance system itself with ensuing bailouts of banks with Quantitative Easing (QE) and taxpayers' money should have corrected this culturalist view: Western countries also got stuck in a decade-long "secular stagnation" with limited economic growth and lack of investments much like Japan before them and used similar tools for recovery (Ronkainen & Sorsa 2018, Tooze 2018, Plehwe et al. 2020).

Neoliberal discourse with its over-emphasis of individual competitiveness also had severe effects for declining demographics. In East Asia, instead of welfare states, the companies and extended families had conferred rudimentary security network. During Neoliberal upheavals both systems were shattered: companies reduced and overburdened their core workforce, while individualized competition allowed less time for family, emphasizing the responsibility of parents to provide their offspring with competitive education. Furthermore, the chronic stress over employability discouraged the young from shouldering extra burden of marrying and raising children. Combined with the cultural values of Japan and South Korea, having kids became increasingly difficult with women in particular suffering from pressures between career and family due to the lacking family policies evidenced by the ballooning childcare waiting lists which contributed to declining births (Ogawa et al. 2006, Yoda 2006, Shi & Ku 2009, Tokoro 2009, Anderson & Kohler 2013, Kingston 2013, Lee 2018A).

In South Korea, Neoliberalist reforms together with the pre-existing pressures stemming from its recent democratization and Korean culture that already overemphasized the importance of

education contributed to the creation of extremely stressful domestic climate (Anderson & Kohler 2013). Affectionately termed 'Hell Joseon' for its ruthlessness which resulted into growing social polarization, tensions and even 'gender wars' as the increasingly few spots available for 'winners' now included competition from the opposite gender as well further disincentivizing family formation.[1]

Although South Korea's rising economy and 'soft power'-successes brought by its cultural exports generated positive frames abroad (Kim et al. 2016), they could not entirely replace the simultaneous negative narratives of the demographic and socioeconomic problems plaguing South Korea. Despite Japan resisting the Neoliberal medication more than South Korea - popularity of Koizumi's Neoliberal reforms being exception to the norm (Harris 2020) - its demographic decline stemmed from similar maladies: expensive childcare, difficulty of family formation, economic uncertainties, demanding education system and strained intergender relations. Similarly to South Korea, its popular culture successes did little to stem the negative narratives concerning Japan's demographic decline. Ultimately, popular culture export industries of Japan and South Korea concentrated on teens and young adults are subcultural niches, thus unable to change the image of their demographic realities despite the youthful charm of anime, manga, and *hallyu*-products.

2.2. Demographic Change and Aging Narratives: Previous Research and Theoretical Concepts

Japan and South Korea's aging has attracted considerable media attention as evidenced by the number of newspaper articles devoted to the topic (e.g. Reynolds 2017, Steger 2017, Larmer 2018, Takeo & Dormido 2019). However, the literature review of the prior research for this thesis found that the academic research on the aging as demographic phenomenon and the research about aging in the media specifically diverged significantly. While the former centred around socioeconomic and medical effects brought by aging and was mostly quantitative,[2] the latter appeared to favour qualitative research.[3] This pattern seemed to persist regardless of whether the target of research was Japan, South Korea, or more general categorical group such as the East Asia or developed countries.

1. See Moon 2002, Peng 2012, Moon 2015, Steger 2017, Barr 2018, Gonzales & Lee 2019, Greenberg 2019, He-Suk 2019, Larmer 2018, Lee 2018A for examples.

2. See Liang et al. 2003, Callen et al. 2006, Ogawa et al. 2006, Coulmas 2007, Fu & Hughes 2009, Shi & Ku 2009, Goerres and Vanhuysse 2012, Hashimoto 2017, Jang 2017, Pachana et al. 2017, Zoli 2017, Funabashi 2018, Suzuki 2019, Tsuya et al. 2019, Goodhart & Pradham 2020, Vollset et al. 2020 for examples)

3. See Ylänne et al. 2012, Rudman 2015, Ylänne 2015, Clemens et al. 2016, Bhar 2017, Morton 2017, Ayalon and Tesch-Römer 2018, Danely 2019, Neves and Vetere 2019, for examples.

Socioeconomic types tended to focus on demographic change and repercussions of aging either as global (Callen et al. 2006 Goodhart & Pradham 2020) or regional phenomenon (Tsuya et al. 2019) with Japan usually serving as localized example for both. The effects of aging including shrinking working-age population and growing numbers of elderly/declining youths as result demographic shifts like falling fertility rate were common topics. High population density also correlated with low fertility (Lutz et al. 2006). Medically oriented research like Liang et al. (2003) or Pachana et al. (2017) covered the health(care) issues involved in aging or researched medical causes of topics like fertility (Konishi et al. 2018). As discussed in 2.1, both economic and cultural factors such as costs of childcare, education culture, work pressures and gender relations contributed to Japan and South Korea's falling fertility, aging and demographic profiles.[4]

Role of identity construction, othering, recognition, and perception in the media narratives related to Japan and South Korean relations and politics have been researched by constructivists (e.g. Choi & Moon 2010, Tamaki 2010, Gustafsson 2011, Hagström 2015). For example, Tamaki includes examples of media narratives such as Korean ungratefulness in Japan in context of Japan-South Korea relations (2010: 105-106,166-167) and Hagström includes the reproduction of Japan's 'abnormality' on foreign policy in the media discourse serving to maintain Japan as the Other and the US as norm in the international system (2015:137). However, the aging discourses appear to have played little if any role among their work. Such lack of attention to aging by politics-focused constructivists is likely explained by the different areas of research interests.

Meanwhile, the studies focusing on media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging the existing research included topics such as coverage of the elderly care technology in the Japanese news (der Veere 2018), South Korean media's framing of the health insurance discourse (Wonkwang and Myongsoon 2019) and representations of older people in TV advertisements in Japan and South Korea (Fon and Kitchen 2008, Prieler 2012, Prieler et al. 2015). While aspects of aging in Japan/South Korea were covered in these studies, the aging-specific focus was absent.

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4. See Moon 2002, Tokoro 2009, Anderson & Kohler 2013, Kingston 2013, Macnaughtan 2015, Barr 2018, Lee 2018A, PRB 2021A; 2021B,WPR 2021A; 2021C.

Contrastingly, the research linking Neoliberalism and aging discourses together emphasized aging but lacked either media or Asian countries (Rudman 2015, Danely 2019, Pickard 2019). In Rudman's (2015) study Neoliberalist rationality of positive aging discourses influenced soon-to-be-retirees in taking responsibility for the risks of aging to individuals including maintenance of the aging bodies, focus was on Canada and media's role minimized. Although Pickard (2019: 221-227) discussed the link between Neoliberalist framing of young/productive and old/meaningless and media in the 'age war' between generations where older generations were framed as economic burden and political problem, the Asia was absent. Danely (2019) criticized the life extension practices of 'Successful/Active Aging'-narrative in Japan propagated through institutions including media, but his analysis focused on interviews instead of media analysis.

The review of prior research makes evident a research gap regarding specifically aging-related media narratives about Japan and South Korea, including the comparison of native Japanese and South Korean media with the Western media. Thus, this thesis may have research value in bringing broadening the understanding of these topics and stimulating further research.

2.3. Summary

This chapter has shown the evolution of narratives regarding Japan and South Korea's perception in the West forming the repository which the narratives used in contemporary discourses occasionally borrow from. Examination of media narratives regarding Japanese and South Korean aging discourses were connected to socioeconomic challenges brought by aging and demographic decline. In this way, the theoretical framework used to analyse and interpret the media narratives about Japanese/South Korean aging is formed through combination of constructivist identity construction, perception, and othering, aging and demographic changes, and Neoliberalist paradigm.

3.0. RESEARCH METHODS

In this chapter, the research design is introduced and the chosen methodological approach - a mixed-methods approach combining content analysis with discourse analysis - and its operationalization are discussed. Lastly, the limitations and ethical considerations of the selected methodological approach are addressed.

3.1. Research Design

To answer the thesis' research questions (see 1.2), analysis of media narratives forming the aging discourse in relevant newspapers was conducted. Media narratives on aging in Japan and South Korea are treated as socially constructed (Gill 2000: 175). Thus, the thesis is constructivist despite its methodological approach.

Ontologically, constructivism is anti-realist as it contradicts objectivism by denying the existence of an external reality independent of the observers, instead arguing that there are multiple realities constructed through social interaction that are subject to frequent modification (Bryman 2012: 33, 490). The data used in creating these realities are produced by human actors and presented through narratives rather than facts. Epistemologically, constructivism is thus fundamentally interpretivist: the data is interpreted as specific individually constructed narratives (Ibid: 28-32). Therefore, the empirical data used in this thesis is treated as truth from a certain point of view. Ergo, what the Western or Asian media want their English-language readers to believe regarding the aging in Japan and South Korea and whether these narratives differ from each other is therefore target of interest.

However, the constructivist framework does not imply that this thesis dismisses the use of quantitative methods entirely. Instead, it rejects the claims that research methods are intractably embedded to specific epistemological and ontological commitments or that quantitative and qualitative methods are inherently incompatible with each other (Bryman 2012: 629-631). Rather than repeating such orthodoxies reflective of qualitative vs. quantitative debate(s) in academia (Bryman 2012: 650), this thesis sought to utilize a mixed-methods approach integrating both qualitative and quantitative strategies (Ibid: 628).

3.2. Methodology

Decision to conceptualize 'media' as online news articles and prioritize them over other potential data sources was made due to the feasibility considerations for time, financial costs and accessibility concerns elaborated on in section 3.5. Mixed-methods research combining

the qualitative discourse analysis with the quantitative content analysis was chosen over purely quantitative content or purely qualitative narrative/discourse analyses to combine strengths of both approaches while limiting their weaknesses. Discourse analysis was deemed suitable for deeper analysis of the articles once the data had been collected and sampled using content analysis. As my primary data consists of articles collected from the online archives of five newspapers, the latter was used in a subsidiary role in facilitating the sampling and categorization of the cases for the former (Bryman 2012: 632-634).

The chosen newspapers were *New York Times* (NYT), *Wall Street Journal Europe* (WSJ), *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS)*, The Japan News* (TJN) and *The Korea Times* (TKT) and timeframe 2006-2015 with the TKT period being limited to 2007-2015 due to archival limitations. Timeframe was chosen based on theoretical framework. As fully representative analysis of media was impossible due to scope constraints, the papers in question were selected as feasible proxies providing semblance of ideological diversity. Among Western papers, the left-leaning NYT, right-leaning WSJ alongside more mixed HS were selected to reflect different perspectives. Ideally, NYT would provide social commentary and balance the economic focus of WSJ whereas the Finnish HS would provide example of alternative perspective to the Anglo-American mainstream of the former two. Contrastingly, right leaning TJN and TKT were selected to reflect the ideological mainstream of their countries. Difference being that the latter is South Korea's oldest English-language newspaper whereas the former directly translates articles of the Japan's largest newspaper's (*Yomiuri Shimbun*) into English, thus providing another angle for comparison (TJN 2021, TKT 2021).

Access to four of the online newspaper archives - NYT, WSJ, TKT accessed through Global Newsstream database and TJN which was accessed through Nordic Information Resource Portal for Asian studies (NIAS) database – were provided by the Lund University. HS online archives were accessed privately as part of the HS subscription. Apart from the exception of HS archive searches done in Finnish, all other database searches were done in English. Translations of the Finnish articles used as example in 4.4 were done by me as Finnish native fluent in English.

Apart from newspaper articles and the research literature discussed in Chapter 2, online demographic databases were also used to build a coherent image of the topic. To minimize bias, two sets of demographic databases were used for Japan and South Korea: World Population Review database using national and the UN statistics and the Population

Reference Bureau (PRB) database using their own statistics (WPR2021A-D, PRB 2020A-C; PRB 2021A-B).

