

An Examination of the Meaning of Atomic-Bomb Survivors' Demands for State Compensation from the Japanese Government: Based on 2005 and 2009 *Nihon Hidankyo* Surveys

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Abstract

Even today, the institutionalisation of state compensation by the Japanese government for the Atomic-bomb damage remains one of the major goals of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organisations, *Nihon Hidankyo*. Although the rationale for sustaining collective campaigns has been studied, there is limited knowledge about the meaning of individual *hibakushas*' (Atomic-bomb survivors) demands for compensation by the Japanese state. Very little research has been done on this problem, especially after 1994, when the state finally enacted the Atomic-Bomb Survivors' Support Law, which provides health, medical care, and welfare support for *hibakusha*. This study first provides an overview of *hibakushas*' views on the need for the institutionalisation of state compensation. Second, using co-occurrence network analysis, this study examines the words that characterise the ways in which individual *hibakusha* frame their demands for compensation. The data used in this research are based on answers to open-ended questions collected in two nationwide *Nihon Hidankyo* surveys conducted in 2005 and 2009. The findings suggest that when advancing demands for state compensation, respondents refer to four main issues: the nature of the Atomic-bomb damage, responsibility for the damage, the need to prevent similar tragedies, and exigency to improve the existing support provisions to meet the needs of *hibakusha*.

1. Introduction

‘Bring back’, the words of the famous Hiroshima poet¹, are among the earliest expressions of Atomic-bomb survivors’ (*hibakusha*) need to seek remedy and redress for their immense losses. The Atomic-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 caused vast destruction, indiscriminate mass deaths, and inhumane suffering. For *hibakusha*, the memory of that fateful day constitutes profound emotional trauma. The bombings disrupted family and community bonds and caused the loss of work and educational opportunities, poverty, and social discrimination. The effects of radiation exposure caused *hibakusha* to experience acute symptoms and numerous late-onset diseases. Even today, they continue to be haunted by incessant anxiety about their health and the health of their children and grandchildren. The injuries that *hibakusha* have suffered are multiple, long lasting, and interrelated, and encompass all the health, psychological, and socioeconomic aspects of their life.²

In 1957, despite the considerable delay, the Japanese government took the first step towards alleviating the conditions of the *hibakusha* by introducing a basic health examination and medical care system. Since then, the tireless efforts of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organisations (*Nihon Hidankyo*) and its supporters to receive full recognition of *hibakushas*’ suffering have brought about numerous revisions to the support measures. At present, a law enacted in 1994, called the Atomic Bomb Survivors’ Support Law (henceforth, Support Law), regulates the provision of ‘comprehensive support for the health, medical care and welfare of the ageing *hibakusha*’³. The Support Law improved the previous welfare provisions and came closer to meeting at least some of the expectations of the *hibakusha* organisations. However, it did not satisfy one of *Nihon Hidankyo*’s main demands towards the Japanese state—to institutionalise state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage. Together with the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the enactment of a state compensation system for the *hibakusha* and their bereaved families remains a major goal of the confederation⁴.

Surprisingly, although the rationale behind *Nihon Hidankyo*’s campaigns for state compensation has been elucidated (Naono 2018), research on the meaning individual *hibakusha* attribute to the enactment of state compensation remains scarce. Most academic discussions on this topic were published in the 1980s when the nature and scope of the support measures became

¹ A quotation from ‘Prelude’, a poem by Toge Sankichi, translated by Minear (1990: 305).

² For an overview of the damage caused by the Atomic-bombings, see *Nihon Junbi-iin-kai* (1978), The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1981), and Kawano (2010).

³ For comprehensive information about the provisions of the Support Law, refer to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/kenkou/genbaku/index.html (accessed on 22 January 2022). All citations of the text of the Support Law were translated by the authors.

⁴ Information about *Nihon Hidankyo*’s main objectives is available on confederation’s website: <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about1-01.html> (accessed on 22 January 2022).

the subject of a heated debate between the Japanese government and *hibakusha* organisations (e.g. Ishida 1986b; *Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1986). The vast majority of these works predate the enactment of the current Support Law and are inaccessible to non-Japanese speaking readers.

This study first provides an overview of *hibakushas*' individual opinions on the need for institutionalisation of state compensation. Second, using co-occurrence network analysis, this study examines the words that characterise the ways in which individual *hibakusha* tend to state their demands for compensation. The analysis seeks to grasp the main issues the *hibakusha* refer to when advancing their demands for compensation from the Japanese state. The data used in this research consists of answers to open-ended questions collected during two nationwide *hibakusha* surveys conducted by *Nihon Hidankyo* in 2005 and 2009. This study is part of the authors' efforts to shed more light on *hibakushas*' mindscapes (e.g. Kawano 2010; Kawamoto and Kawano 2015; Vasileva, Izumi, and Kawano 2020).

2. *Nihon Hidankyo*'s Demand for State Compensation and the Atomic-Bomb Survivors' Support Law of 1994

Nihon Hidankyo has tirelessly advocated for the enactment of relief measures for *hibakusha* since its establishment in 1956 (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1956). Together with the abolition of nuclear weapons, this goal is commonly referred to as one of the 'two wheels' of the *hibakusha* movement. A major feature of *Nihon Hidankyo*'s campaigns for relief has been the demand for the institutionalisation of state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage by the Japanese government. Confederation's rationale for demanding state compensation was progressively elaborated in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and the 1980s (Naono 2018).

