

Working from Home During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results of a Survey on the Effects of Staying at Home on the Family and Gender Relations in Japan

Emiko OCHIAI, Nanami SUZUKI

The survey we conducted, the first such survey in Japan, on working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, made it clear, first, that the stay-at-home policy combining working from home and closing the schools has greatly increased the housework and child-rearing burden on the family, and the weight of that burden has had a debilitating effect on women who primarily have to bear it. The burden falls particularly heavily on women with children and especially on women with children who are staying at home from school. The second area of note is that many people feel that working from home has improved their family relations. Men in particular feel this. To ensure that even after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended, working from home becomes part of the “new normal,” we need to construct a social system that pays more attention to sustainable human reproduction by rebuilding social care, revising corporate labour management and redefining gender roles.

Meta-analyses of Mean Age and Rate of Sexual Harassment by Professors in Japan: Is Power Relevant in University Sexual Harassment?

Hiroshi TAROHMARU

Meta-analysis is a method used to synthesize several different studies measuring an effect size, e.g., an odds ratio, difference of means, or the slope of a regression line. Although meta-analysis is often used to unify the results of different professional academic papers estimating the same effect size, it can be applied to unify essays written by undergraduate students as well. In this paper, I meta-analyzed essays written by students taking my class on survey methods. I assigned the students the task of collecting a probabilistic sample of articles on sexual harassment cases caused by full professors or associate professors, based on reports published in Asahi Newspapers from 2000 to 2020. The students were then tasked with estimating the 95% confidence intervals of the mean age and rate of harassment by full professors reported in their samples. I then meta-analyzed those results in order to obtain better estimates. The results show no significant difference between the rates of harassment by professors and those by associate professors. However, the mean age of the harassers was lower than the other professors by 1.3 years, which contradicts the hypothesis that older and more powerful people would be more likely to commit sexual harassment.

Reciprocity in Qualitative Research and Rights Advocacy in Response to COVID-19: A Case Study of the Living Conditions of Foreign Residents

Wako ASATO

This paper outlines action research carried out in response to COVID-19 with regards to foreign residents living in and around Kyoto. This includes details of the survey procedure adopted, involving face-to-face interviews, and the qualitative research method used, focusing on food relief. Food relief was chosen as an example of a community activity involving reciprocity, and to ensure an adequate supply of information for the researcher during a time of economic downturn. The survey results, collected from nearly 600 respondents, show how the negative socio-economic/psychological impacts of COVID-19 differed depending on foreign residents' countries of origin, age, residence status, occupation and gender, and highlighted how a more effective support strategy, capable of responding to these various different impacts, is needed. One unexpected outcome of the research was the researcher's own commitment to and involvement in rights advocacy - mainly coordinating support from government services. What became clear as a result of the survey was that the welfare services provided by local government, which should normally act as a safety net, are often difficult for foreign residents to access due to the language barrier and the cumbersome bureaucratic procedures involved. Undocumented workers also need food relief. However, this can raise moral and ethical questions regarding advocacy by the researcher. In some respects, these workers are victims of the rent-seeking structures associated with their lack of citizenship, but it is difficult to legitimize a separate research ethic solely for investigating and advocating on behalf of just one particular group of people. This could be seen as unethical. It would also distract from the overall research context and could promote individual reductionism. However, such commitment does not necessarily have to be provided just by the individual researcher. Multidisciplinary collaboration among lawyers when dealing with legal issues, among doctors and NGOs/NPOs when dealing with matters of livelihood support, and with

other essential people in the community, can all help to overcome the academic limitation of isolationism. Advocacy is not the prerogative of fieldworkers alone.

Precarious Employment and the Transformation of the Japanese Labor Market (1980s-2010s)

Stéphane HEIM

The dual labor market in Japan is depicted as having evolved from inequalities between a core and stable working force in large firms, and a peripheral one in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to inequalities between regular and non-regular workers, both in large firms and SMEs. In other words, working in a large firm is no longer a sufficient condition to earn a stable and high income. This article examines the permanence and evolutions of the Japanese labor market between the 1980s and 2010s, by shedding light on the mechanisms causing the increase of new forms of precarious employment. It especially shows that two major factors explain the diversification of the employment forms, while the primary labor market kept stable. First, many non-regular workers are employed in four main service industries, at the expense of regular employees. Second, large firms started to hire non-regular workers in the 2000s, which in turn became a new layer of the working population, which can be depicted as a semi-peripheral labor force.

