

Sociology

Final

2023 - 2024

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Contains all articles + writers, main points of the articles, concepts, and examples

Disclaimer:

Please use this document together with your own notes, assignment answers and Power Point slides from the lectures.

The information in this document is a combination of information from the lectures and the contents of the articles, but mostly contains information from the articles. Still, it would be wise to read through the articles yourself as well, because no way can I write down every single example I find.

GOOD LUCK

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Week 8:

1. Pierre Bourdieu – *Forms of Capital*
2. Takehiko Kariya – *From credential society to “learning capital” society*
3. Kaori Okano – *Childhood poverty, gender gap, and regional variations*

Week 9:

1. Helena Hof – *‘Worklife Pathways’ to Singapore and Japan*
2. Miriam Kingsberg – *Repatriation but not “Return”*

Week 10:

1. Sabine Frühstück – *Queer Identities and Activism*
2. S.P.F. Dale – *Same-Sex Marriage and the Question of Queerness*

Week 11:

1. Susanna Hoffman, Anthony Oliver-Smith – *Why anthropologists should study disasters*
2. Junko Otani – *Ageing Society, Health Issues and Disaster*
3. J.C. Schencking – *The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Culture of Catastrophe and Reconstruction in 1920s Japan*

Week 12:

1. Yoshimi Shun’ya, S.L. Loh (tr) – *Radioactive Rain and the American Umbrella*
2. Ikeda Yoko – *The Construction of Risk and Resilience of Fukushima in the Aftermath of the Nuclear Power Plant Accident*

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Week 8: What does it take to succeed in education?

1. **Cultural Capital**

Cultural Capital, in short, refers to the social assets of a person (such as level of education, style of speech and dress, etc.) that one can use to climb up in the ranks in a society.

Example: a child from a lower class who needs to work to help support their family will have less time to study, which results in poor academic performance, and will therefore have less cultural capital available than a middle-upper class child who gets supported in their education and is able to get a good degree.

In the article *Forms of Capital*, Pierre Bourdieu describes the three forms of cultural capital:

1. The *Embodied State*; knowledge obtained outside of school
Example: having been read to as a child to develop good speech patterns
2. The *Objectified State*; your possessions and assets and their quality to indicate social class
Example: owning a BMW is seen as more prestigious than driving a beat-up or second-hand Ford Focus
3. The *Institutionalised State*; the way society measures social capital
Example: a doctorate gives you more social capital than a master's or bachelor's degree and a well-known family name can earn you social capital without having to do anything (Social capital can in a crude way be described as "a person's worth and value to a society". This is my personal description; I hope it gives you some clarification.)

In conclusion, if a person is raised in a family with high cultural capital, in which they have learnt manners and were exposed to a certain way of thinking (the child of lawyers learning to reason and argue in a constructive way) will likely end up doing well in society, whereas a poor child with absent parents and bad role models will likely fare significantly worse.

2. **J-mode Credential Society vs Learning Capital Society**

- In the Japanese schooling system, the 6-year elementary and 3-year junior high school programs are compulsory, but the 3-year senior high school is not. Elementary school focusses a lot on social development, where junior high school has more "regular" classes.
- Cram schools are available to get extra studying time and develop more skills/get more knowledge, but they are often expensive. There is also a difference between the quality of education, depending on which school gets chosen (e.g., private schools are usually higher quality than public schools, and even among these schools there are differences).

In their article *From credential society to "learning capital" society*, Takehiko Kariya describes the shift in Japan from what they refer to as the "J-Mode" of credential society to a Learning Capital society.

- J-mode/Credential society is described as a system in which academic achievement determines what educational institutions a person can get into, and later, what type of employment a person will get.
 - Workplaces offered opportunities to learn skills required for the job along the way; it didn't matter what you studied or how well you did, all that mattered were your academic credentials and whether you were motivated to work hard.
 - Workers got promoted based on seniority and therefore often stayed with one company for life.