In 1966, *Nihon Hidankyo* issued an important paper, commonly known as the Crane Pamphlet, in which it demanded the enactment of a relief law based on the state's responsibility to compensate for war damage and ensure its citizens' welfare (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1966; Naono 2018: 233). Later revisions of *Nihon Hidankyo*'s demands included a call for the provision of a monthly *hibakusha* pension, which was interpreted as serving three functions (Ito 1975: 196; *Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1978): to compensate *hibakusha* for their health, emotional and socioeconomic suffering (compensation for the past); to assure a stable life for *hibakusha* (welfare support for the present); and to ensure that the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedies are not repeated (guarantee for the future). The desired relief law was further interpreted as a guarantee of *hibakusha* and citizens' right to a peaceful existence and as a direct expression

of the peaceful spirit of Japan's constitution (Ito 1975:196; Moritaki 1994: 282). The papers and policy proposals issued by *Nihon Hidankyo* in the late 1960s and the 1970s emphasised the state's responsibility to enact a compensatory system, not just welfare provisions, and began to articulate a connection between the confederation's demand for compensation and its calls against nuclear weapons and war (Naono 2018: 237-238).

Later in 1984, based on a survey among members of the confederation, *Nihon Hidankyo* further elaborated on the meaning of its demand for state compensation in a paper known as Basic Demands⁵. This document remains *Nihon Hidankyo*'s guiding paper. Unlike the Crane Pamphlet, in which demands for compensation were mixed with demands for welfare support, in Basic Demands, *Nihon Hidankyo* confidently demanded the enactment of a compensatory relief system for the Atomic-bomb damage. The confederation justified its demands for compensation from the Japanese government by pursuing the state's responsibility for initiating the war that brought about the Atomic-bombings⁶. In the document, the essence of the desired compensatory relief system is summarised under four main points: 1) the institutionalisation of compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage serving as a guarantee that no more *hibakusha* will be created; 2) the provision of condolence money and pensions to the families of the Atomic-bomb victims; 3) the provision of medical care, treatment, and recuperative care for all *hibakusha* merely upon presentation of a *hibakusha* certificate; and 4) the provision of *hibakusha* pensions aimed at alleviating the life-long agony of being a *hibakusha* caused by the multiple health, psychological and socioeconomic aspects of the Atomic-bomb damage (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1984a). *Nihon Hidankyo* clearly linked the enactment of state compensation to the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons. In a commentary on Basic Demands, the confederation's leaders changed the traditional 'two wheels' metaphor into a 'two wheels of a bicycle' metaphor. The demands for the abolition of nuclear weapons and no (nuclear) war were framed as the 'front wheel', powered by the 'rear wheel'—a metaphorical expression of the demand for a compensatory relief system (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1984b). Consequently, the enactment of state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage was seen as a guarantee that such inhumane damage would never be

⁵ An English translation is available on *Nihon Hidankyo*'s website: <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about3-01.html> (accessed on 22 January 2022).

⁶ *Nihon Hidankyo* further pointed to the state's responsibility for failing to provide support to *hibakusha* for twelve years after the bombings (thus aggravating their suffering) and waiving their right to demand redress from the United States government for the illegal use of atomic-bombs under international law (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1984a). A decision by the Tokyo District Court handed down on 7 December 1963 ruled that the Atomic-bombings constituted a violation of international law. However, Japan's signature on the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty has generally been interpreted as waiving *hibakushas*' right to claim damages from the United States. In Basic Demands, Japan's responsibility for waiving *hibakushas*' rights to claim damages from the United States is positioned as a secondary rationale. This decision is due to fears that putting a stronger emphasis on Japan's obligation to shoulder the United States responsibility to compensate *hibakusha* obscures Japan's war responsibility and exempts the United States from taking responsibility for the Atomic-bombings (authors' interview with a member of the confederation, 26 February 2022).

tolerated and a first step towards the abolition of nuclear weapons and (nuclear) war prevention (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1984a, 1984b). Together with outlying the four pillars of the desired compensatory relief system, *Nihon Hidankyo* also criticised the insufficiencies of the then-existing support measures for *hibakusha* and pointed to the additional problems experienced by the survivors due to their progressive ageing. Thus, *Nihon Hidankyo* established a link between the institutionalisation of state compensation and the improvement of the support measures. The Confederation outlined additional eight demands for improvement and pointed out that implementing these requests was just a way to strengthen further the desired compensatory relief law, not an alternative to it (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai* 1984a).

In 1994, the Japanese government made a major reform of the measures extended to the *hibakusha* by enacting a Support Law that integrated and improved on the provisions of the pre-existing Atomic-Bomb Survivors Medical Care Law of 1957 and the Atomic-Bomb Survivors Special Measures Law of 1968⁷. The Support Law has remained in force to date. Under its stipulations, all certified *hibakusha* are exempted from medical expenses for the treatment of general diseases and diseases recognised as induced by exposure to the radiation of the Atomic-bombs, and entitled to receive regular health examinations. The law also provides for monthly welfare allowances if eligibility criteria for specific health conditions are met. The Support Law abolished the income threshold that had previously limited the provision of benefits. A funeral service allowance is paid when a *hibakusha* passes away due to the injurious effects of the Atomic-bombs. Special funeral allowance is retrospectively extended to the bereaved families⁸ of those who had passed away before the funeral service allowance came into force. Social welfare services, such as consultations and home-based support services are also provided. In addition, the Preamble to the Support Law states that support measures for *hibakusha* are enacted in a spirit of remembrance to the victims and the prevention of similar tragedies. Under the Support Law, the state pledges to work to abolish nuclear weapons, sustain peace and commemoration projects, and promote research on the effects of the Atomic-bomb radiation exposure.

Nevertheless, the Support Law does not explicitly acknowledge the state's responsibility for causing the Atomic-bomb damage by initiating the war and does not address the illegality of the Atomic-bombings. Instead, it ambiguously positions the enactment of the measures under 'state

⁷ The Medical Care Law of 1957 established a *hibakusha* certification and health examination system and provided medical care for diseases recognised as induced by exposure to the radiation of the Atomic-bombs. The Special Measures Law of 1968 introduced welfare allowances for those who met specific eligibility criteria, such as stipulated health conditions, and income and age thresholds. For a comprehensive list of all the revisions of the support measures, see the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/kenkou/genbaku/index.html (accessed on 22 January 2022).