3.3. Quantitative Side of Mixed Methods: Content Analysis

Since the content analysis has traditionally been based on objectivism - which is both epistemologically and ontologically contrary to constructivism - it needs to be clarified that for the purpose of this thesis content analysis was defined as an "approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner" (Bryman 2012: 289-290). Such conceptualization retains the core meaning of content analysis by fitting several of the Bauer's definitions (2000: 133) while bypassing the ontological and epistemological incompatibility concerns resulting from a mixed-method approach. Used in this manner, the content analysis requirement of quantifying content in terms of predetermined categories in a systematic and replicable manner was met without epistemological and ontological violations that would undermine the constructivist underpinnings of this thesis.

Content analysis played an auxiliary role in aiding the sampling of the cases for discourse analysis by filtering unnecessary and gathering relevant content (Bryman 2012: 632-634). It was implemented through pre-determined keyword searches used in sorting out relevant articles for the qualitative analysis from larger data repositories, these being the online archives of the aforementioned newspapers (Ibid:290). Papers in question were chosen to serve as the representation of the Western, Japanese, and South Korean media whereas the 2006-2015-era was chosen for theoretical considerations: the GFC had shattered the Western "end of history" paradigm, potentially reflecting the increasing interests in Asian alternatives in aging discourses in media.

After deliberation and preliminary tests, the list of aging-related keywords used in the keyword searches was finalized, with the following chosen: *ageing/aging, birth rate/birthrate, demographics, graying/greying*, and *fertility* which were combined with Japan and Korea. These were deemed to be the most suitable for finding relevant news articles concerning the aging narratives as part of discourse(s) in the media. Other words such as replacement rate, depopulation and dependency ratio were considered, but were found to be not as representative during the preliminary test searches. Notably, Finnish equivalents used in HS database searches were done by using word stems because idiosyncratic Finnish

conjugation would otherwise exclude conjugated forms of keywords from the searches. Translations and details are provided in Table 1 (see Appendix).

In some cases, the variant spellings for selected keywords ended up broadening the results with occasionally different results for "birthrate" and "birth rate" being the most common example across all papers. It was found that unlike the use of variant spellings, ordering of the words did not affect the search results in any of the databases. For example, "Japan birthrate" and "birthrate Japan" had the same results in contrast to "Japan birth-rate" and "Japan birthrate" which sometimes had different results in English-language archives. Results for "aging Korea" and "Korea aging" likewise did not differ while "ageing Korea" and "aging Korea" did. Similar pattern could be seen in Finnish searches where synonyms and alternative spellings had occasional impact on the search results whereas whether Japan or Korea was placed before or after the keyword was irrelevant.

However, the main practical difficulty with keyword searches was the sheer amount of hits. Searches were done in the yearly format (i.e., "aging Japan" 1/1/2007-31/12/2007) to make the search process easier. The common problem of content analysis - separating relevant articles from irrelevant hits - in addition to the feasibility concerns caused by size necessitated the exclusions of multiple articles. Sometimes the logic of exclusion was clear-cut as the articles discussing aging nuclear reactors, infrastructure or military equipment were obviously off-topic. Other times the decision for exclusion was more difficult, but due to feasibility concerns articles discussing aging war veterans of Pacific/Korean Wars, atom bomb survivors, comfort women and Japanese abducted by North Korea were excluded as separate topics outside the scope of my focus on media narratives about Japanese/South Korean aging in general.

In addition to those topics, search results that did not mention Japan or South Korea by the name were also excluded. For example, if TKT search for "Korea demographics" resulted into article discussing the global demographic decline without mentioning Japan or (South) Korea, it was excluded. Furthermore, with occasional duplicate articles and the rare cases when two articles about the same topic within short timeframe - few days at most- were found without significantly different contents, one was removed for redundancy. TKT (2007) and Park (2007) are good illustration of the latter as both are about the IMF's South Korea report citing economic risks to South Korea's future GDP growth with rapidly aging population being among the risks due to the increasing welfare burden published on the same

day. In rare cases like this, only one of the articles – in this case Park (2007) due to written by reporter rather than just citing the report – was included. Finally, the remaining relevant articles among were divided into two categories: those that featured Japan and/or South Korea's aging as the primary topic and those articles where aging was dealt with as a secondary.

3.4. Qualitative Side of Mixed Methods: Discourse Analysis

'Discourse' here is defined as "*a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)*" per Jorgensen and Phillips (2002). Because discourse analysis has various definitions and its practisers' resistance makes codification difficult, (Gill 2000: 173-4, Bryman 2012: 528-531), the four premises serve as rough guideline: 1) critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, 2) recognition that the ways we commonly understand the world are historically and culturally specific and relative, 3) that knowledge is socially constructed and 4) that knowledge and social action actions are linked together (Gill 2000: 173-4).

Language is depicted as constituting or producing the social world, instead of being simply a means of understanding that world unlike in other methods (Gill 2000: 173-176, Bryman 2012: 528-531). As products of social practice, discourses are intentionally used for specific purposes suitable for 'action orientation' (Gill 2000: 175). Therefore, understanding how various actors such as reporters use narratives and their contexts are crucial for being able to discern and interpret the discourse(s) they are shaping. Among discourse analysis approaches my version is closest to the Fairclough's critical discourse analysis which explores the links between language and social practice, how discourses and discursive practices they consist of change and emphasises intertextuality arguing that texts can never be understood in isolation (Jorgensen and Phillips (2002:64-76). However, my research followed Gill (2000:180)'s suggestion of using discourse analysis as an analytical strategy treating the way something is said as a solution to problem applied to media narratives about Japan and South Korea's aging. Although discourse analysis' principal aversion against codification alongside its ontological and epistemological premises limit the types of research methods it can be combined with (Gill 2000: 172-176, Bryman 2012: 528-531), using content analysis for selecting data to be utilised for discourse analysis was not seen as a problem.

Discourse analysis' operationalization roughly conformed with Gill's (2000:188-189) stages. Implementation of the first and second steps consisting of formulation of initial research

question(s) and choosing texts to be analysed have been described above and the newspaper articles used as data made the third step (transcription) unnecessary. Using the results of the initial content analysis as the base and to make the project feasibly implementable within the thesis timeframe, the 3000 newspaper articles discussing Japanese and/or South Korean aging were analysed and divided in two groups based on whether the aging was primary or secondary topic (see section 4.1 and Table 2 in Appendix for details).

Next, the remaining 1513 articles where Japanese and/or South Korean aging was the primary topic were critically (re)read and (re)examined once more for the patterns within the data as well as for variabilities between the different accounts (Gill's fourth step). Based on these repeated readings and analyses, the said "primary articles" were coded into emergent categories (fifth step) including year, name of the paper, whether Japanese and/or South Korean aging was discussed, was aging depicted positively, negatively or neutrally as well as which abstracted archetype(s) the articles aging narrative belonged to (i.e. economic, social, political, security). These conformed with Gill's (2000:178-180) fourth and fifth steps for discourse analysis (sceptical reading and interrogation of the text(s) and Coding).

Keeping the scope and time constraints in mind, these tentative codes were used to select representative newspaper articles to serve as examples of various Japanese/South Korean aging discourses present in the data (mix of Gill's second and sixth steps). Narratives in these representative articles were analysed as example to demonstrate what was included/excluded, how certain things or policies were formed as potential solutions for constructed problems in the analysed articles, which agenda was advocated, by whom, when and for why (Gill 2000: 180). Finally -to the extent it was possible in the context of the study - reliability and validity was refined through deviant case analysis by including examples of 'counter-narratives' in form of cases that went against the identified patterns. (Ibid: 187-189, step seven). Detailed explanation of this process and the codes can be found in the sections 4.2-4.4 below.

Originally, discourse analysis was planned to be carried out by using the data analysis program NVivo. However, this proved to be unfeasible in practice due to the combination of issues stemming from size of the collected data, NVivo's technical requirements and time constraints. Since NVivo requires documents to be saved to it for analysis and said documents increase the file size significantly, manually saving all 3000 collected newspaper articles or 1513 articles which had aging as their primary focus was deemed to be unsuitable for the thesis given the time and resource constraints. While using NVivo in helping to

analyse the smaller subset of few dozen articles eventually chosen for discourse analysis would have been more feasible in comparison, such plan was among the research options which unfortunately had to be abandoned due to time constraints. As such, the analysis of the articles chosen to be representative of certain types of Japanese/Korean aging discourses in newspaper media were carried out without NVivo.

Using other methods like narrative analysis for interpreting the news articles due to its suitability for media studies and similar methodology were considered (Cotter 2003, Linde 2003, Stokes 2003: 68-69), but because of its role in analytical strategy described above, discourse analysis was chosen over them with media narratives treated as components of discourse(s).

3.5. Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The thesis relies primarily on secondary data sources: newspaper articles archived online. In these, questions such as deception, invasion of privacy or potential harm to participants were no longer dependent on my choices. Newspaper archives used as data sources were accessible online, not requiring any consent procedure beyond access provided by Lund University and paid subscription in the case of *Helsingin Sanomat*-archives (Bryman 2012: 135-140). Thus, ethical considerations were relegated to the domain of academic integrity and quality of the conducted research – such as minimizing bias, acknowledging limitations and potential danger of misinterpretation on author's part (Ibid: 145).

In assessing the quality of the documents used as data in this thesis, the Scott's four criteria (cited in Bryman 2012: 543-544) were useful reminder to consider: authenticity (was the evidence used genuine and of unquestionable origin), credibility (was evidence free from error/distortion), representativeness (was evidence typical of its kind, if not was extent of untypicality known), and meaning (was evidence clear and comprehensible). Regarding the online newspapers used as the primary source of data, the authenticity was usually likely to be guaranteed as most articles named the author, occasionally such information was occasionally omitted in some HS and TKT articles and was surprisingly norm rather than exception among TJN articles. As for the other three categories, credibility and meaning were irrelevant as the distortions and clarity of the articles were object of research interest in itself due to thesis' focus on media narratives. For representativeness, the categorization process did divide the data to certain typologies (see Chapters 3 and 4) but was limited by the issue of intercoder reliability (Stokes 2003:58-59) due to subjectiveness involved. Consequently,

ensuring academic integrity became the primary ethical challenge. Because of this each step of the data collection and analysis was explained in detail to make author's train of thought and logic behind the choices clear to minimize any potential confusion while finding suitable middle ground between details and presentation of the data. For this reason, erring in favour of multiplicity in categorization process for Tables was considered more intellectually honest and safer choice.

Other limitations concerning material and methods included the questions of access and selection. The Lund University's change from previous Nexis Uni-system to the current Global Newsstream in January 2021 improved the number of freely available online newspaper archives which used to be scarce prior to switch, rendering this problem largely moot. While the new system did have coverage gaps that affected the selection - including limited availability for Japanese newspapers in English - these were possible to work around by using NIAS database to access TJN archives and by paying for HS subscription. Selection was trickier issue, as choosing which newspapers and how many to choose as stand-in for 'Western, Japanese and South Korean media' is obvious limitation, requiring compromise between representativeness and feasibility. These included my linguistic abilities being limited to Finnish, English and limited Japanese which foreclosed the comparison of Western media articles in English to Japanese and Korean news in native press which necessitated the use of English-language substitutes. Citations presented another ethical problem: because of how their archival systems worked, the HS and TJN articles could not be cited directly unlike the Global Newsstream-using NYT, WSJ, and TKT. Furthermore, I acknowledge that choices made are contestable – e.g. claiming that 'Western media' is slanted towards Anglo-American media - and that other conceptualizations are also viable.

