

ON-SITE SKETCH:

The Second Media Briefing of COVID-19 Survey on Citizens in 30 Global Cities: The Metamorphosis of National Images of South Korea, Japan, the United States, and China

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OVERVIEW:

- ❑ **Date of the Event:** 30th of June 2020 (11AM~)
- ❑ **Venue:** Korea Press Center 19F
- ❑ **Hosted by** Joongmin Foundation (JMF)
- ❑ **Sponsored by** Sori Asset, National Research Foundation of Korea
- ❑ **Presentations Conducted** in Korean, English, Chinese, and Japanese by
 1. **Professor. Sang Jin Han:** The Rise of a Korean Model and its Hidden Danger (Korean)
 2. **Subin Kim:** Japan at the Crossroads with Frustrated Citizens (Japanese)
 3. **Dajung Ryu:** The Collapse of the United States Hegemony from a Global Perspective (English)
 4. **Chunjui Hsu:** The Divided Global Image of China (Chinese)



On 30th of June 2020, there was an event hosted by JMF, the second media briefing, to release the main outcomes of the survey research on citizens in 30 global cities. Participants consisted of professor Sang Jin Han, the chairman of JMF and the professor emeritus of Seoul National university, Young Hee Shim, the professor emeritus of Hanyang universities, research fellows of JMF, journalists from prominent media like JTBC, Yonhap news, Hankook Ilbo, and Kookmin Ilbo.

The session began at 11AM straight, with the chair, professor Shim's opening address and general overviews of the COVID-19 survey results. Presentations are prepared in multiple languages, Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese. This was indeed interesting, because it seemed like the seminar was targeted for foreign press, yet the participants consisted of Koreans exclusively. This was indeed experimental, as Professor Han commented later, to show the willingness to communicate globally. Despite this forward-looking intention, disappointment remains due to the absence of the targeted audience. However, the experiment was significant in that it could be readily utilized in a future international event.

INTRODUCTION: Before presentations, Shim gave a concise but a detailed introduction on explaining the topic and overview of the research, including to whom the survey was processed. In fact, the survey was processed toward adults in 30 global cities, with the cooperation of Hankook Research and Rakuten Insight Survey, which augment the reliabilities of the data.

Thanks to Shim's overview of the background, methodology, the questionnaires used and general findings of research, it became easier to comprehend the conceptual tools, which could



save time for the audiences to understand each presentation. It made it possible to organize the four presentations with independent topics in less than one hour.

In addition, the interaction of civil society and government was well understood, as the methodology included four facets of evaluations: 1) evaluation on government performance (absolute), 2) relative: better/worse than other countries, 3) reliability in government/media supplied COVID-19 information, and 4) reliability in local and foreign media. With these data, there were different sets of combinations made in generating scatter plots to analyze the tendency and correlations of the civil and government relations. Personally, it was a nice way to check whether a certain city is in a right track in managing quarantines for COVID-19 from the public perspectives of global citizens. As Shim pointed out, the high evaluations made on themselves by Seoul, Daegu and Taipei, while underscoring others, especially Japan, identified different perceptual tendencies among the global citizens.

KOREAN CASE: The first presentation was made by the Professor Han, who introduced South Korean case under the theme of *“the Rise of a Korean Model and its Hidden Danger.”*

“Regarding the positive evaluation that Korean government’s COVID-19 policy had received, the fact that unique psychological state of Korean is indeed isolated from the general trend, can be detected. As Korean citizens feel the sense of superiority through the experience of COVID-19, there is a risk of falling into narcissism of self-abduction.”

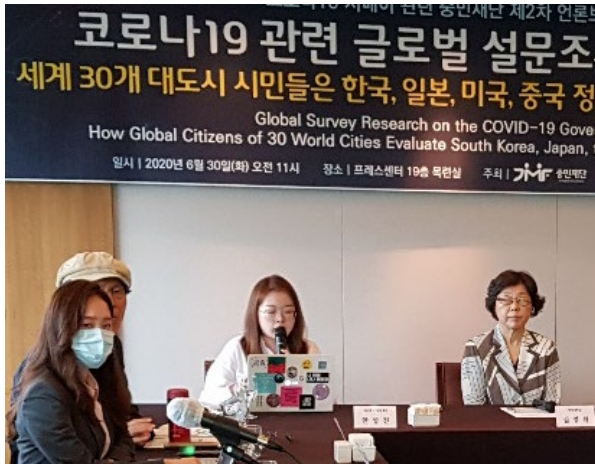
As quoted by the professor Han, he has shown his concern to the new “K-Quarantine” to combat the COVID-19, as its overly positive evaluations within and outside Korea. Han referred to the “distinguished” feature of the Korean memory of health governance; when MERS (2015) invaded Korea, the Seoul citizens’ trust on the government-supplied information was very low, achieving 80% of unreliability, while now the rate is completely opposite. Thanks to the previous experience, South Korea could have efficiently handled the pandemic relatively at rapid speed. Han argued that the success of the Korean model had firmly been proven by the citizens of 30 global cities. As a result, the domestic marks would be high for themselves, but the problem is related to the low marks they give to the other global cities, which is not shown in other countries’ pattern.