⁸ Often interpreted as unfair given its applicability only in cases when the relative to whom the benefit is provided is also a *hibakusha*; the short application period of only two years for this benefit and its monetary amount of only 100,000 yen have also been criticised by *Nihon Hidankyo* (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai Nihon Hidankyo-shi Henshu-iin-kai* 2009: 266).

responsibility in light of the special kind of health damage caused by the Atomic-bombings, different from other war-induced damage'.⁹ This position is thought to reflect the government's long-established stance that support for the *hibakusha* is provided on the grounds of their specific health problems, while other types of war-related damage 'ought to be endured'¹⁰.

Nihon Hidankyo's representative board committee met the enactment of the Support Law with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the long-awaited enactment of a law integrating the previously established measures and the improvements it introduced were acknowledged as a step closer to reflecting the confederation's demands (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai Daihyoriji-kai* 1994). On the other hand, the lack of state compensation provisions and the narrow understanding of the Atomic-bomb damage as limited to the health injuries induced by radiation exposure was strongly criticised (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai Daihyoriji-kai* 1994). The representative board stated that the Support Law was substantially different from the compensatory relief law the confederation had demanded because it did not address the state's war responsibility and the illegality of the Atomic-bombings and did not provide for pensions and condolence money (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogi-kai Daihyoriji-kai* 1994). Therefore, *Nihon Hidankyo*'s position demanding state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage has remained unchanged.

3. Previous Studies

Individual *hibakushas*' wish to receive redress for the Atomic-bomb damage has been documented by surveys since the formation of the very first *hibakusha* organisations in the 1950s.¹¹ Based on life history research, social scientist Ishida (1986a: 104-112) argued that responsibility seeking was one of the major meaning-making needs of *hibakusha*¹². He pointed out that the

⁹ For a thorough discussion of the nature of the government support measures for *hibakusha*, see Naono (2011). Naono points out that the term 'state responsibility' used in the Preamble to the Support Law refers merely to the state's role as an implementing body (2011: 218).

¹⁰ War-related damage in this context refers to the damage suffered by the general civilian population. The Japanese state has enacted compensatory measures for war veterans, civilian military employees and their bereaved families (e.g. the War Victims and Survivors Relief Law of 1952). For details on the government's position regarding the nature of the *hibakusha* support measures, refer to the 1980 report by the Committee to Discuss the Basic Policy Issues Regarding the Atomic-Bomb Survivors. The report is available on the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website, <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/10901000/000694125.pdf> (accessed on 22 January 2022).

¹¹ Some early examples can be found in the 1953 survey conducted among 70 *hibakusha* by the Hiroshima Atomic-Bomb Victims Organisation (Ubuki 2011: 49, 67); an exploration of *hibakushas*' demands conducted by the *Gensuibakukinshi Nihon Kyogi-kai Senmon-iin-kai* (1961); *Asahi Shinbun*'s 1967 survey of 500 *hibakusha*; and small-scale surveys conducted by local *Nihon Hidankyo* branches from the late 1950s to the 1970s (Hamatani 1977).

¹² A similar conclusion was reached by Lifton (1971: 490-495), who argued that justice seeking is one of the 'formulation' mechanisms employed by the *hibakusha*.

content of *Nihon Hidankyo*'s Basic Demands was a direct expression of *hibakushas*' attempts to come to terms with their inhumane experiences (Ishida 1986b: 100-101). In 1985, *Nihon Hidankyo* conducted a nationwide survey of 13,178 *hibakusha*, which showed that 92.4% of the respondents wanted the state to enact a compensatory relief law (*Nihon Gensuibaku Higaisha Dantai Kyogikai* 1986). The survey also included a multiple-choice question about the purpose of the law. The answer options with the highest percentage were: 'to guarantee a stable life for the *hibakusha*' (69.3%); 'to guarantee that more *hibakusha* will not be created' (46.8%); 'to redress the human losses' (34.1%); and 'to clarify the state's responsibility' (34.1%). Ishida (2004), who conducted a statistical analysis of this survey, created an eight-level trauma stratification that reflects the accumulation of health and emotional injuries. Ishida found that the demand for the enactment of a relief law acknowledging the state's responsibility was prevalent among *hibakusha* who belonged to the strata of respondents who had suffered severe damage.

Shortly before the Support Law came into force in July 1995, *Nihon Hidankyo* conducted another *hibakusha* survey that collected 3,592 valid answers¹³. The survey featured a closed-ended question about respondents' familiarity with the newly enacted Support Law and an open-ended question about their opinion. At the time, only 13% of the respondents answered that they were well familiar with the new law's provisions. Nemoto (2020) provided a detailed qualitative report on the content of the answers (1,683 in total) to the open-ended question. According to the results, 26.7% of the respondents criticised the law for failing to provide state compensation. The report points to the belief that the enactment of state compensation would guarantee that no other *hibakusha* would be created. It also reports respondents' different views regarding the positioning of the demand for state compensation under the larger ideology of the *hibakusha* movement.

Despite the valuable contributions of the aforementioned studies, further research should be conducted using more current data. The surveys mentioned above were conducted before the enforcement of the Support Law of 1994. In addition, the analyses of these surveys did not focus exclusively on the meaning of the institutionalisation of state compensation. Further investigation into this issue will enrich the strand of studies that aims to shed light on individual *hibakushas*' mindscapes (e.g. Kawano 2010; Kawamoto and Kawano 2015; Vasileva, Izumi, and Kawano 2020).

¹³ The descriptive statistical report of the survey results is available on *Nihon Hidankyo*'s website: <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/about/about4-03.html> (accessed on 22 January 2022).