- Students were put under extreme pressure to compete against each other to get into the most prestigious high schools and universities, which ultimately led to getting the best jobs.
- In a Learning Capital (yutori kyoiku) society, Learning Competence became much more important than academic credentials.
 - Due to the increasing number of part-time and temporary jobs, which is generally unskilled and low-paid work, the number of jobs that require high-skill are limited and difficult to secure.
 - What matters in a society, where technology is evolving at a rapid pace, is how quickly a person can learn new skills and become familiar with new tasks, just to keep their jobs and retain job stability.
 - Employers now expect more results more quickly after having trained a new hire and thus have a demand for workers that can learn quickly and are more efficient. Workers also tend to leave companies more often when they find a better opportunity elsewhere.
 - Skill-development is now also seen as the responsibility of the worker.
- The “Capital” in “Learning Capital” refers to the Learning Competencies that people have learnt in their lives; these competencies can be seen as capital since having them means you can exchange it for other types of capital, such as social or financial capital.

Example: Older generations teach themselves how to use devices through manuals, whereas younger generations learn by doing; they have developed an ability to learn on their own without the need of outside input and will therefore have a higher chance to succeed in the current fast-paced society.

In conclusion, in a society where adaptability has become an increasingly important skill, those who, from a young age, have started learning to acquire skills and knowledge on their own are the ones who are the most mobile in society; it is no longer as straight-forward as being judged based on your test-scores. The better your learning competency, the better scores you can get on tests.

3. The Impact of Poverty & Environment

In their article *Childhood poverty, gender gap, and regional variations*, Kaori Okano discusses, among other things, the impact of poverty on children’s education in Japan.

They describe four main channels of impact:

1. Academic Performance: depends on several factors such as the material environment at home (access to books, writing utensils, etc.), access to learning resources outside of school (cram schools, etc.), and the length of home study. Children in poor families often have restricted access to these resources and even their effort matters less if the family environment isn’t good.
2. Educational Decisions: parents (and children) of lower socioeconomic status often must make the decision not to send their child to (or to attend) tertiary education due to the high cost.
3. Aspirations: children that perform poorly at school may feel disappointed by their lack of results despite their effort and learn to have fewer expectations of themselves when it comes to school and work later in life. (A later survey fortunately showed that children did not confirm these interpretations.)

4. **Health:** children in poor families often eat unhealthy food, may have a poor daily routine, which affects their physical health, and are more likely to be neglected or abused, which affects their mental health.

Kaori Okano states the changes that have been implemented to address childhood poverty and suggests several changes that they think would greatly help to support these children when it comes to education:

- Providing material and financial resources; both national and local governments provide these resources to low-income families.
- Providing social resources and a place of belonging in and outside schools; children of poor single mothers often suffer social isolation through lack of a social network or close friends. Some non-profits or schools have created places of comfort for children to be at, rather than being left alone at home.
- Providing concrete academic learning assistance; Okano writes that providing diverse forms of learning outside of the mainstream schooling system and officially acknowledging them as equivalent to formal schooling would be a great way to facilitate children's entry into, and completion of, at minimum senior high school.

In conclusion, poverty affects children in a lot of different ways. The fewer resources a child has while growing up, the worse they will perform in school. They may be forced to drop out of school or decide not to pursue higher education due to financial problems. Resources and support are provided through the government and schools, but taking the step to ask for help is often too much for the parent(s).

Week 9: Migration East – West

1. **Migration from Europe**

Push-and-pull factors: conditions that compel people to emigrate and attract people to receiving countries.

Example: people might want to leave a country due to a high crime rate, poverty, war, lack of jobs, colder climate, etc. These are the push factors. Examples of pull factors would be the opposites of the push factors: low crime rate, more wealth, political stability, great job market, warmer climate, etc.

Historical-structural approach: migration was often used to get cheap labour forces from poorer countries, who were attracted by the higher wages compared to their home country

Migration systems theory: countries may have ties to each other stemming from various factors (colonies and their colonisers, trade agreements, cultural ties, etc.) which causes migration between those countries.

In her article 'Worklife Pathways' to Singapore and Japan, Helena Hof describes to reasons for going to and struggles of European work-migrants in Singapore and Japan. She mainly focusses on race and gender and the intersectionality of the two.