Moreover, in the interest of reflexivity, the possible biases stemming from my own positionality as Finnish cosmopolite who grew up in the 90s/00s should be acknowledged. Although the potentially negative preconceptions and unconscious biases have been a target for conscious minimization, their effects are impossible to discount completely.

4.0. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Operationalization and results of content and discourse analyses are covered in this chapter. As explained in Chapter 3, Section 4.1explains the former whereas the latter is split between sections 4.2-4.4.

4.1. Data Collection Results: Content Analysis Findings

The newspaper articles were quantified and subjected to content analysis. As its final part, the remaining relevant articles among search results were divided into two categories: those that featured Japan and/or South Korea's aging as the primary topic and those articles where aging was dealt with as a secondary theme. For example, Nam (2013) is example of former with its coverage of South Korean elderly's socioeconomic issues, generational divide and growing polarization between young and old and growing dependency ratio/pension concerns caused by the combination of aging and the world's lowest birth rate. In contrast, article like Tabuchi (2010) is a good example of latter category as the focus there is on the economic discussion of Japanese deflation with Japan serving as a negative 'Other' and warning example to the US with aging and dwindling population merely as one of the deflationary causes for lower consumption and demand. Keyword search results of the data collection can be seen in the Table 2 (see Appendix for details).

Table 2. Data collection keyword search results

Japan	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	KT	Total (J)	South Korea	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	KT	Total (SK)	Both (J+SK)
Aging	121	141	72	289	91	714	Aging	6	7	3	1	761	778	1492
Birth rate	22	16	14	290	23	365	Birth rate	9	7	8	7	496	527	892
Demographics	25	38	15	17	30	125	Demographics	4	3	2	0	114	123	248
Graying	25	7	9	142	7	190	Graying	2	0	0	0	18	20	210
Fertility	15	10	4	38	10	77	Fertility	2	3	0	1	65	71	148
Total	208	212	114	776	161	1471	Total	23	20	13	9	1464	1529	3000
Primary*	68	26	48	384	74	600	Primary*	20	5	6	7	875	913	1513
Relevancy*	0.33%	0.12%	0.42%	0.49%	0.46%	0.41%	Relevancy%	0.87%	0.25%	0.46%	0.78%	0.60%	0.60%	0.50%

"Aging" was the most common keyword for searches featuring Japan across every paper apart from TJN. It was also the highest for TKT and tied for top in WSJ for South Korea searches. Similarly, "Birth rate" had the most results for TJN's Japan searches and for NYT, HS, and TJN's South Korea searches while tying for WSJ. "Fertility" was overall lowest keyword category for Japan searches whereas "Graying" was the lowest overall for South Korea.

Since keywords seldom appeared without other, overlapping keywords, articles were categorized based on the keyword that was mentioned most often. In the case of equal keyword frequencies, the article was listed as belonging to the keyword that appeared first in. For these reasons, the search results in Table 2 should be seen as rough idea rather than the exact distribution of keywords. Instead, what is notable are the overall number of articles (Total), how many of those focused on aging (Primary*) and the share of latter among total articles (Relevancy%).

As Table 2 shows, out of 3000 total articles 1471 were about Japan while 1529 were about South Korea. TKT having the most results across all keyword searches for South Korea and TJN having the most results for all keyword searches for Japan apart from "Demographics" were expected considering their larger size: TJN formed slightly over half of all searches for Japan (776/1471) while TKT dominated South Korea searches (1464/ 1529). Same pattern of TJN's Japan and TKT's South Korea search dominance held true when adjusted for Primary articles only (TJN 384/600, TKT 875/913), with TJN's relative share of Japan searches increasing from slightly over half to almost two-thirds but TKT's supermajority among South Korea searches remaining the same. TJN had the highest relevancy (49%) for Japan searches despite the size difference with WSJ's accuracy being the lowest (12%). Although WSJ's relevancy remained the lowest among South Korea searches (25%), both NYT (87%) and TJN (78%) had higher relevancy than TKT (60%), which is explained through the massive gap in search result sizes.

Overall, the results indicate that Japanese and South Korean newspapers aimed at English-speaking international audiences contained majority of the articles featuring Japanese/South Korean aging regardless of whether aging was primary or secondary topic in them. While such a finding was predictable, the scale of TKT/TJN's articles over the Western media and TKT's size difference relative to TJN along with the degree of their respective emphasis on Japan/South Korea were unexpected. Despite the one-year handicap with unavailable data from 2006, TKT articles alone formed more than half of all articles (1625/3000) and almost two thirds of Primary articles (949/1513) while TJN articles consisted of ~quarter of each (785/3000 and 391/1513). Combined, TKT and TJN articles had 4/5 of all (2410/3000) and almost 9/10 of Primary articles (1340/1513), leaving measly 20% of all and 11% of Primary articles split between the Western media consisting of NYT, WSJ, and HS.

While the result of non-Korean newspapers prioritizing news about Japan over South Korea was expected, the fact that TJN's South Korea coverage (0.01% of both all and Primary articles) was far smaller than the Western media's (NYT ~10/23%, WSJ ~9/16%, HS ~10/11%) or TKT's Japan coverage (~10/0.08%) can be relevant. Although the scale is likely partial explanation for the differences in coverage, the result indicates Japan being more commonly mentioned in South Korea's aging-related media discourse than vice versa during the 2006-2015 period.

4.2 Discourse Analysis: Coding and Preliminary Findings

After the content analysis, the primary articles (n=1513) with Japanese and/or South Korean aging as the primary topic were re-read and re-examined as part of discourse analysis to find meaningful patterns within the data (Gill 2000: 187-189). Emergent categories based on the readings were constructed to facilitate this and the articles were coded by developed scheme with Table 7.2 as example (see Appendix for full list).

TKT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	x	44	63	101	101	109	164	97	84	112	875
Intnat comp-	x	19	27	50	37	28	40	16	32	36	285
Intnat comp+	x	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	1		14
Economic (-)	x	22	30	65	58	59	89	41	46	60	470
Economic (+)	x	4	10	10	5	8	9	14	12	19	81
Econ (bal)	x	1	1	1	2	4	5			1	15
Depopulation	x	21	30	48	51	46	77	38	43	56	410
Social (-)	x	23	27	55	54	50	87	47	49	66	458
Social (+)	x		5	6	10	6	10	14	4	6	61
Social (bal)	x	1	3	5	4	9	13	1		7	43
Medical (-)	x	5	5	5	7	6	17	11	3	7	66
Medical (+)	x	2	4	4	5	1	2	3	1	7	29
Medical (bal)	x	1	3			3	5				12
Political (-)	x	4	7	11	3	2	4	6	4	10	51
Political (+)	x	5	8	13	12	7	12	2	2	1	62
Political (bal)	x						4	1			5
Tech (-)	x									1	1
Tech +	x		1			2	1	3		4	11
Tech (bal)	x						1				1
Neolib +	x	2	2	1	2						7
Neolib -	x		1	3	4	1	1			1	11
Security (-)	x			4	3			1	2		10
Other	x	2			1	1					4

Although construction of the different coding categories will be explained in the next paragraphs, the key things to note are the uppermost row depicting the number of articles about Japan or South Korea per year as the total **n(umber) of articles** regardless of overlap between categories and that the (+), (-) and (bal) are **indicators of framing** which indicate whether the aging in the articles was framed as positive, negative, or balanced in context of the relevant category. For example, 65 Econ (-) in 2009 in Table 7.2 above means that economic topics were negatively associated with South Korea's aging in 65 different TKT articles that year.

Regarding the presentation of data, trade-off between details and presentability had to be made with the above categories emerging as a compromise solution. These categories serve as abstracted composites merging various concepts related to their topic for making the presentation cleaner. "International comparison" indicates whether Japan/South Korea is mentioned as ahead or behind other countries in the article. For instance, if article in TKT

mentioned Japan's budget for solving birth rate being higher than South Korea's, it was classified as + for Japan and – for South Korea. As composite categories, "Economic" consists of topics such as dependency ratio, workforce, and labour shortages whereas "Social" included welfare services, education, and rural/urban divide. "Medical" included diseases, healthcare, and nursing, "Political" featured political events and the evaluation of a government's policy. "Technology" was about technical innovations such as robotics while "Security" featured concerns about military manpower and land sales to foreigners. "Other" present only in the TJN/TKT was about overpopulation of the Tokyo/Seoul metropolitan area as specific issue beyond the typical rural/urban divide. "Neoliberalism" indicated whether Neoliberalism specifically or its components such as deregulation and privatization were advocated for or criticized in context of aging. Finally, "Depopulation" as category included mentions of falling population/groups and birth rate if it was mentioned to be declining. More comprehensive list of coding category contents is shown in Table 8 of Appendix.

Remarkably, it was common for one news article to be classified under two or more categories as clear focus on only one of the categories was rather rare. For example, TJN (2006A) article about Japan's shrinking population not only discussed the obvious depopulation issue, but also the population shrinkage's effects on Japan's workforce, rising social security costs, social value/family unit changes such as later marriages and family structure changes behind the low birth rate responsible for the depopulation. It also compared Japan negatively to France which was held as model for turning negative birth rate around while advocating for social value changes and the use of more female, elderly, and immigrant labour as fix to workforce. Article like this was counted as one for both "Economic (-)" and "Social (-)" categories due to its negative framing and while also counted as 1 for "Intnat comp- " and "Depopulation" due to Japan being behind France and the presence of depopulation discussion. Had the discussion of social changes been absent, only "Social (-)" would have been removed with rest of the categorical markings being retained.

Therefore, the potential confusion presented by the Tables 3.1-7.2 is acknowledged as an inevitable but necessary result from the balancing act between details and presentability, and this limitation should be kept in mind along with the obvious issue stemming from intercoder reliability (Stokes 2003:58-59). Nevertheless, social science research is not exactly a laboratory where clean separation between factors is possible. It was deemed safer and more intellectually honest to err on the side of multiplicity in categorization process of the Tables.

Keeping the said caveats in mind, what the Tables 3.1-7.2 do reveal are broad patterns of both similarities and differences regarding the Japanese/South Korean aging discourses between the chosen newspapers during the 2006-2015 period. Firstly, the aging-related coverage in different papers had different periods of intensity as shown by total numbers/year with 2006/2015 peaks and rising frequency from 2009 onwards as trends (see Appendix for details).

For the second, there is the notable disparity in focus between Japan and South Korea. Apart from year 2010 in WSJ, Japan had primary articles classifiable to various categories related to aging in every year, whereas South Korea's coverage had number of gap years in every paper apart from TKT (20% in NYT, 70% in WSJ, 50% in HS and TJN). While the subjectiveness involved in the coding system as well as various issues such as scale disparities discussed in the section 4.1 are likely a partial explanation, the results provide additional evidence for relative neglect of South Korea's aging in comparison to Japan's in non-Korean media. Furthermore, in "International comparison" across all newspapers both Japan and South Korea were mostly portrayed as 'behind' with their depiction ahead as models in some aspect of aging discourses being exception from the norm. International comparisons also formed significant part of all articles in all newspapers for both Japan and South Korea (see Table 9 in Appendix). Excluding the International comparisons discussed above, the most common categories for Japan and South Korea are shown in Table 10 (see Appendix).

For the third, the distribution of "Neoliberalism"-framing both between Japan and South Korea and across newspapers deserves attention. As for Japan, a positive framing of "Neoliberalism" was the majority in both Asian and Western media with WSJ's case being especially remarkable: the framing of "Neoliberalism" was entirely positive and advocacy cases consisted almost a third of all WSJ's Japan articles. In contrast, as to South Korea the "Neoliberalism" was either absent (WSJ, HS, TJN) or mostly negatively framed (NYT, TKT). One explanation for these results is the coding scheme choice to limit analysis to articles where aging was the primary topic.