Plurality as a Condition for Sexual Politics in Late Modernity: Based on Judith Butler's Evolving View of the Legal System

Tamio TOKAJI

Michel Foucault said that sexuality, which was intermingled with various different aspects of life, is produced in modernity as an independent event. In this context, sexual politics can be regarded as being directed toward modern regimes that objectify and project sexuality into the private sphere on the basis of the public/private distinctions that produce sexuality. Moreover, current sexual politics, which is compatible with social network theory, tends to view the modern regime it faces as an early modern regime whose mechanism is a reflexive circulation about identification with identity and remaking of normative regulation. However, current sexual politics does not provide a good understanding of the new neoliberal regime of sexuality that has emerged in the late modern society where these mechanisms of reflexive circulation are now becoming dysfunctional. The lack of understanding of this late modern regime may be the result of the inability of current sexual politics to articulate the condition required to confront the neoliberal regime.

This article identifies the mechanism of this neoliberal regime of sexuality and then describes the characteristics needed for sexual politics in order to confront that neoliberal regime. To that end, this article focuses on Judith Butler's theoretical development about legal systems from the early modern frame of the 1990s to the late modern frame of the 2000s and beyond. In the 1990s, Butler noted that legal systems were tied to performative reflexive circulation. In the 2000s, on the other hand, Butler noted that the legal system has been divorced from reflexive circulation and has become tacticalized by sovereign power. By clarifying the changes involved, I show how the inherent mechanisms of the late modern regime of sexuality are different from the early modern regime of sexuality. Furthermore, this paper will also show that Butler identifies the characteristics of current sexual politics as being necessary in order to confront late modern regimes of sexuality as part of the "politics of plurality" posited by Hannah Arendt.

An Imperative Cultural Trend?: International Film Co-production Policy in Japan

Suhyun KIM

In this article, I investigate the process of agenda building and implementation of the Japanese film policy which was concomitant with the Japanese cultural policy of 'Cool Japan.' This article is composed of three major analyses: 1) a review of the sociological literature and critiques on cultural industries and policy; 2) the discourse regarding the Cool Japan strategy and film policy in Japan; and 3) the incentive for international film co-production and the globalization of cultural policy in East Asia. First, this article explores the policymaking process associated with the Cool Japan strategy and Japanese film policy by analyzing the archival documents of the various governmental institutes in Japan. The Cool Japan policy has been built up as a national and cultural agenda by the government (an agenda-building effect) in the wake of globalization in East Asia. The promotion of the state of Japan is the main goal of this strategy, but the state does not always consider the current circumstances and problems of the Japanese film industry. The incentive for international film co-production was created as the state was influenced by neighboring nations, even though the co-production strategy was initially exploited by a handful of directors who already had a track record of co-productions. I compare the cultural and film policies of South Korea and PRC with those of Japan by charting their interplay and examining their implications for global trends in the film industry. However, policy theory and discourse cannot be understood without also examining the industry situation itself. It is necessary to investigate the incentive provided for international film co-production in tandem with the Cool Japan strategy, in the name of which the government has committed several grave blunders. Thus, while the incentive for international film co-production in Japan is policy-driven, at the same time it is also intertwined with media globalization in the competitive circumambience. Eventually, the question raised here must be: is it an imperative cultural trend or a commercial necessity for the Japanese film industry?

Considering Fan-fiction Culture from the Perspective of the Social Group

Yuko KAWAHARA

In contemporary society, social groups are not necessarily regional and often show fluidity. The social group associated with fan-fiction is one example of such a borderless group which has grown with the proliferation of the Internet. Fan-fiction (*nijisōsaku*, derivative works) refers to creations, such as comics or novels, made by fans using characters or worlds of already-existing fictions. In this group, members display a remarkably high level of mobility and there are no official organizations, official leaders or written rules. Nevertheless, their activities converge in certain patterns, both online and offline, for maximizing efficiency in communication with other fans. They have a specific economy like organizations, trade their own fan works at events such as “Comic Market” and make use of outside companies. However, members of the group also share common ideals of equality and a non-profit motive resulting from their consciousness of the relationship with the original fictions and the infringement on intellectual property rights though the group has an informal hierarchy based upon the popularity or roles of its members.

Based on long-term participant observation and in-depth interviews within the fan-fiction group, the purpose of this paper is to elucidate the structural order from the perspective of the social group elaborating the aforementioned features, analyzing interactions, and examining the roles of members, inside norms and outside rules. This paper also highlights a latent function that works to maintain the huge and amorphous group referring to Simmel’s discussion of “sociability (*Geselligkeit*)”.