According to Han, the citizens of 30 global cities, without a single exception, evaluated Korea to be higher than world average. In many cities, however, they evaluated their domestic performance to be unsatisfying. Nevertheless, it is worthy to note Han’s alert that South Koreans’ tendency to overestimate its own country’s performance can also lead to the hidden

danger of falling into a sense of national superiority and arrogance.

JAPANESE CASE: The second presenter was Ms. Subin Kim, research fellow at JMF presented Japanese case with the presentation file prepared in Japanese language. The topic was “*Japan at the Crossroads with Frustrated Citizens*”



presentations in front of the press.

Ms. Kim introduced the comparative case studies of Tokyo and Osaka. Overall Japanese evaluation on their own progress was low, with Osaka becoming more pessimistic than that of Tokyo in evaluating the domestic management of COVID-19, while Tokyo citizens show less reliability in the domestic media. Interesting points were found that Taipei and Korea evaluated Japan very low, while other countries relatively high. The East Asian countries have strong perception that Japanese government is not doing well. In contrast, the relative favorable inclination of the Western countries toward Japan can be seen from their high evaluation on Japanese progress. On the other hand, the Japanese citizens were found to be highly dissatisfied with their government’s performance. Thus, the emerging conclusion was Japan is at the crossroads, with frustrated citizens.

Originally the file was prepared by other assistant who was to give speech in Japanese, but due to the personal affairs, Ms. Kim had to replace the presenter, because she helped collecting and organizing Japanese data analysis. Including Ms. Kim, all presenters consist of very young researchers, M.A. candidates of Seoul National University. This was indeed very surprising and pleasant at the same time, as JMF is giving opportunities to students without experiences in giving



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: The next presentation was made by Dajung Ryu a graduate student of M.A. degree in international studies at Seoul National University, working as research fellow at JMF. The topic of the presentation was “*The Collapse of the United States Hegemony from a Global Perspective.*”

She confidently grabbed the microphone with active gestures and gave a speech in English, with a presentation file prepared in English. She first introduced the interesting points on how the collapse of the US hegemon was proved through today’s COVID-19 cases. Despite being the strongest country in the world, the citizens of 30 global cities, without any single exception, viewed the United States significantly lower than world average.

US citizens marked the least score to China, while marking the highest for South Korean progress. The growing tension of the US-China relations would best explain this result. The more fear and threat, the US feel in the rise of China as a challenge of revisionist to the current hegemon, the less marks the US had given to China, while marking high scores to the other East Asian countries. The result personally was very interesting, in terms of indicating the current unstable position of the US as a hegemon.

CHINA: The podium was then taken by Mr. Chun who prepared his presentation in Chinese language, and Korean slides regarding “*the Divided Global Image of China.*”



Mr. Chun is originally from Taiwan, studying at graduate school of sociology in Seoul National University. It was indeed interesting to see Taiwanese presenting Chinese case himself, because apparently Taipei, along with other East Asian cities had also marked very low for China’s progress.

The presentation was rather short and concise since the survey research in Beijing and Shanghai remains to be done. Regardless, it was intriguing to see the comparative analysis on global averages and Chinese average. Some cities like Moscow, Singapore, Jakarta, Mexico City and Rome gave a high evaluation on China, while cities like Osaka, Tokyo, and Seoul, the East Asian neighbors and the US were highly skeptical toward Chinese progress. In that sense, the image of China as a nation state is globally divided with respect to COVID-19 management, as there are dissenting opinions from different countries.

UPON CLOSING THE FOUR PRESENTATIONS, Q&A session was held, where many follow-up questions regarding the nationalist narcissism of Korean citizens were made. In addition, several interesting questions, like the differences between Northeast Asia and other regions’ evaluations on Japanese quarantine progress were made. Furthermore, a separate interview session was organized upon an additional request to Professor Han Sang Jin, after the Q&A session. The media briefing had successfully finalized around 12:30 afternoon, and the whole event had been filmed by JTBC, a prominent South Korean cable TV network. After a group photoshoot of all the participants, chair and presenters, a fancy luncheon was held, with a great scenery of Seoul city hall from the 19th floor building at Korea Press Center.

FINAL REVIEW: A well-organized review was made by one of the research fellows of JMF, Seong Jin lee (left photo).

After the event finalized, the JMF made a review materials that briefly summarize and pinpoint the critical issues raised in Q&A sessions, along with an



elaboration of the main points of how transformation of national images of South Korea, Japan, the United States, and China is being made. The reviewer, Seong Jin Lee, a research fellow of JMF had well organized the statistical analysis and materials precisely. JMF also provides English and Japanese version of the review, which will be distributed along with Korean version for those who are interested.



[Group Photos] After the Event



▷ Participants of the Event



▷ Professor Han, Shim, and the research fellows of JMF