Although the cross-newspaper differences in "Medical", "Political" and "Technology" categories is likely attributable to the combination of size difference and the chosen coding system, its notable that the "Security"-category was unique to Japanese and South Korean press and limited to domestic discussion in both cases. Similarly, while the high population

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density has been linked to lower fertility (Lutz et al. 2006), it was surprising that the discussion of overpopulation of Tokyo and Seoul in relation to aging ("Other") was found only in TJN and TKT and was absent in the Western newspapers.

Finally, the analysis of the discourses related to Japanese and South Korean aging in the articles through coding categories presented in Tables 3.1-7.2 revealed roughly seven interrelated core themes consisting of national competitiveness, welfare state, dependency ratio-pension system linkage, individualization, generational justice, education culture and its costs as well as depopulation. As these core themes were heavily interrelated, for the sake of visualization and due to resource/time constraints the categories chosen for coding were used in construction of Tables.

4.3. Discourse Analysis: Selection Process

The media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging present in the collected and analysed newspaper articles could be distilled into the following seven interrelated core themes:

1) *National competitiveness*: Although international comparison and depopulation as coding categories were related to all seven core themes, 1) was especially closely associated with them. Typically found in articles of most coding categories (Economic, Social, Medical, Political, Technology, Security), generally covering the effects of aging to Japanese/South Korean economic, social, and political systems in both present and future and using both explicit and implicit international comparison. National competitiveness thus often covered the other six themes. For example, the articles about Japanese/South Korean welfare state debate commonly blended all seven themes in various combinations (TJN 2009, Lee 2010). Such discussion could involve international comparisons and reforms as models for maintaining/improving competitiveness, how to cope with the growing share of elderly while the supply of young workers is decreasing, how various services from education to pensions should be financed and by whom, how changed values regarding family explained related phenomena along with the roles and justifications played by shrinking population and falling birth rates. Japan and South Korea were typically depicted as either already fallen or risking falling "behind" in multiple aspects due to aging-related factors, but there were also examples of counter-narratives arguing otherwise, occasionally questioning the entire rationale for national competitiveness.

2) *Welfare state*: Albeit not as prevalent among coding categories as 1), welfare state articles commonly involved Economic, Social, Political and Medical categories. The welfare state discourse was fuelled by the shift from extended family-societies in Japan and South Korea towards more national social security such as maternal benefits, day-care, pension, and healthcare services. As shown by the example in the 1) above, the interconnectedness between core themes was high. Similarly, the motive of national competitiveness could be found behind the advocacy for increased day-care/welfare services as way to tap into female workforce.

3) *Dependency ratio-pension system linkage*: Dependency ratio-pension system linkage was primary featured in the articles coded to Economic and Social categories as the discourse focused on covering the socioeconomic effects created by Japanese/South Korean aging and depopulation with international comparisons being common. Apart from 6), it was also highly correlated with the other core themes. While the competitiveness rationale was part of the discourse like in above examples, senior work support was both justified and criticised by the elderly poverty forcing them to work, especially in South Korea. Humanitarian motives thus competed with economic cost-efficiency.

4) *Individualization*: Typically belonging to articles from Economic and Social coding categories with occasional branching from other fields, 4) as a core theme tended to feature articles discussing value and attitude changes in Japan/South Korea. Due to this, 4) was tightly interconnected with the six other core themes. As values change from self-preservation through family loyalties to individual self-expression, (Inglehart 2018), it was generally used to explain the baby dearth by the focus on career and materialistic consumption leaving no time or desire for children. Overall, the changed values were portrayed as positive shift with negative side-effects mitigable through policies, but there were also examples of counter-narratives calling for the return to traditional family values and social roles.

5) *Generational justice*: 5) was usually found in articles from Economic, Social and Political coding categories and was highly interrelated among other core themes. Topics included the discussion of the causes of socioeconomic and political inequalities between younger and older generations in Japan and South Korea with structural causes favouring the old being used to explain the value rupture between generations and rising intergenerational polarization such as the growing resistance by

the young Japanese and Korean towards participation in the system they perceived as rigged against them.

6) *Education culture and its costs*: As socioeconomic issue idiosyncratic to East Asia, 6) was commonly found in articles coded as Economic, Social and Political. Although 6) was interrelated with all six other core themes, it was most correlated with 1), 2) and 7). There were country differences between Japan and South Korea, as while the East Asian phenomenon of education costs acting as a barrier for getting children was found in articles covering both, in former's case the focus was on day-care/pre-school costs and waiting lists whereas latter's education coverage also extended to prevalent private schools (hagwons) framed as one cause for the falling birth rate.

7) *Depopulation*: Because of its dual role as a both coding category and core theme, 7) was somewhat unique case. As a repository for articles discussing the falling populations and birth rates, depopulation warranted a unique classification for both coding as core theme due to the prevalence of such concepts among articles. Prevalence was also the reason for 7) being closely associated with the other six core themes. Conversely, the high interrelation also ensured that articles only about depopulation were extremely rare and exceptions from the norm.

These seven core themes explained above were chosen to justify the selection of meaningful examples of the various aging-related discourses present in both Western and Japanese/South Korean media to make the large number of articles more presentable. Examples of both "mainstream" narratives as well as the occasional 'deviant case'-articles serving as examples of counter-narratives are presented. While acknowledging that the provision of fully representative number of articles was impossible, the analysis of selected examples below is intended to provide broad idea of the various core themes of discourses found in the articles and how they were discussed.

4.4. Discourse Analysis of Example Articles and Findings

The New York Times

Heavily interrelated nature of various themes is illustrated by analysing the following two 2012 NYT op-eds by Fingleton and Douthat. Both articles were written at the time of shaken confidence in Neoliberal worldview in the US during the slow economic recovery in the aftermath of the GFC with contrasting framings for both Japan and the US. For discourse

regarding South Korea, article about digital evolution of matchmaking culture (Choe 2007) was chosen as example.

Fingleton's (2012) op-ed *"The Myth of Japan's Failure"* is a good example of the counter-narrative that views Japan as positive model and challenges the mainstream portrayal of Japan as failure and warning to Americans. Japan's superior life expectancy resulting from better healthcare, superior infrastructure and other measures are contrasted with the narratives about Japan as 'fallen giant and 'lost decades'. The article argues that the supposed underperformance is a misinterpretation caused by selective use of statistics and the Neoliberal bias against Japan's different system of social integration. Japan's demographic decline was similarly framed as normal for developed country and as deliberate choice due food security concerns and healthcare improvements rather than policy failure. Fingleton claims that the success of the 'fallen giant' narrative is explained by its convenience for both Japan and the US. By playing the economic weakness up, Japan has supposedly been able to get better trade deals with the US and Europe without addressing the core complaints of the late 1980s concerning cars and agriculture. Meanwhile, by comparing Japan's rise and fall to China has allowed the US to feel better about its position and downplay the latter. The US rather than Japan was perceived as declining with Japan portrayed as model to learn from instead of scoffing at.

Contrastingly, Douthat (2012)'s op-ed *"The Incredible Shrinking Country"* arguing the opposite presents an example of the mainstream Japanese aging discourse in the NYT. Japan's demographics and aging are depicted as uniquely bad among developed countries and likened to dystopian science-fiction becoming real with Japan's high suicide rates, rental relatives for wedding parties, companion robots for lonely seniors and millions of "parasite singles" living with and off their parents as well as hundreds of thousands of asocial shut-ins (*hikikomori*) among younger generations. Low birth rate (1.3) and high life expectancy were used to prophesise future where there is one centenarian per baby in 2040, straining the economy and welfare services further. Going beyond economics, the cause for Japan's collapse is located as culture combining liberalism and traditionalism in a fatal way: the stigma about out-of-wedlock births persists despite the collapse of the old moral cohesion provided by family ties. Consequently, unmarried Japanese embrace childlessness voluntarily. Moreover, suspicions towards immigrants have similarly prevented immigration from being used as source for demographic vitality. Finally, Douthat uses Japan as negative

'other' for the US by illustrating how the American socioeconomic problems are less severe in comparison, with its 21st-century future being brighter than the sunset faced by Japan.

Fingleton's op-ed used 3/7 of core themes: national competitiveness (via international comparison, Neoliberalism and economic measures including growth), welfare state (healthcare) and depopulation (declining birth rates). The narratives about Japan's "failure" were the problem whereas treating Japan as model for the US was the solution. By framing its demographic decline as deliberate choice, Japan's agency was taken to an exaggerated level when considering the general trend of governmental instability; Japanese governments did not last long between 1990-2012 apart from Junichiro Koizumi's 2001-2006 term. Considering Fingleton's background as decades-long Forbes and Financial Times editor specializing in the East Asia (Fingleton 2021), his 'Japan as model'-stance critical of the Neoliberal mainstream is surprising as its reminiscent of Japan mania of the late 80s/early 90s.

Douthat's article utilized 5/7 core themes: national competitiveness (via international comparison centred around socioeconomic measures,) welfare state (safety net) dependency ratio (centenaries per babies), individualization (via the litany of social problems including family changes) and depopulation in form of birth rates and population decline predictions. In Douthat's narrative, Japan was the warning sign; its decline inevitable with Japan wasting the little agency it had by refusing the solution offered by immigration. The promising past, when Japan was viewed as potentially eclipsing the US is cancelled by presenting the US managing despite its socioeconomic problems while Japan was depicted in midst of socioeconomic implosion. Considering the US' own socioeconomic woes in 2012 along with Douthat's background as American columnist writing about domestic affairs (NYT 2021B), its unsurprising that Japan's situation was portrayed negatively to encourage American readers.

Choe's (2007) article "*Traditional Korean marriage meets match on the internet*" describes the South Korean entrepreneurs turning the low birth rate into a business opportunity by combining matchmaking tradition and Internet culture. Interviews of entrepreneurs and clients were included, though only positive reactions toward the service and technology enabling it are shown. South Korean birth rate described as among the world's lowest is implied to result from falling marriages and growing number of singles in response to increasing job insecurity. Online matchmaking industry is portrayed as a natural evolution of traditional Korean matchmaking culture, solving the problems of parents brokering their

children and singles themselves by expediting the work involved and helping to 'save face'. Thus, the article combines both sources of national pride: South Korea as a pioneer of Hi-Tech solutions and its long cultural tradition.

Thematically, Choe (2007) blended negative international comparison of South Korean birth rate, social changes and continuities and economic and technological opportunities together, coalescing into 2/7 core themes of national competitiveness and individualization. While commonly present in articles of this kind, depopulation was absent here likely because of the date: in 2007 the declining population was noy yet tangible threat to South Korea. Similarly, its low birth rate was treated closer to economic chance than danger.

The Wall Street Journal Europe

Harden's (2008) "*Why japan dreams of robots; nation is now facing a paucity of people; who will do the work?*" describes Japan heading for population collapse, as fewer Japanese women want kids and Japanese reject immigrants, leaving the robots as potential solution for depopulation. Although the perspectives of both robot advocates and critics are shown, the latter side is favoured, with the core message of Harden's article being that robots are unable to reverse the demographic decline. Instead, they are framed as a politically expedient distraction from lasting solutions such as increasing immigration and female employment. Japan's low birth rate is primarily attributed to young women's growing refusal to marry and/or have kids due to the lack of affordable childcare. Spineless government(s) and Japanese public's hostility towards immigration are also blamed for the population decline. Japan is presented as a victim of its own ethnic nationalism and the lacking agency of its governments.