Shaping Stances in Post-Industrial Societies: Two Decades of Change in Attitudes Towards Unequal Income Distribution

Joanna KITSNIK

For decades, economically developed post-industrial countries have experienced major institutional and structural transformations. Since the 1970s, the stagnation and retrenchment of the welfare state has contributed to the disruption of the social fabric. A growing share of the population is now experiencing stagnating wages, job insecurity, and wealth inequalities. However, these trends have not resulted in equal growth in demand for more socio-economic equality and wider redistribution of resources. This study analyses 2 waves of Integrated Values Survey longitudinal data: 1989-1993 (N = 18,028) and 2005-2009 (N = 23,248), and explores the changes in attitudes toward the unequal distribution of income in 10 OECD countries. The paper examines how age and self-interest explain people's attitudes toward unequal income distribution. The findings conclude that while the overall level of support for more equal income distribution increased between the years 1989-1993 and 2005-2009, self-interest plays an important role in explaining public opinion on the normative attitudes toward income distribution. Fixed-effects models with country-fixed effects show that individuals' self-interest explains attitudes toward income inequality better than age. Contrary to expectations, the attitudes of medium- and high-income earners do not align. However, compared to low-income earners, medium- and high-income earners are less in favour of more equality in income distribution. It is noteworthy that individuals who are employed full-time, part-time, and those who are not employed, all express similar levels of support for more equal incomes, while individuals who are self-employed are least supportive of increased equality in income distribution.

Socialist Femininity with Chinese Characteristics: Analysis of the Image of Nurses in *People's Daily* during Infectious Periods

Hengyu LIU

As COVID-19 spreads, nurses - the people who fight against the epidemic on the frontlines – are attracting global attention. Because more than 90 percent of the nurses in China are women, the representation of nurses in the media is inevitably associated with femininity. Therefore, the nurse is a valid object for analysis – helping us to better comprehend the characteristics of femininity in contemporary China. On the one hand, making nurses visible in the media allows people to realize how difficult it is for nurses to work under epidemic conditions and helps to promote a nurse-friendly social environment. On the other hand, there are also risks associated with the representation of nurses. For instance, a one-dimensional and monolithic representation of nurses might ignore the individual needs of some nurses or even make it more difficult for nurses to express their true emotions and thoughts. Therefore, it is important to examine how the public image of the nurse has been constructed by the media in order to create a truly helpful media environment for nurses.

In this article, I explore how nurses have been described in *People's Daily*, the main official newspaper in China, and I discuss the underlying gender presumptions on which the image of nurses has been constructed. In order to clarify the explicit features of femininity in contemporary Chinese society, I approach this task from a comparative perspective. By studying both the SARS coronavirus period and the COVID-19 period, and comparing the portrayals of both female nurses and male nurses, it was found that the representation of nurses has reflected a distinctive femininity in Chinese society, resulting from a process of historical accumulation - a concept which I describe as "Socialist Femininity with Chinese Characteristics". I conclude that the image of the nurse, as portrayed in *People's Daily* during various infectious periods, and which is based on "Socialist Femininity with Chinese Characteristics", places too much emphasis on sacrifice and altruism and might have a negative effect on nurses - especially those who grew up in a new age characterized by globalization, fragmentization and individualization.

Intergenerational Transmission of Homeownership in Japan

Kei SATO

Since homeownership is a socioeconomic resource, along with income or occupational status, it is important to investigate the extent to which homeownership is determined by parental socioeconomic status. Recent studies have revealed that, in many societies, the probability of homeownership by young people is increased by parental homeownership. This relationship is called the intergenerational transmission of homeownership. In Japan, however, the conclusions of previous studies have been inconsistent in terms of whether or not intergenerational transmission of homeownership actually occurs. In this study, we aim to broaden the current state of knowledge by examining whether the effect of parental homeownership can be differentiated by the place of residence. We hypothesized that the effect of parental homeownership would be higher when parents lived in large cities, rather than in small cities or rural areas, because such parents were probably more affluent. This hypothesis was tested by binomial logistic regression analysis using data drawn from the Social Stratification and Social Mobility Survey conducted in 2005, focusing on homeownership by young people.

The results showed that the hypothesis we proposed was valid. The children of homeowners in large cities had a probability of homeownership that was 17.5 percentage points higher than the children of non-owners, while there was no significant difference in the probability of homeownership between the children of homeowners in other areas and the children of non-owners. This may be because homeowners in large cities provide higher amounts of *inter vivos* gifts to their children when they buy their house. Overall, the results imply that homeownership has a certain significance for the process of intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic resources in Japan.