4. Data and Procedures

The data used in this study are based on answers to open-ended questions collected in two nationwide *hibakusha* surveys conducted by *Nihon Hidankyo* in 2005 and 2009¹⁴. Both surveys featured similarly structured multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to express their demands towards the Japanese government. Table 1 provides an overview of the surveys and the relevant survey questions. The 2005 survey received 1,615 responses. The average age of the respondents was 75.7 years (minimum age 59 years, maximum age 98 years); 55.2% were men and 44.3% were women (0.5% NA). The average age of the respondents in the 2009 survey was 78.7 years (minimum age 63 years, maximum age 97 years); 54.4% were men and 45.0% were

Table 1. Overview of the 2005 and 2009 *Nihon Hidankyo* surveys

Organising institution	<i>Nihon Hidankyo</i>	<i>Nihon Hidankyo</i>
Survey title	60th Anniversary of the Atomic-Bombings: My Appeal	Message from the <i>Hibakusha</i> : Towards the 2010 NPT Review Conference
Collection period	2005/3-2005/5	2009/5-2009/7
Number of responses	1,615	1,032
Question regarding the demand for state compensation	<p>Q5. As a <i>hibakusha</i>, what would you like to demand from the United States and Japanese governments?</p> <p>B) From the Japanese government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enactment of state compensation for the damage inflicted by the Atomic-bombs 2. Dissemination of information about the realities of the Atomic-bombings throughout the world 3. Adherence to the three non-nuclear principles 4. Promotion of the abolition of nuclear weapons among the nuclear states 5. Atonement and provision of apology and compensation for the victims of Japan's war of aggression in Asia 6. Preservation of Art. 9 of the Constitution and conduct of peaceful foreign diplomacy 7. Other <p>Express your thoughts freely to the Japanese government.</p>	<p>Q2. In view of next year's NPT Review Conference, what would you like to demand from the Japanese and the United States governments?</p> <p>A) From the Japanese government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dissemination of information about the realities of the Atomic-bombings throughout the world 2. Enactment of state compensation for the damage inflicted by the Atomic-bombs 3. Legislation of the three non-nuclear principles 4. Promotion of the abolition of nuclear weapons among the nuclear states 5. Preservation of Art. 9 of the Constitution 6. Other <p>Express your thoughts freely to the Japanese government.</p>

¹⁴ Mid-term reports showing the descriptive results of all the survey questions of the two surveys are available on *Nihon Hidankyo*'s website: <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/spread/img/057myappealjapanese.pdf> and <https://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/img/091030j.pdf> (accessed on 22 January 2022). It should be noted that there are minor differences between the total number of respondents reported in the mid-term reports and the data used in this article. In a previous study (Vasileva, Izumi, and Kawano 2020), we referred to the characteristics of the 2009 *Nihon Hidankyo* survey using the information provided in the mid-term report.

women (0.6% NA). In total, 1,032 responses were collected.¹⁵ Although the two surveys have a similar structure and items, it should be noted that their backgrounds differ. The 2005 survey was conducted on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Atomic-bombings, while the 2009 survey was carried out in preparation for the 2010 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review Conference.

A co-occurrence network analysis was used to analyse the answers to the open-ended questions. Co-occurrence analysis is a statistical association approach to text analysis with two theoretical foundations: 1) mental associations of concepts manifest themselves in co-occurring words; and 2) meaning is understood as residing in how words relate to other words (Osgood 1959: 56-78; Krippendorff 2019: 256). Co-occurrence analysis is based on calculating the strength of links (co-occurrence frequency) between words that are characteristic of the content of a group of texts. The analysis results are visualised through a network plot showing words (nodes) with similar patterns of appearance. Words with high degrees of co-occurrence are connected by lines (edges). KH Coder software (Higuchi, 2020) was used to perform the analyses.

In the first step of the analysis, two sub-samples were created that included only results of the open-ended questions of respondents who had indicated in the multiple-choice part of the questionnaire that they wished to receive state compensation. The sub-sample of the 2005 survey amounted to 690 (42.7%) answers and that of the 2009 survey amounted to 609 (59.0%) answers. The compiled texts were then pre-processed through KH Coder, the segmentation of the words was checked, and the extracted words¹⁶ were controlled for synonyms and words with alternative writings.

Next, all words used to indicate ‘compensation’ that appeared in the two sub-samples were unified and coded as ‘補償’ (the most common word used in this context to indicate compensation). Then, word association lists and co-occurrence networks of the words most closely associated with the words coded as ‘compensation (補償)’ were generated. The units of analysis were individual documents. Last, after making sure that there were no changes to the overall composition of the networks, words with high frequencies—such as ‘request (求める)’, and ‘demand (要求する)’—that did not contribute meaningfully to the interpretation were excluded from the analysis, and the networks were regenerated.

¹⁵ The total number of survey questionnaires that was sent out has not been published.

¹⁶ In this analysis, KH Coder’s default parts of speech list was used for the word extraction (Higuchi 2020: 126-127).

5. Results and Discussion

In both the 2005 and 2009 *Nihon Hidankyo* surveys, most of the *hibakusha* respondents (over 65%) selected ‘enactment of state compensation for the damage inflicted by the Atomic-bombs’ from the multiple-choice options of the question about their demands towards the Japanese state (Figures 1 and 2)¹⁷.