Among core themes, 5/7 were included through national competitiveness (workforce shortages, economy size, immigration, female work), welfare state (healthcare spending and collapse risk, lacking childcare services), dependency ratio-pension linkage (proportions of below 15 and above 65, pension collapse risk), individualization (changing attitudes towards motherhood) and depopulation. As a long-time foreign correspondent (Harden 2021), Harden likely was aware of the instability of the Japanese governments at the time of the article's writing which explains the cynical framing of the short-termism of Japanese governmental policies.

Direct example of the value shifts in Japan is Tabuchi's (2008) "*No promotions, please; Japan's 'hodo-hodo' bow out of rat race as recession looms*" depicting the changed attitudes

of younger Japanese towards working and the consequential generational divide between old and young. The older Japanese interviewed by Tabuchi are frustrated by the growing preference towards less demanding jobs over promotions among young Japanese in their 20s/30s, known as the 'so-so folks' (*hodo-hodo zoku*). While the older Japanese see them as irresponsible slackers ruining the aging country, the *hodo-hodo* youths likewise disdain the work-above-all mentality of the older generation. Value divergence is traced to the 1990s when younger Japanese witnessed the job and pay cuts older generations faced regardless of their commitments. Both young and older generations are presented with agency, although defining problem(s) and their solutions depended on the perspective of who was interviewed.

Individualization, generational justice, and national competitiveness were the core themes of the article. First was epitomized by the changed attitudes towards work and personal life among the young, second by the resulting generational disconnect with the older viewing the *hodo-hodo* mentality as unfair and the third by negative international comparisons, productivity, and work culture. As a Japanese native and newspaper correspondent (NYT 2021A), Tabuchi's balanced depiction of both perspectives was unsurprising, especially when accounting for the timing: during the GFC and growing inequalities of post-Koizumi Japan.

Nam's (2013) article "*World news: Elderly South Koreans lipping into poverty* "was the best available example for WSJ's sparse coverage of South Korean aging. It discusses South Korea's growing economic polarization between young and old Koreans due to various socioeconomic challenges posed by aging and the low birth rate. These include pensions, dependency ratio, welfare payments, education costs, senior poverty, and family structure changes. Older and younger generations along with government official and think-thank researcher were interviewed. Nam's narrative is of South Korea in crisis; beset by growing welfare costs, economic inequality, fiscal instability, and demographic changes at the same time. Feasibility of President Park's plan for tackling elderly poverty through increased welfare spending is questioned as a solution. Generational conflicts were also expected to worsen. Young and elderly Koreans are depicted as victims, whereas South Korea as country is portrayed as unprepared and internationally lagging in extending retirement as solution to senior welfare.

Apart from depopulation, Nam (2013)'s article featured every core theme. However, the space given to topics related to individualization such as family culture change and the costs of education culture were limited and primary focus was on welfare state, generational

justice, dependency ratio-pension linkage and national competitiveness. Considering Nam's work history (WSJ 2021), his emphasis on economic and comparative aspects of South Korean aging are understandable.

Helsingin Sanomat

Saarinen's (2014) article (eng." Future *of the South Korea with sparse kids: the last inhabitant dies in 2750"*) about South Korean depopulation was chosen as example of the HS' limited Korean aging discourse during the 2006-2015 (see Table 5.2.). Typically for a Finnish news article covering a foreign country, Saarinen's article is based on Anglo-American press, in this case *Washington Post* (2014). In the article, its sensational prediction about future extinction of the Koreans via gradual depopulation is acknowledged as hypothetical and possible to change. Next, South Korea's superficially good situation with gradually growing population is contrasted to its rapid aging and its world's 5th lowest birth rate (1.25) below both Finland (1.75) and replacement rate (2.1) is attributed to parents focusing their resources on the first child. Because of its tight controls, South Korea is presented as unable to fix its birth rate with immigration and was predicted to become 'superaged' like Germany, Italy, and Japan by 2030. Saarinen's narrative is pessimistic, depicting South Korea as declining with little agency to reverse its demographic course.

Core themes present were national competitiveness (via international comparisons and immigration) and depopulation (through population decline). In international comparison South Korea's demographics were framed negatively, set to become one of the superaged countries because of its aging and birth rate. Apart from its reliance on the prior narrative constructed by the *Washington Post*, most notable aspect of Saarinen's portrayal were the demographic comparisons between South Korea and Finland. Although Finland's birth rate at that time was closer to replacement rate, it was set to become superaged faster than South Korea (2020s instead of 2030s). Thus, the narrative about South Korea's tragic demographic destiny had elements of soothing domestic Finnish concerns by presenting another country suffering from similar aging issues.

Since then, Finland 's birth rate has fallen (1.7>1.4) despite of generous family policy and the vaunted Nordic day-care system enabling women to participate in working life which were often seen as counter for depopulation in TJN and TKT articles during 2006-2005 (PRB 2020C, Se-jeong 2010, TJN 2015). Like in Japan and South Korea, in Finland calls for welfare retrenchment, longer careers, flexible labour market and more working-age

immigrants have become louder. As even Sweden would be the most aged country in Europe if immigration were discounted, reality has rebuked the TJN and TKT's idealized portrayal of the Nordic welfare model as exaggerated (Rotkirch 2021, Vaittinen 2021). Gender equality, welfare policies and female labour alone were not enough.

Japanese birth rate and depopulation were recurrent element amidst HS' aging discourse about Japan with Kärppä's (2015) article (eng. "*Japan investing to population growth with new actions")* as example. Based on the original report by Reuters, Kärppä's article discusses the pro-natal policies of Prime Minister Abe's government such as deregulating childcare providers and easing women's return to work after birth. Abe's government hoped to prevent population from declining below 100 million by rising the birth rate to 1.8 from 1.42. However, without a large-scale immigration resisted by politicians, increasing Japan's economic growth is portrayed as difficult due to its demographic structure. Immigration is also deemed as superior solution to childcare improvements in boosting population growth and alleviating the problem of Japan's shrinking workforce predicted to fall to 44 million by 2060.

Out of 7 core themes, national competitiveness (by economic growth, immigration, and workforce), welfare state (childcare) and depopulation (population decline) were included in Kärppä's (2015) article. Finnish mainstream articles regarding Japanese and South Korean aging in HS were recycling premade arguments of foreign media while occasionally supplementing them with Finnish comparisons.

Lastly, as example of counter-narratives regarding aging in HS is Kaaro's (2015) column (eng. *Seniors could be the way out of economic system which is destroying the Earth*). Kaaro as the freelance science correspondent of HS argues that since natural resources are given and efforts of past generations in learning to utilize them better have contributed to societal heritage, people have duty to take care of the seniors that helped to build the current societies in return. Seniors should be revalued as productive citizens and no longer considered as a mere burden of those now paying for their pensions and care. As seniors do not consume much, demand for products, jobs and economies will fall with Japan as classic example and similar future awaits Western countries. Therefore, seniors are solution for societal renewal by offering a chance to replace the unsustainable economies centred around constant growth with something more humane and ecologically sustainable.

Although only national competitiveness among core themes was discussed in Kaaro's (2015) column, Japan with its socioeconomic decline was seen as the future of Western countries and was reframed as offering potential for societal transformation beyond the current system stuck in idea of eternal economic growth. Such implicit critique of Neoliberal orthodoxy could be expected from a Finnish counter-narrative article written in 2015, as the persistent Eurozone crisis has reduced the dominance of Neoliberal orthodoxy and raised populist movements (Blyth 2013; Tooze 2018). Stabilization of societies beyond growth had become imaginable.

The Japan News

It would have been possible to present examples of various narratives related to Japan's aging in the TJN due to the breadth of the articles involved. However, the idiosyncratic themes concerning the consumption tax and the population concentration in Tokyo metropolitan area, made them suitable as representative examples. TJN's consumption hike advocacy as welfare solution was significant for its persistence spanning through the entirety of 2006-2015 period. Correspondingly, the TJN's articles covering the relationship between Tokyo metropolitan area's overpopulation and aging issues were notable for (implicitly) connecting the aging and population density together (Lutz et al. 2006). Thus, three examples tracking the evolution of TJN's consumption hike advocacy as aging Japan's solution to the problem of rising welfare costs and one article representing the population density-aging relationship in Tokyo metropolitan area overpopulation were selected for analysis. South Korea was omitted because of comparative scarcity (Tables 6.1-6.2) and space constraints. All four were written by the TJN journalists, though detailed information about authors could not be found.

TJN (2006B) editorial "*Use wisdom in dealing with aged society*" presented Japan at crossroads between mature but vital and weakening societies. The demographic transition combining unprecedented aging speed and shrinking population could be fatal: Total fertility rate (TFR) at 1.28%, 20% of Japanese were older than 65 while below 14-year-olds had dropped below 14%, the worst among developed countries. Japan's welfare system was designed based on the population pyramid of 1960s with 11 workers per senior, thus unsuitable for current Japan's 3 per 1. Proposed welfare reforms included changing the treatment of 65 and older by dependents, helping women to work, making labour market participation flexible and providing childcare support with the promoted consumption tax hike intended to finance them. In this narrative, Japan had the agency to choose adjustments,

even allowing Japan to become the model for other aging countries – but omission of acting in time would lead to decline.

Only the education culture is missing among the article's core themes. National competitiveness (international demographic comparisons, workforce, work culture), welfare state (medical and welfare programs), dependency ratio-pension system linkage (both), individualization (elderly social role change), generational justice (fairer welfare system) and depopulation were all present. While the alarmist tone of the article was exaggerated as Japan's population continued to grow until 2010 peak (WPR 2021A), the call for urgent action is understandable when the speed of Japan's aging is considered. Moreover, as reformist Koizumi was in charge at the time of writing, expecting government to act was not unrealistic.

Different from open letter format of TJN (2006B), its 2010 editorial "*Consumption tax hike key to secure welfare net*" was critical of Hatoyama government due to its opposition to consumption tax hike. Some old arguments including the unsustainability of social security system designed for 1960's demographics, unprecedented population decrease and low TFR (1.37) were reiterated whereas new variations linked the GFC to both falling births and pension system burden as further threats to welfare system as whole. Generational justice argument for consumption tax hike had been developed further, arguing for more equal burden sharing between the young and the old with 61% support in Yomiuri poll used as evidence. Rising welfare costs were seen as inevitable due to aging with budget balancing having only limited effects. Hatoyama's own welfare policies such as child-rearing allowances along with other costs were also used for advocacy, with the TJN (2010) editorial arguing for the need for new revenue stream which consumption tax would fill while it criticized Hatoyama government for lack of a long-term social security strategy.

Compared to TJN's (2006B) editorial, the (2010) version discusses less core themes as it focuses on 4 rather than 6, those being welfare state (welfare funding, reform), dependency ratio-pension linkage (pensions, demographic changes), generational justice (fairer burden sharing) and depopulation. Space spent on castigating Hatoyama-led DPJ government policies TJN disagreed with is likely the primary cause for the more domestic framing and absence of international comparisons, especially when the recent dethroning of LDP by Hatoyama's DPJ is accounted. Notably, members of DPJ cabinet open for discussing the

consumption hike received better treatment than the PM Hatoyama as latter had been framed as the 'villain' of the story with ordinary Japanese as his victims.

TJN's (2014A) editorial "*Consumption tax hike must support stable social security*" differs from the previous two as it defends the planned hike agreed on by DPJ, LDP and Komeito in 2012 and was aimed at any party in power. This meant LDP after its return to power in late 2012. Once more, the previous arguments about demographic changes, making the previous social security system unsuitable, consumption tax hike as a method for financing the rising welfare costs with more equal burden sharing and declining population along with low TFR 1.41 were repeated. New ideas appeared, too. Social security spending's financing via Japan's debt was mentioned, and beyond the support for second part of the hike from 8%>10%, TJN (2014A) also called for more budget control for welfare and pension services and cutting 'waste' such as 'unnecessary' medical consultations. Similarly, childcare and improving employment conditions of non-regular employees were included.

Core themes of TJN (2014A) were the same as TJN (2010)'s, namely welfare state (welfare funding, reform), dependency ratio-pension linkage (pensions, demographic changes), generational justice (fairer burden sharing) and depopulation. Yet the narrative had experienced slight revisions: while DPJ was treated with suspicion over their withdrawal from 2013 three-party negotiations, it was no longer the devil Hatoyama had been. Despite the passing of the first consumption tax hike from 5>8%, the raised tax had been downgraded from the panacea to the welfare costs of aging to a medicine for alleviating symptoms. However, ordinary Japanese were still depicted passive and needing activation.

Among the TJN articles about the population density-aging relationship in the overpopulated Tokyo metropolitan area, TJN (2014B) *"Groundwork needed to stem population decline"* was selected because not only had year 2014 the most hits related to the topic (see Table 6.1), but it also serves as example of the interview-format TJN utilized frequently. The former internal affairs and communications minister Hiroya Masuda was interviewed by TJN on Japan's depopulation. Low birth rate and concentration of everything in Tokyo are framed as causes whereas men's attitude change towards a work-life balance and long-term plans to counter Tokyo overconcentration necessary for overcoming depopulation, including revitalization of provincial areas, are offered as solutions.

Among the core themes, TJN (2014B) included individualization (value change) and depopulation (population decline). Japanese men and Tokyo were portrayed as misinformed

culprits for the low birth rate with women and prefectural areas as indirect victims. Government was the mentor in charge of reforming the misinformed for brighter future. As former governor of Iwate prefecture, Masuda's potential bias for rural devaluation should be acknowledged.

The Korea Times

Because of its size, the full depiction of TKT's aging discourses was impossible. Therefore, examples highlighting South Korea's biased birth rate discourse by the same author with one-month interval between them and example of security-aging discourse linkage idiosyncratic to TKT were chosen. For Japan, an article discussing Korea's potential "Japanization" was selected. All four were written by the TKT journalists, though detailed information about authors could not be found.

Hee-Mook (2012A) articles *"Childbirths dip in April"* together with (2012B) *"Number of newborn in Korea rise in May"* provide illustration of the creative interpretation of data by Statistics Korea commonly cited by TKT. The former dismisses the Korean and Seoul governments pro-natal policies as failures because of the number of babies compared to previous year's April was slightly lower, yet the latter celebrates both as success because of babies in May 2012 being higher than 2011. Both also frame the aging population and low birth rate as problems (economic threats), differing only in wording: 2012A describes the birth rate as one of the lowest in the world and aging as rapid whereas 2012B uses 'chronic low' for birth rate, omitting any adjective for aging. Similarly, incarnation of economic threat differs: 2012A uses harm to growth/raising welfare spending and 2012B reduced workforce/increased welfare burden.

Thematically, both utilise national competitiveness (workforce, international comparison for birth rate for 2012A), welfare (costs) and 2012A also features depopulation via shrinking births. In both articles, Korean government(s) are the actors with agency with difference being in pro-natal policies as solution: in 2012A they are failures, in 2012B they are successful.

Dong-seok's (2009) article *"Women may volunteer as rank-and-file soldiers"* was a short report about South Korean manpower shortages driven by its internationally low birth rate expanding the female roles in the military. Women are the heroines saving the army from depopulation with future obstacles as part of their journey. The core themes of national competitiveness (military strength/birth rate comparison) and depopulation (manpower

shortages) were found. Problem of manpower shortage was resolved with increasing gender equality in the army.

Eun-ji's (2013) article "*Age of deflation?"* about South Korea's potential 'Japanization' and its socioeconomic consequences is a typical example of the TKT articles covering Japan's aging where discussion of Japan and South Korea is interconnected with the former used as a measuring stick for the latter. Eun-ji depicts South Korea following Japan's path as likely risk due to their similarities including aging populations and economic problems with the interviews of Korean professors and experts used to bolster the narrative. Most were worried about the risk, though some saw South Korea being in better position vis-à-vis Japan. The sole foreign interviewee's, American economist and author Harry Dent's, arguments about South Korea following Japan's demographic and economic trajectories are used as evidence: urbanization and rising incomes incentivize fewer and better-educated kids, resulting into demographic cliff, economic slowdown, and eventual deflation with immigration as suggested answer. However, in the last part offering suggestions for President-elect Park Eun-ji also warns against using Japan, the US or Europe as demographic or economic models because of their failures. While increasing birth rates as solution as pledged by Park are viewed as a long-term solution to the demographic problem, immigration advocated by Dent is also presented as a viable option.

Apart from dependency ratio-pension system linkage, all core themes were represented: National competitiveness (international/demographic/economic comparisons/immigration), welfare state (social safety net for young), individualization (changed family formation), generational justice (elderly bias in politics), education culture and its costs (fewer/more educated kids) as well as depopulation. While the nominal rejection of foreign models can be attributed to the GFC considering the date, the fact that foreign expert like Dent was cited so extensively over Korean ones suggests that status of foreign authorities had yet to degrade.

The articles analysed as examples in section 4.4 were selected for presentation and were screened based on the seven core themes that emerged during the discourse analysis (see 4.3). Reflecting the distribution of cases (see Tables 3.1-7.2), the majority treated Japanese/South Korean aging negatively with the exceptions of Choe (2007), Fingleton (2012), and Kaaro (2015) which had positive frames. The mainstream articles focused on the socioeconomic problems caused by Japan/South Korean aging such as depopulation, generational conflict or welfare costs were supplemented with the counter-narrative articles serving as the 'deviant

cases' for enhancing the analysis (Gill 2000: 187-189). Their framing of problem/solution dyads varied, ranging from the Japanese rejection of immigration to resolve its demographic problems (Douthat 2012, Kärppä 2015) and consumption tax hike as fix for rising welfare costs of aging (TJN 2006B; 2010; 2014A) to the South Korea's low birth rate being either a business opportunity for tech-savvy matchmaker firms (Choe 2007) or an economic problem for the government's pro-natal policies to solve (Hee-Mook 2012A; 2012B).

5.0. CONCLUSION

Rapid aging of (developed) societies has become a contemporary challenge from the point of view of national competitiveness, funding pensions, and welfare services. Meanwhile, in the era of 'Fake News' the construction of the media narratives has become increasingly relevant.

This thesis examined the 2006-2015 period when the demographic shifts have been accelerating and how the media narratives portrayed the aging of Japan and South Korea in the Western and English-language Japanese/South Korean newspapers in era covering periods before, during and after the GFC. Media narratives here were classified as part of broader discourse(s).

As elaborated in Chapter 3, the NYT, WSJ, HS, TJN and TKT were chosen for the study that used mixed-methods approach combining content and discourse analyses to answer the following primary and four sub-research questions:

1. *How are the media narratives portraying the aging of Japan and South Korea?*
2. *Do the narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging in the Western media differ from each other?*
3. *Do the narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging in the English-language Japanese/South Korean media targeting international audiences differ from each other?*
4. *Do the Western and English-language Japanese/South Korean media narratives about Japanese and South Korean aging differ from each other?*
5. *If so, how do they differ and why?*

To summarize the results:

1.) Although both positive and negative depictions of the Japanese/South Korean aging were found, the overall portrayal was mostly negative across all years and newspapers with the positive and balanced frames being a minority (see Tables 3.1-7.2).

2-4.) Broad patterns of both similarities and differences regarding the Japanese/South Korean aging discourses between the chosen newspapers during the 2006-2015 period were found. As discussed in sections 4.1-4.2, apart from TKT all newspapers covered the aging of Japan more than South Korea as expected, although the dearth of TJN's Korea-related articles was notable in contrast to the TKT's Japan-selection (see Tables 3.1-7.2). TJN and TKT articles also dwarfed the Western media articles: as shown by Table 2, roughly two thirds of Primary Japanese articles were from TJN while 90% of South Korean articles came from TKT. When combined, TJN and TKT had ~89% of all Primary articles with only ~11% left split between the Western newspapers. Intensity of the aging-related coverage also varied across the papers and countries with general patterns being 2006 spikes followed by post-2012 increase for Japan and 2009/2015 spikes with 2009-2012 as the peak period for South Korea as shown by total numbers/year (see Tables 3.1-7.2 in Appendix).

Throughout the studied period, all newspapers usually portrayed both Japan and South Korea as lagging 'behind' in international comparison in aspects such as competitiveness, retirement age and social security (see Table 9). Besides international comparison, "Depopulation", "Economic (-)" and "Social (-)" in varying orders were generally the three most common coding categories for both Japan and South Korea across all newspapers (see Table 10). Aging discourse in Japanese and South Korean newspapers also featured two coding categories absent from the Western media (Tables 3.1-7.2). Same tables show that the Neoliberalist advocacy present in media narratives about aging were smaller than expected: apart from the WSJ they covered only a fraction of the total cases and in contrary to the expectations were skewed positive for Japan and either absent or negatively skewed for South Korea.

5.) Keeping the caveats mentioned in section 4.1 in mind, one explanation for Japan being more commonly mentioned in the aging-related media discourse is South Korea's lacking recognition as the Western and Japanese equal during the 2006-2015, thus making it less newsworthy. The contrast between the Japanese aging's far higher representation in South Korea's aging-related media discourse than vice versa is indicative of this type of othering (Tamaki 2010). Another explanation lies in the demographic data. Since Japan's population

started declining during the period and due to Japan's status as the world's most aged country, bias towards Japan across newspapers makes sense in contemporary context as its aging is more concrete despite the speed of South Korean aging being faster than Japan's (PRB 2021A;2021B, WPR 2021A; 2021C). Frequency of TKT's Japan mentions could also reflect Japan's interlinkage with South Korean (domestic) discourses as model of comparison (Eun-ji 2013). While small samples are issue in South Korean coverage, the differing peak periods of aging-coverage in newspapers roughly correspond to the GFC (2009-2012) and 2015 spike in South Korea's case whereas for Japan is the overall trend despite some exceptions was aging articles declining from the 2006 peaks during early GFC with coverage gradually rising from 2012 onwards (see Tables 3.1-7.2 in Appendix). This indicates mixed support for the initial assumption that Japan's aging would have initially been treated more seriously than South Korea's: South Korean articles about aging increased over time in TKT but the samples in TJN and Western media are too small to establish patterns.

Since all outliers in Table 10 came from South Korean coverage, its smaller sample sizes also explain the distortions as the papers with larger size were not affected. The overall lack of Neoliberalist frames and their skewness towards positive advocacy for Japan and absence/negative advocacy for South Korea's aging is similarly explained by small sample sizes stemming from the methodological choices that excluded the articles where aging was secondary topic (see Chapter 3). Regardless, these results indicate the reverse of the prior assumption: at least in context of the aging discourse, South Korean TKT was more opposed to Neoliberalism than Japanese TJN. However, these are only some of the possible explanations thus highlighting the need for more studies on this topic.

The main contributions of this thesis have been the identification and exploration of central issues and focal points in the aging discourses concerning Japan and South Korea. The findings of the study discussed above demonstrate the presence of similar narratives and core themes found in all newspapers while highlighting more specific iterations such as the links between aging/security and aging/overcrowding present in Japanese and Korean but absent in the Western media. Prior assumption about Japanese aging's broader coverage in media outside Korean news was confirmed. While the hypothesis about Japanese/South Korean aging serving as proxies for Western countries got limited support, the causalities between Neoliberalist advocacy and Japanese/South Korean media narratives in aging discourses were reversed in contrast to expectations. Therefore, this thesis has helped to address the identified

research gap regarding specifically aging-related media narratives about Japan and South Korea and helped to broaden the academic knowledge of aging discourses in the media.