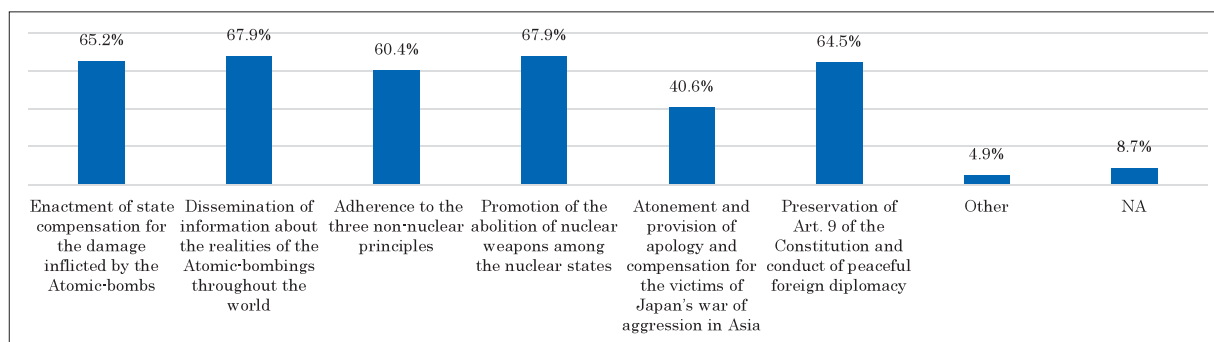


Figure 1. Results of the 2005 survey

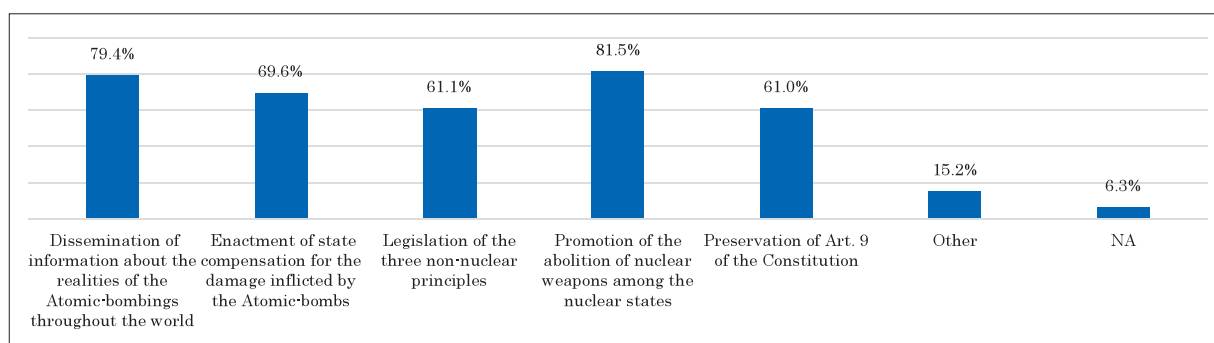


Figure 2. Results of the 2009 survey

Table 2 shows the results of the word extraction of the answers to the open-ended questions given by respondents who indicated in the multiple-choice part of the questionnaire that they wanted state compensation. The list of Japanese words coded as ‘compensation (補償)’ in the two sub-samples is shown in Table 3. Words indicating ‘compensation’ were observed in 178 documents in the 2005 sub-sample and in 95 documents in the 2009 sub-sample¹⁸.

¹⁷ The results of the two *Nihon Hidankyo* surveys seem to confirm the results of a national *hibakusha* survey with 13,204 respondents conducted by *Asahi Shimbun*, Hiroshima University and Nagasaki University in 2005. The survey included a question about respondents’ wish for state compensation explication. The results showed that the majority of the respondents (58%) thought state compensation should be explicated under the Support Law. The statistical results of the survey were published in the *Asahi Shimbun* morning edition on 17 July 2005.

¹⁸ This number does not include answers that indirectly refer to or otherwise imply compensation.

Table 2. Results of the KH Coder word extraction

	2005 sub-sample		2009 sub-sample	
	Total	Used in the analysis	Total	Used in the analysis
Extracted words (n)	36,097	15,146	29,512	12,548
Different words (n)	3,980	3,390	3,534	2,952

Table 3. Incidence of words indicating ‘compensation’ in the two sub-samples

Different words indicating ‘compensation’ in Japanese that appeared in the sub-sample of the 2005 <i>Nihon Hidankyo</i> survey	Number of occurrences in the sub-sample
補償	205
償い	4
賠償	2
代償	1
慰謝料	1
償う	1
Total number of occurrences in the sub-sample	214
Total number of documents (one per respondent) where at least one of the above words indicating ‘compensation’ occurred	178 (11.0% of all respondents)
Different words indicating ‘compensation’ in Japanese that appeared in the sub-sample of the 2009 <i>Nihon Hidankyo</i> survey	Number of occurrences in the sub-sample
補償	99
償い	4
賠償	3
罪ほろぼし	1
Total number of occurrences in the sub-sample	107
Total number of documents (one per respondent) where at least one of the above words indicating ‘compensation’ occurred	95 (9.2% of all respondents)

In the next step of the analysis, lists of the words most closely associated with the code ‘compensation (補償)’ were generated. The association estimation is based on a conditional probability calculation to show which words are most likely to occur in documents containing the code ‘compensation (補償)’. The strength of the association was determined using the Jaccard similarity coefficient. Based on the retrieved results, two co-occurrence network plots showing the links between the words most closely associated (the top 75 terms in the case of the 2005 sub-sample and the top 60 terms in the case of the 2009 sub-sample) with the code ‘compensation (補償)’ were generated (see Figures 3 and 4). The size of the circles corresponds to the frequency of the occurrence of each word. The colours of the circles indicate the centrality of the words in the network.

The co-occurrence network results for the 2005 and 2009 sub-samples show a number of similarities. For this reason, they are discussed together in a complementary way. To strengthen our interpretation of the results, we used KH Coder’s KWIC (keywords in context) concordance function to check how the extracted words were used in the original texts. We also provide examples

from both sub-samples showing the most relevant thematic patterns.¹⁹

First, the results of the statistical text analysis show that the code ‘compensation (補償)’ is closely associated with the nodes ‘state (adj.) (国家)’, ‘damage (被害)’, ‘Atomic-bomb (原爆)’, and ‘*hibakusha* (被爆者)’. The results reveal that the core meaning of demanding compensation from the Japanese state is associated with receiving redress for the enormity of the Atomic-bomb damage. While most *hibakusha* respondents use the generalised expression ‘Atomic-bomb damage’ to refer to their numerous losses and injuries, some emphasise the specific nature of the damage inflicted on them. Those who choose to describe their ordeal make use of the words ‘live/living (生きる)’, ‘life (人生)’, ‘livelihood (生活)’, ‘suffering (苦しみ)’, ‘health (健康)’, ‘anxiety (不安)’, and ‘die/dying (死ぬ)’. These words form and participate in some smaller node groups in the networks. Thus, in the messages, the Atomic-bomb damage is exemplified by respondents’ references to their life as *hibakusha*, the mass deaths they witnessed and the loss of family and friends, their preoccupation with dying, their constant suffering, and their health and livelihood anxiety. Examples are provided below:

‘I want state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage to be enacted.’

‘The suffering the Atomic-bomb damage caused to the human beings is lifelong. My ordeal has continued for 60 years. I can never forget. I demand state compensation for the sufferers.’

‘Hibakusha are passing away after living a life full of suffering. State compensation for the Atomic-bomb radiation exposure should be promptly established. To my knowledge, in the United States, a compensatory system has been established for victims of radiation exposure. Even from an international perspective, it is strange that Japan, the only Atomic-bombed state, does not have such a system. State compensation should be enacted immediately.’

‘I lost seven family members. Apart from us, who are somehow still alive, there is no compensation even for those who passed away. Our losses are inconsolable. The state should do something.’

‘Every year the state’s top representatives visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but do they really understand the [characteristics of the damage suffered by the] *hibakusha*? I want the state to make every possible effort to enact a relief law based on state compensation.’

The results further reveal that *hibakushas*’ demand for the enactment of state compensation is also frequently associated with the need to clarify the ‘responsibility (責任)’ of the ‘state (n.) (国)’ for the damage. In the 2009 sub-sample network, the nodes ‘responsibility (責任)’, ‘state (n.) (国)’, ‘war (戦争)’ and ‘victims (犠牲)’ are connected by links. The KWIC concordance function shows that the

¹⁹ The words (nodes) in the network plots and examples were translated by the authors. The translation of the words (nodes) is based on their most frequent usage in the original messages. The underlined words in the examples match the words extracted in the statistical text analysis; however, synonyms are sometimes used to improve the quality of the translation.

word ‘responsibility (責任)’ in the 2005 sub-sample network is also frequently used in the sense of responsibility for the war. Thus, the majority of respondents, associate their demand for state compensation with Japan’s responsibility for initiating the war that brought about the Atomic-bomb damage. Some of the respondents refer to themselves as war victims and emphasise that the Atomic-bomb damage is a war-induced damage. In addition, some responses openly criticise the government’s endurance policy for the war damage (see Section 2) and state that the Atomic-bomb damage could never be tolerated given its inhumanity and war-induced origin. The words ‘endurance (受忍)’ and ‘policy (政策)’ form two of the smaller nodes in the 2009 sub-sample network. Examples are provided below:

‘*Hibakusha* became victims of a war the state initiated. The government must provide thorough state compensation.’

‘It was the Japanese government that initiated the war. Therefore, under the responsibility of the government, state compensation must be institutionalised for those affected by the Atomic-bomb damage.’

‘The Atomic-bomb damage was a consequence of the arbitrary decision of the political leaders at the time to rush into war. Therefore, it goes without saying that it is only natural for the government to provide state compensation.’

‘The [war damage] endurance doctrine that underlies the provision of support for the *hibakusha* must be abandoned immediately. By initiating the war, Japan became the only Atomic-bombed state in the world. The government actions caused the Atomic-bomb death of (...) innocent citizens and the lifelong health and psychological and social suffering of the *hibakusha* who survived. The state should realise that it is fundamentally wrong to force the endurance policy on the *hibakusha*.’

The responsibility for the Atomic-bomb damage is sometimes framed as accumulated or a joint responsibility. In addition to initiating the war, the respondents also hold the state accountable for neglecting the *hibakusha* and failing to provide sufficient support in the immediate post-war period. This aspect is shown by the relationship between the nodes ‘neglect (放置)’ and ‘post-war (戦後)’ in the 2009 sub-sample network. Some messages also pin down the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty that supposedly waived *hibakushas*’ right to claim compensation from the United States. It should be noted that, although limited in number, some respondents in the sub-samples also refer to the United States’ responsibility and mention that not only Japan, but also the United States government, should compensate the *hibakusha*. Some responses urge Japan to claim compensation from the United States government, which is one of the reasons why in both networks there is a link between the nodes ‘United States (アメリカ)’ and ‘Japan (日本)’/‘the only Atomic-bombed state (唯

—被爆国)’. The demand for compensation sometimes includes a call for Japan to apologise to the *hibakusha* or ask the United States to apologise to them. The following responses exemplify these points:

‘During the first ten years of the post-war period, the government neglected the *hibakusha*. There was no medical assistance to alleviate the conditions of those suffering from acute Atomic-bomb radiation exposure symptoms. I think the state should apologise to the *hibakusha* and provide compensation.’

‘The real responsibility to provide compensation for the *hibakusha* lies with the United States as the Atomic-bombings violated international law. However, Japan bears a heavy responsibility for neglecting the *hibakusha* and waiving their right to claim damages from the United States. Therefore, I strongly believe that Japan should shoulder the United States’ responsibility to enact state compensation for the *hibakusha* (...).’

‘Neither Japan nor the United States has provided compensation.’

‘Japan should demand compensation for the *hibakusha* from the United States government.’