However, the quantification and categorization involved in thesis' explorative research have clarified the field of study but also brought about critical thoughts concerning this kind of "exact" approach. Since the themes so often overlapped and rarely appeared isolated from each other, it is arguable that a clear-cut classification did not serve its purpose in the best way. If articles where the aging was a secondary theme could have been included, a more nuanced picture would have emerged. However, this was impossible due to the limited time and the sheer number of articles. Alternative selection of articles such as selecting a smaller timeframe suitable for analysis could have also led to deeper insights in the framing and interpretation of aging. Similarly, using another form of coding for sharper delineation between the articles to limit the overlap for preventing some of the analytical issues that emerged might have been possible (Bryman, 2012:303)

Moreover, the historical shift from the Neoliberalism's economic basic assumptions during the Washington Consensus era into a more central bank and state-led phase of world capitalism during the GFC and stagnation since 2008 have not been fully tested in this classification. The shattering of orthodoxies in the West could have led to a re-evaluation of the state-led capitalisms in Asia as well. From the perspective of historical analysis, the quantitative overview with its classifications formed during the thesis' explorative study can be seen as a preliminary phase in research: a necessary step towards deepening the analysis with more differentiated conceptualization and content-sensitive methods. Despite its limitations, findings of the thesis present multiple avenues for further studies to explore.

APPENDIX

Full List of Tables:

Table 1. Finnish Keyword translations

Keyword	Finnish search stem	Unconjugated keywords
Aging/ageing	ikäänt/vanhene	ikääntyminen/vanheneminen
Birth rate/birthrate	syntyv	syntyvyys
Demographics	demografia,väest	demografia,väestö
Graying/greying	harmaan	harmaantuminen
Fertility	hedelmällis	hedelmällisyys

As **Table 1** shows, Finnish keyword equivalents used in HS database searches were done by using word stems. This was done to minimize the potential misses caused by the idiosyncratic Finnish conjugation. The equivalents for keywords like *aging/ageing* (*ikääntyminen/vanheneminen*) would often appear in variety of conjugated forms which the Finno-Ugric languages such as Finnish and Hungarian are (in)famous) for, examples including, but not limited to forms like: *ikääntyneet, ikääntyvät* (plural) or *ikääntynyt, ikääntyvä* (singular). Sometimes the Finnish keyword stems also broadened the searches by including the synonyms: Finnish *väest* (short of *väestö,* meaning population in English) is used in words such as *väestörakenne* and *väestökehitys* corresponding to the English "*demographics*" with different connotations. Therefore, the use of Finnish word stems improved the validity of the keyword search in HS archives by minimizing the exclusion of conjugated forms of keywords from the searches.

Table 2. Data collection keyword search results

Japan	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	KT	Total (J)	South Korea	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	KT	Total (SK)	Both (J+SK)
Aging	121	141	72	289	91	714	Aging	6	7	3	1	761	778	1492
Birth rate	22	16	14	290	23	365	Birth rate	9	7	8	7	496	527	892
Demographics	25	38	15	17	30	125	Demographics	4	3	2	0	114	123	248
Graying	25	7	9	142	7	190	Graying	2	0	0	0	18	20	210
Fertility	15	10	4	38	10	77	Fertility	2	3	0	1	65	71	148
Total	208	212	114	776	161	1471	Total	23	20	13	9	1464	1529	3000
Primary*	68	26	48	384	74	600	Primary*	20	5	6	7	875	913	1513
Relevancy*	0.33%	0.12%	0.42%	0.49%	0.46%	0.41%	Relevancy%	0.87%	0.25%	0.46%	0.78%	0.60%	0.60%	0.50%

Horizontal axis at the top shows country (red), newspapers[1] (blue), total number of frequencies in single category across all newspapers (green) for Japan [Total(J)], South Korea [Total(SK)] and both Japan and South Korea [Both(J+SK)] .Vertical axis depicts country (red), the five keyword search categories[2] (gold), and total number of frequencies in all categories in single newspaper (green). It also shows how many of total articles featured aging as the primary topic (Primary*) as well as how large a share the primary topic articles had from total number (Relevancy%).

1.NYT=*New York Times,* WSJ=*Wall Street Journal Europe,* HS=*Helsingin Sanomat,* TJN=*The Japan News,* KT=*The Korea Times*).

2. (*Aging=aging/ageing, Birth rate=birth rate/birthrate, Demographics, Graying=graying/greying, Fertility*).

As Tables 3.1-7.2 below all work in the same way, to minimize repetition, explanation is provided here:

Tables 3.1-7.2 are divided into two groups with the odd-numbered (**3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1**) **tables** being about Japan and even-numbered (**3.2, 4.2, 5.2, 6.2, 7.2**) **tables** about South Korea. Table numbers show the newspaper in question (3= NYT 4=WSJ 5=HS 6=TJN 7=TKT). Horizontal axis shows the name of paper[1], year (blue), and the total number of frequencies in single category across all years in one newspaper (green). Vertical axis shows the name of paper, country (red), and a list of different categories[2] (gold). The (+), (-) and (bal) are indicators of framing, conveying whether the aging in the articles was framed as positive, negative, or balanced in context of the relevant category. For example, 65 Econ (-) in 2009 in **Table 7.2** below means that economic topics were negatively associated with South Korea's aging in 65 TKT articles that year. The uppermost row depicting the number of articles about Japan or South Korea in given year **shows the total *n* of articles about their aging per year** with total showing *n* for 2006-2015. Lack of categorical overlap also makes it the most accurate, as it shows the different patterns of intensity and peaks in Japan[4] and South Korea's[5] aging-related coverage across all newspapers. Categories from "*Intnat comp*" to "*Neolib*" are abstracted composites merging various concepts related to their topic for making the presentation cleaner (see **Table 8.** for details). **Tables 6.1-6.2** for TJN and **7.1-7.2** for TKT also include *"Security"* and *"Other"*[3] categories that were absent in the Western newspapers.

1. (NYT=*New York Times* WSJ= *Wall Street Journal Europe* HS= *Helsingin Sanomat* TJN= *The Japan News* KT= *The Korea Times*).

2. (International comparison, Economic, Depopulation, Social, Medical, Political, Technology, Neoliberalism, Security and Other).

3. "Other" here referring to the overpopulation of the Tokyo/Seoul metropolitan areas as specific issue beyond the typical rural/urban divide.

4. These being 2009 peak followed by decline (NYT), 2006, 2008. 2012,2015 coverage spikes (WSJ), 2006 peak and rise in 2012-2015 period (HS), 2006 peak and rise from 2013-2015 (TJN) and peak coverage in 2011-2012 (TKT).

5. While South Korean sample is hampered by gap years in coverage and low total for papers other than TKT, similar trends to Japan could be observed: 2009 peak (NYT), consistent HS coverage from 2010-2015 (apart from 2013) and 2009-2012 peak coverage period followed by 2015 peak in TKT. Samples were too low and sporadic for TJN and WSJ to establish consistent pattern.

Table 3.1: New York Times Japan Results

NYT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Japan	7	6	6	14	8	7	9	5	2	4	68
Intnat comp-	3	2	2	4	3		5	3	1	2	25
Intnat comp+							2				2
Economic (-)	1	2	4	8	4	4	4	4	1	2	34
Economic (+)				2	1		2	1		2	8
Econ (bal)					1						1
Depopulation	6	4	5	5	2	7	5	3	1	2	40
Social (-)	6	4	6	6	2	7	7	3	1	2	44
Social (+)		1					2				3
Social (bal)											
Medical (-)		1									1
Medical (+)		1									1
Medical (bal)											
Political (-)							1				1
Political (+)				1							
Political (bal)											
Technology (-)								1			1
Tech (+)				1	1					1	3
Tech (bal)											
Neolib +							1	1		1	3
Neolib -				1			1				2

Table 3.2: New York Times South Korea Results

NYT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	x	2	1	5	3	x	3	1	2	3	20
Intnat comp-	x	1		2	1	x	1	1	2	1	9
Intnat comp+	x					x				1	1
Economic (-)	x			1		x	1		2		4
Economic (+)	x					x					
Econ (bal)	x				1	x					1
Depopulation	x	2	1	4	2	x	1	1	1	2	14
Social (-)	x	2	1	4	2	x	3	1	1	2	16
Social (+)	x			1		x				1	2
Social (bal)	x				1	x					1
Medical (-)	x					x					
Medical (+)	x					x					
Medical (bal)	x				1	x					1
Political (-)	x					x					
Political (+)	x					x			1		1
Political (bal)	x					x					
Tech (-)	x					x					
Tech +	x					x					
Tech (bal)	x					x					
Neolib +	x					x					
Neolib -	x					x	1		1		2

Table 4.1: The Wall Street Journal (Europe) Japan Results

WSJ	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Japan	6	1	4	1	x	3	5	1	1	6	26
Intnat comp-	3	1	2		x	2	3	1	1	5	18
Intnat comp+				1	x						1
Economic (-)	4		4		x	2	4	1	1	4	20
Economic (+)	2				x		1				3
Econ (bal)		1			x					1	2
Depopulation	4	1	1	1	x	2	2	1	1	5	18
Social (-)	1		4		x	1	1	1	1	3	12
Social (+)				1	x						1
Social (bal)					x					1	1
Medical (-)					x	2				1	3
Medical (+)	1				x						1
Medical (bal)					x						
Political (-)	1		1		x					1	3
Political (+)					x						
Political (bal)					x						
Technology (-)			1		x						1
Tech (+)	1				x						1
Tech (bal)					x						
Neolib +	2	1	1		x		1	1		2	8
Neolib -											

Table 4.2: The Wall Street Journal (Europe) Japan Results

WSJ	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	2	x	x	x	x	2	x	1	x	x	5
Intnat comp-	2	x	x	x	x	2	x	1	x	x	5
Intnat comp+		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Economic (-)	2	x	x	x	x		x	1	x	x	3
Economic (+)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Econ (bal)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Depopulation	2	x	x	x	x	2	x	1	x	x	5
Social (-)	1	x	x	x	x	1	x	1	x	x	3
Social (+)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Social (bal)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Medical (-)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Medical (+)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Medical (bal)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Political (-)	1	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	1
Political (+)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Political (bal)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Tech (-)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Tech +		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Tech (bal)		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Neolib +		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	
Neolib -		x	x	x	x		x		x	x	

Table 5.1: Helsingin Sanomat Japan Results

HS	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Japan	7	1	2	2	2	3	8	7	9	8	48
Intnat comp-	2	1	1	1	1	2	6	4	5	5	28
Intnat comp+	1			1			2	1		1	6
Economic (-)			1	1		2	4	1	5	3	17
Economic (+)			1	1			1	1		2	6
Econ (bal)	1						1			1	3
Depopulation	4	1	1	1	1	2	5	4	4	4	27
Social (-)	4	1	1	1	2	2	4	4	7	3	30
Social (+)				1			1			1	3
Social (bal)	1						1				2
Medical (-)							1		1	1	2
Medical (+)	2						2	2	1		7
Medical (bal)											
Political (-)		1					2	1	1		5
Political (+)										1	1
Political (bal)											
Technology (-)									1		1
Tech (+)	1		1		1			1		3	7
Tech (bal)											
Neolib +							2			1	3
Neolib -										1	1