Apart from being associated with words describing the Atomic-bomb damage and *hibakushas*’ need to clarify the responsibility for that damage, the demand for state compensation also co-occurs with words conveying other types of demands. The node ‘nuclear weapons (核兵器)’ in both networks is linked to the node ‘abolition (廃絶)’. Thus, when advancing demands for state compensation, most respondents also urge Japan, as ‘the only Atomic-bombed state (唯一被爆国)’, to ‘appeal (訴える)’ to the ‘United States (アメリカ)’ and the other ‘nuclear states (核保有国)’ for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Another demand, coupled with the one for state compensation, is for Japan to ‘adhere (堅持)’, ‘preserve (守る)’, or even ‘legislate (法制)’ the ‘three non-nuclear principles (非核三原則)’. It should be noted that the co-occurrence of the nodes ‘Japan (日本)’ and ‘war (戦争)’ in the 2009 sub-sample network is also influenced by responses inviting Japan to promise never to engage in military aggression and remain a peaceful state. Although this cannot be seen as a characteristic shared in all responses, some respondents even position the enactment of state compensation as a necessary step towards promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons and guaranteeing adherence to peaceful foreign diplomacy. This opinion is exemplified by the edge between the small nodes ‘again (再び)’ and ‘create (作る)’ in the 2005 network referring to respondents’ wish that more *hibakusha* should never again be created. As shown in the 2005 sub-sample network, other demands, coupled with the one for state compensation, are for Japan to ‘disseminate (広める)’ information about the ‘realities (実相)’ of the ‘Atomic-bomb radiation exposure (被爆)’ to the ‘world (世界)’, and compensate and ‘apologise (謝罪)’ to the ‘people (人々)’ and countries in ‘Asia (アジア)’ who also became victims of its war aggressions. In the 2009 sub-sample network, words such as ‘(nuclear)

umbrella (傘), ‘American military (米軍)’, and ‘(military) bases (基地)’ that refer to concerns about United States–Japan relations appear more often. Another demand that appears in the 2009 sub-sample network is related to the edge between the nodes ‘people (citizens) (国民)’ and ‘government (政府)’. The KWIC option reveals that the use of these words reflects two primary meanings. They are sometimes used to emphasise that all Japanese people suffered from the consequences of the war. However, they also refer to requests for the Japanese government to create good welfare policies for all its citizens, including the *hibakusha*. The following examples illustrate these points:

‘Japan must strongly appeal for nuclear weapons abolition to the nuclear states. State compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage must be enacted immediately.’

‘The government should enact state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage, disseminate information about the realities of the Atomic-bomb radiation exposure throughout the world, and never again engage in wars.’

‘Japan must admit its war responsibility and compensate not only those affected by the Atomic-bomb damage but also all other war victims. Further, Japan should press the United States and other nuclear states to work towards abolishing nuclear weapons.’

‘Japan should take the lead in promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons. However, to do so, it should first institutionalise state compensation for the Atomic-bomb damage, consider abandoning the United States nuclear umbrella, and develop a more decisive foreign diplomacy towards the United States.’

‘It is only natural that, in order to avoid creating hibakusha again and causing anyone to go through the same suffering, Japan should provide compensation for the damage we suffered under the responsibility of the state. The Japan’s constitution was born out of the tragedies of war and Atomic-bombings. It should be absolutely preserved.’

‘Japan should properly apologise to and compensate the people of the Asian countries that became victims of its war aggressions. State compensation for those affected by the Atomic-bomb damage should also be provided. Japan should abandon war forever and develop friendly relations with its Asian neighbours.’

‘(...) the government should develop policies that protect the life and livelihood of all its citizens. Article 9 of the constitution should be preserved. Japan should appeal strongly to the abolition of nuclear weapons. In addition, compensation clarifying the state’s responsibility for the Atomic-bomb damage should be provided. Japan should never again engage in war.’

The remaining nodes in the two networks seem to reveal additional arguments used to support *hibakushas*’ demands for state compensation. In most cases, these arguments seem to build

upon the rationales that were already discussed. A word that frequently occurs in both sub-samples is ‘ageing/old age (高齢)’. In the 2005 sub-sample network, it is linked to the node ‘promptly (早期)’; in the 2009 sub-sample network it is connected to the nodes ‘die/dying (死ぬ)’ and ‘live/living (生きる)’. The KWIC results show that the respondents refer to their ageing to emphasise two problems. The first, is for the Japanese government to enact state compensation before the *hibakusha* generation passes away. The second relates to the additional burden ageing seems to place on the *hibakusha*. In their responses, some respondents motivate their demands for state compensation by describing how ageing exacerbates the afflictions caused by the Atomic-bomb damage. Thus, the difficulties associated with ageing are positioned as a reason for the government to provide further assistance to the *hibakusha*. The following examples support these points:

‘All the *hibakusha* have reached old age. The government should hurry to institutionalise state compensation.’

‘*Hibakusha* continue to grow older and older each year and feel anxious about their future. The 60th anniversary of the bombings may be the last chance. The government should promptly admit to its obligation to enact state compensation.’

‘Because of our old age and health problems, our everyday life is full of worries. Please give us compensation as soon as possible.’

‘I would like to tell of the pain and sadness of losing both my parents and my three siblings. There should never be a war again. I would like to request assistance for the ageing hibakusha. I want the government to consider providing state compensation for those who, because of the Atomic-bomb damage, could not form families and are constrained to live alone (...).’

As shown in the above examples, the demand for state compensation sometimes appears in responses that criticise the provisions of the ‘Support Law (援護法)’ for not being ‘sufficient (充分)’ to respond to the needs of the *hibakusha*. The state is expected to provide additional ‘assistance (援助)’ to alleviate the ‘suffering (苦しみ)’ of the *hibakusha*. A significant point of discontent appears to be related to the ‘Atomic-bomb disease (原爆症)’ ‘certification (認定)’ standard, according to which *hibakushas*’ eligibility to receive a special medical care allowance is decided²⁰. The certification standard has been a frequent object of ‘litigation (訴訟)’ between the *hibakusha* and the state.

²⁰ The special medical care allowance is granted only when a *hibakusha* needs medical treatment due to injuries or diseases stipulated by government ordinance as attributable to the effects of exposure to the Atomic-bomb radiation. Among others, the list of certified diseases for this category comprises specific blood and solid cancers. Whether or not a disease onset is attributable to the effects of the Atomic-bombs is decided based on considerations of the time and place (distance from the hypocentre) and, respectively, the dose of radiation exposure. Refer to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare website for a complete list of the designated diseases and the respective certification criteria: https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/kenkou_iryuu/kenkou/genbaku/index.html (accessed on 22 January 2022).

Another problem the respondents refer to is their wish for the amount of the other monthly ‘allowances (手当)’ to be ‘increased (増額)’, or, at least, not to be decreased. In such contexts, the enactment of state compensation is sometimes framed as a way to overcome the shortcomings of the existing Support Law by increasing and equalising the scope of its provisions and guaranteeing the stability of monthly payments. Thus, while many responses seem to emphasise the symbolic function of compensation to remedy the Atomic-bomb damage and do justice to the victims, some respondents also focus on how the explication of state responsibility for the damage should bring about concrete improvements in support measures. The connection between the Atomic-bomb damage, the state’s responsibility to compensate for it, and respondents’ criticism of the provisions of the Support Law is well expressed in the 2009 plot where the group of nodes formed by ‘certification (認定)’, ‘Atomic-bomb disease (原爆症)’, and ‘litigation (訴訟)’ is linked to the main node group formed around the ‘compensation (補償)’ code. It should be noted that, although a minimal number, some respondents in both sub-samples refer to the existing support measures as ‘state compensation’ but nevertheless demand further monetary increase or improvement of the scope of the provided benefits. The following examples illustrate these points:

‘The distance from the hypocentre is not a measure of *hibakushas*’ suffering. The Japanese state should open-heartedly understand the realities of the Atomic-bomb damage and the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. The Japanese state caused our tragedy. The state must promptly admit responsibility for the war and institutionalise state compensation. All *hibakusha* should receive a certification of their Atomic-bomb diseases.’

‘Together with institutionalising state compensation, the government should relax the [Atomic-bomb disease] certification standards and provide more assistance [for the *hibakusha*]. The state should also press for the abolition of nuclear weapons.’

‘I want the state to apologise and provide state compensation to us who became victims. The monthly allowances should be increased. I live alone and suffer from anxiety.’

‘The standards introduced by the state are unreasonable. The [benefits allowed upon] Atomic-bomb disease certification should be established as state compensation.’

‘Most of us are now over 70 years old, and our numbers are progressively declining. To avoid decreases in the monthly allowances, state compensation should be provided for those affected by the Atomic-bomb damage.’

‘I want the government to provide better state compensation for those affected by the Atomic-bomb damage. For example, the designation of nursing care homes for elderly *hibakusha* should be considered.’

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate empirically the main issues that *hibakusha* refer to when stating their demands for compensation from the Japanese government. Both *Nihon Hidankyo* surveys used in this research report a high percentage of *hibakusha* demanding state compensation in 2005 and 2009. The analysis of respondents' answers to the open-ended questions reveals multiple layers of meaning associated with the call for the institutionalisation of state compensation.

Hibakushas' demand for compensation is frequently positioned as a reparative action for the Atomic-bomb damage (that goes beyond the health injuries caused by radiation exposure) and as a means to clarify the state's responsibility for such damage. Although the results show the existence of opinions that frame Japan's obligation to enact state compensation as primarily resultant from its responsibility for waiving *hibakushas'* right to claim damages from the United States, the majority of the respondents emphasise Japan's war responsibility. In addition, the demand for state compensation appears to be strongly associated with other demands aimed at assuring the prevention of similar tragedies. The call for state compensation enactment tends to frequently co-occur with demands for the Japanese state to promote the abolition of nuclear weapons and preserve its peaceful post-war principles²¹. The association between the demands for the enactment of state compensation and the elimination of nuclear weapons suggests that the majority of the respondents share the main ideology of *Nihon Hidankyo*. In Basic Demands, the confederation positions its two major goals, state compensation institutionalisation and achievement of nuclear weapons abolition, as closely related to one another. On both collective and individual levels, these two demands seem to be linked by the inhumanity of the Atomic-bomb damage. However, in a slightly different vein to *Nihon Hidankyo's* position paper, only some of the respondents seem to clearly position the institutionalisation of state compensation as a step leading towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. In most cases, these goals are just paired and discussed together.

In addition, the findings reveal that the demand for the institutionalisation of state compensation is also discussed together with demands for further improvements to the existing support system, which the respondents criticise for failing to meet their needs. Preoccupations with the vulnerabilities caused by ageing and the problems with the provision of monthly allowances, such as their eligibility criteria and insufficient or fluctuating amounts, seem to be additional arguments used to support *hibakushas'* demands for compensation from the Japanese government. Sometimes, the enactment of state compensation is seen as a means of overcoming the shortcomings of the Support Law. In most cases, these arguments seem to build on a rationale

²¹ These findings are also consistent with Nemoto's (2020) observations.

focused on the nature of the Atomic-bomb damage and the state's responsibility for it; however, they are sometimes stated as arguments per se.

The observed association between the demand for state compensation and the demands for nuclear weapons abolition, clarification of Japan's war responsibility, and improved *hibakusha* support suggests that the majority of the respondents share *Nihon Hidankyo*'s main arguments for demanding state compensation.

However, it should be noted that this study used only small sub-samples of texts and did not examine the centrality of the demand for state compensation within the whole body of demands towards the Japanese state. Therefore, the dissimilarities between the two sub-samples were not discussed in detail. It should be noted that the node 'compensation (補償)' does not seem to be a central node in either of the co-occurrence networks generated in this study. Further investigations should be conducted to address these issues. Additional research should be conducted using more current datasets. Different sampling strategies targeting respondents less engaged with *Nihon Hidankyo* could also deepen our understanding of the meaning of *hibakushas*' demands for state compensation.

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