Table 5.2: Helsingin Sanomat South Korea Results

HS	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	x	x	x	x	1	2	1	x	1	1	6
Intnat comp-	x	x	x	x	1	2	1	x	1	1	6
Intnat comp+	x	x	x	x				x			
Economic (-)	x	x	x	x		1	1	x		1	3
Economic (+)	x	x	x	x				x			
Econ (bal)	x	x	x	x				x			
Depopulation	x	x	x	x	1	2	1	x	1	1	6
Social (-)	x	x	x	x	1	2	1	x	1	1	6
Social (+)	x	x	x	x				x			
Social (bal)	x	x	x	x				x			
Medical (-)	x	x	x	x				x			
Medical (+)	x	x	x	x				x			
Medical (bal)	x	x	x	x				x			
Political (-)	x	x	x	x		1		x			1
Political (+)	x	x	x	x				x			
Political (bal)	x	x	x	x				x			
Tech (-)	x	x	x	x				x			
Tech +	x	x	x	x				x			
Tech (bal)	x	x	x	x				x			
Neolib +	x	x	x	x				x			
Neolib -	x	x	x	x				x			

Table 6.1: The Japan News Japan Results

TJN	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Japan	48	37	31	19	34	23	37	40	55	60	384
Intnat comp-	18	16	9	9	14	9	21	11	12	6	125
Intnat comp+	2	1			1	1		1	1	2	9
Economic (-)	22	20	11	11	19	12	26	20	16	20	177
Economic (+)	8	4	5		5	2	3	4	8	14	53
Econ (bal)	2		1		1			1	2	1	8
Depopulation	30	19	18	15	18	11	28	16	34	27	216
Social (-)	23	15	11	12	15	11	28	18	35	25	193
Social (+)	8	3	5	1	2	4	6	4	3	10	46
Social (bal)	2							1	1		4
Medical (-)	8	3	6	1	5	2	6	7	8	13	59
Medical (+)	4	1	1		2	1	1	6	7	5	28
Medical (bal)	1	1	1		1						4
Political (-)	1	4	3	5	5		2	4	1	2	27
Political (+)	2		3	2	1			3	4	2	17
Political (bal)	1										1
Technology (-)											
Tech (+)	2	1			3			3	6	4	19
Tech (bal)											
Neolib +	5	3		1		3	1				13
Neolib -	1	1	1	1	1	1					6
Security (-)			1			1	1				3
Other							1		7	2	10

Table 6.2: The Japan News South Korea Results

TJN	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	1	x	x	2	1	x	x	2	x	1	7
Intnat comp-	1	x	x	1		x	x	1	x	1	4
Intnat comp+		x	x	1		x	x	1	x		2
Economic (-)	1	x	x			x	x		x	1	2
Economic (+)		x	x			x	x		x		
Econ (bal)		x	x			x	x		x		
Depopulation	1	x	x	1		x	x	1	x	1	4
Social (-)	1	x	x		1	x	x		x	1	3
Social (+)		x	x			x	x		x		
Social (bal)		x	x			x	x		x		
Medical (-)		x	x	1	1	x	x		x		2
Medical (+)		x	x			x	x	1	x		1
Medical (bal)		x	x			x	x		x		
Political (-)		x	x			x	x		x	1	1
Political (+)	1	x	x			x	x		x		1
Political (bal)		x	x			x	x		x		
Tech (-)		x	x			x	x		x		
Tech +		x	x			x	x		x		
Tech (bal)		x	x			x	x		x		
Neolib +		x	x			x	x		x		
Neolib -		x	x			x	x		x		
Security (-)		x	x			x	x		x		
Other		x	x			x	x		x		

Table 7.1: The Korea Times Japan Results

TKT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Japan	x	3	6	5	7	14	10	7	17	5	74
Intnat comp-	x	3	3	3	7	10	6	3	8	4	47
Intnat comp+	x		3	2		3	4	3	5	1	22
Economic (-)	x		1	3	5	8	9	6	12	1	45
Economic (+)	x		3	1		2	1	1			8
Econ (bal)	x		1								1
Depopulation	x	3	6	4	6	10	6	3	12	5	55
Social (-)	x	3	1	2	3	4	6	4	6	4	33
Social (+)	x		1	2		1		1			5
Social (bal)	x										
Medical (-)	x				1	1	2				4
Medical (+)	x										
Medical (bal)	x										
Political (-)	x			1	2				1		4
Political (+)	x							1		1	2
Political (bal)	x										
Technology (-)	x									1	1
Tech (+)	x					1					1
Tech (bal)	x										
Neolib +	x		1		1						2
Neolib -	x										
Security (-)	x										
Other	x										

60

Table 7.2: The Korea Times South Korea Results

TKT	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
South Korea	x	44	63	101	101	109	164	97	84	112	875
Intnat comp-	x	19	27	50	37	28	40	16	32	36	285
Intnat comp+	x	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	1		14
Economic (-)	x	22	30	65	58	59	89	41	46	60	470
Economic (+)	x	4	10	10	5	8	9	14	12	19	81
Econ (bal)	x	1	1	1	2	4	5			1	15
Depopulation	x	21	30	48	51	46	77	38	43	56	410
Social (-)	x	23	27	55	54	50	87	47	49	66	458
Social (+)	x		5	6	10	6	10	14	4	6	61
Social (bal)	x	1	3	5	4	9	13	1		7	43
Medical (-)	x	5	5	5	7	6	17	11	3	7	66
Medical (+)	x	2	4	4	5	1	2	3	1	7	29
Medical (bal)	x	1	3			3	5				12
Political (-)	x	4	7	11	3	2	4	6	4	10	51
Political (+)	x	5	8	13	12	7	12	2	2	1	62
Political (bal)	x						4	1			5
Tech (-)	x									1	1
Tech +	x		1			2	1	3		4	11
Tech (bal)	x						1				1
Neolib +	x	2	2	1	2						7
Neolib -	x		1	3	4	1	1			1	11
Security (-)	x			4	3			1	2		10
Other	x	2			1	1					4

Table 8. Coding category contents

International Comparison	Economic	Social	Medical	Political	Technology	Security	Other	Depopulation	Neoliberalism
Japan/SK ahead others	competitiveness	abortions	diseases	elections	apps	military	overpopulation of	falling population	deregulation
Japan/SK behind others	costs	attitudes	fertility treatments	evaluation of	digital services	manpower	Tokyo/Seoul	declining birth rate	free trade
	debt	crime	healthcare	government policy	robots	foreign landsales	metropolitan area		Neoliberalism
	demand	day-care	medicines	scandals					New public management
	dependency ratio	education	nursing						privatization
	economic growth	generational divides							
	fiscal health	household roles							
	job market	isolation							
	labour shortages	lifestyles							
	market opportunity	loneliness							
	poverty	rural/urban divide							
	productivity	suicides							
	unemployment	values							
	workforce	welfare services							

Table 8 above explains the contents of the abstracted composites merging various concepts used as coding categories for **Tables 3.1-7.2**. Horizontal axis (blue) shows the types of coding categories whereas the vertical axis lists the contents forming each coding category. "International comparison" indicates whether Japan/South Korea is mentioned as ahead or behind other countries in the article. For instance, if article in TKT mentioned Japan's budget for solving birth rate being higher than South Korea's, it was classified as "Intnat comp+" for Japan and "Intnat comp-" for South Korea. For composite categories, contents of "Economic", "Social","Medical", "Political" ,"Technology", "Depopulation" and "Neoliberalism" are shown above in **Table 8**. Present only in **Tables 6.1-6.2** and **7.1-7.2** for TJN and TKT, "Security" featured concerns about military manpower and land sales to foreigners whereas "Other" was about overpopulation of the Tokyo/Seoul metropolitan area as specific issue beyond the typical rural/urban divide.

Table 9. International comparison details

Japan	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	TKT	South Korea	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	TKT
Intnat Comp (all)	27	19	34	134	69	Intnat Comp (all)	10	5	6	6	299
Total (articles)	68	26	48	384	74	Total (articles)	20	5	6	7	875
all % of Total (articles)	0.40%	0.73%	0.71%	0.35%	0.93%	all % of Total (articles)	0.50%	1%	1%	0.86%	0.34%
Intnat Comp (ahead)	2	1	6	9	22	Intnat Comp (ahead)	1	0	0	2	14
Intnat Comp (behind)	25	18	28	125	47	Intnat Comp (behind)	9	5	6	4	285
ahead % of Intnat Comp (all)	0.07%	0.05%	0.18%	0.07%	0.32%	ahead % of Intnat Comp (all)	0.10%	0%	0%	0.33%	0.05%
ahead % of Total (articles)	0.03%	0.04%	0.13%	0.02%	0.30%	ahead % of Total (articles)	0.05%	0%	0%	0.29%	0.02%
behind % of Intnat Comp (all)	0.93%	0.95%	0.82%	0.93%	0.68%	behind % of Intnat Comp (all)	0.90%	1%	1%	0.67%	0.95%
behind % of Total (articles)	0.37%	0.69%	0.58%	0.33%	0.64%	behind % of Total (articles)	0.45%	1%	1%	0.57%	0.33%

Details of the International comparisons regarding Japan and/or South Korea are shown in **Table 9** above. Horizontal axis shows the names of paper[1] (blue) and country (red) while vertical axis lists measurements and their values (gold). *Intnat Comp (all)* shows the number of articles where international comparisons about Japan or South Korea in given newspaper during the 2006-2015 period were present. *Total (articles)* shows the total number of articles about Japan/South Korea in the same period with *all % of Total (articles)* showing how large a share of total articles in given newspaper the articles with International comparisons about Japan or Korea constituted. *Intnat Comp (ahead)* and *Intnat Comp (behind)* are equivalents of *Intnat comp+* and *Intnat Comp-* coding categories in **Tables 3.1-7.2**, showing the number of articles where Japan/South Korea were portrayed as models in some aspect(s) of aging discourses *(Intnat Comp (ahead)* or as behind in one or more aspect (*Intnat Comp (behind)*). *Ahead % of Intnat Comp (all)* and *ahead % of Total (articles)* show the percentage of articles where Japan/South Korea were depicted as ahead in some aspect(s) of aging discourses with vice versa for *behind % of Intnat Comp (all)* and *behind % of Total (articles)*.

1. (NYT=*New York Times* WSJ= *Wall Street Journal Europe* HS= *Helsingin Sanomat* TJN= *The Japan News* KT= *The Korea Times*).

Table 10. Most common coding categories in newspapers

Japan	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	TKT	South Korea	NYT	WSJ	HS	TJN	TKT
Depopulation	2nd	2nd	2nd	1st	1st	Depopulation	2nd	1st	1st (tie)	1st	3rd
Economic (-)	3rd	1st	3rd	3rd	2nd	Economic (-)	3rd	2nd (tie)	2nd	3rd (tie)	1st
Social (-)	1st	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	Social (-)	1st	2nd (tie)	1st (tie)	2nd	2nd
						Political (-)		3rd	3rd		
						Medical (-)				3rd (tie)	

Apart from International comparisons illustrated in **Table 9, Table 10** above shows the three most common coding categories based on the **Tables 3.1-7.2**. Horizontal axis shows the names of paper[1] (blue) and country (red). Vertical axis lists the top three categories[2] (gold). Although "Depopulation", "Economic (-)" and "Social (-)" were the three most common categories for Japan and South Korea in every newspaper, the positions of respective categories among the top three categories varied for both within and across newspapers depending on whether Japan and or South Korea was the target. The dominance of negative categories among all papers for both Japan and South Korea in Western and each other's papers conforms to the theoretical framework about their role as 'others'. While the NYT and WSJ's respective social and economic prioritizes were expected (see **Chapter 3**), the much higher overall variance regarding South Korea was unexpected. The higher variance among South Korean aging categories when compared to Japan's is at least partially explained by lower sample (see **Tables 3.1-7.2**). WSJ, HS and TJN with small Korean coverage experienced more variation than NYT and TKT where the larger size made them more stable like Japanese samples.

1. (NYT=New York Times WSJ= Wall Street Journal Europe HS= Helsingin Sanomat TJN= The Japan News KT= The Korea Times).
2. Along with ties in case of South Korea.

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