- Hof describes different reasons for migration to either country; migrants to Singapore anticipated more exciting and possibly better career opportunities and were attracted to the safe and clean living environment, as well as the warm climate and influences from various Asian cultures.

- Migrants to Japan expressed a fascination with Japan itself instead of only being focussed on better career opportunities. They are interested in Japanese culture and enjoy the attention they get for being white in Japan.
- At the same time, Japan is encouraging migrants to come to Japan; because of the low fertility rate and ageing population, the economic demands are getting more and more difficult to meet, so the enforcement of immigration laws have been relaxed to make it easier for work migrants to come to Japan.

In conclusion, European migrants come to Singapore and Japan for slightly different reasons, however cultural interest does appear to be a commonality. Japan is greatly encouraging work migrants to come to Japan due to societal problems.

2. European Migrants' Problems & Experiences

Problems and Experiences in Singapore:

- White people in Singapore mainly encounter a stereotype that all white people are elite-class and rich, which creates a social gap between them and the Singaporean people.
- Those migrants that try to set themselves apart from this stereotype or simply lack the wealth ultimately get marginalised and are excluded from the upper-class expatriate community.
- When it comes to women in higher positions in the workplace, Singaporean people often don't really know how to deal with them; they are ignored, or their professional skills are challenged.

Problems and Experiences in Japan:

- In Japan, lack of cultural knowledge and low proficiency in Japanese may result in stagnation in professional development. There is a very specific expectation of how things get done, especially when communicating with the older generations. An interviewee in Hof's article describes how he managed to get a job as a translator after improving his language proficiency but couldn't get a job in his own field (graphic design).
- As opposed to Singapore, white people have no privilege in Japan and must rely on Japanese people to help with many things.

Women's Problems and Experiences:

- White women described their difficulties finding a romantic partner in both countries. Men didn't really have this issue.
 - o In Singapore, white women are often seen as masculine for their success in the workplace, which makes them undesirable.
 - o In Japan, European women challenge the gender ideology that delegates the domestic work to women; few Japanese men are willing to support their wives in their professional career.
- White women also receive male attention which makes them uncomfortable; white women feel like they are being evaluated by their appearance rather than their professional skills.

In conclusion, stereotyping and cultural differences make it hard for European migrants to truly intertwine themselves with the Singaporeans and Japanese. Women have it harder than men, being perceived as masculine and therefore undesirable to Asian men or having to deal with either being harassed or ignored in the workplace.

3. Latin American return migrants to Japan

In her article *Repatriation but not "return"*, Miriam Kingsberg describes the struggles of Brazilian-Japanese return-migrants, who came to Japan to find work after Brazil suffered an economic recession.

- Japan encouraged people of Japanese descent to come to Japan to fill the gap in the labour force that had been created by the mid-1970s, assuming that due to their Japanese ancestry, it would be easier for them to integrate. Many visa applicants were motivated by the potential of earning a higher wage; few came from wealthy countries.
- The Nikkei from Brazil had great difficulty integrating and after the Japanese economy declined, they were the first to lose their jobs. The Japanese state even tried to actively deport them; one program offered money if the Nikkei would permanently leave Japan.
- The Brazilian-Japanese hardly knew any Japanese, if at all, had a hard time adapting to Japanese work culture and society and were often seen as lazy and disloyal. This was made worse by the fact that Japan viewed Brazil as a third-world country; a university degree from Brazil, for example, was worthless in Japan.

In conclusion, the origins of a person don't really matter; it depends on how a community perceives you whether you are accepted. The positive image of Europeans in Asia only applies to those who "look" European or American for that matter.

Week 10: Same-Sex Marriage and the Koseki

Heteronormativity: takes for granted that heterosexuality is the norm; a relationship between a man and a woman is what is normal, and while other types of relations are somewhat accepted, they are not seen as equal.

1. Institutional Performativity

Institutional Performativity means conforming to the rules that exist within the system to create a situation that is legal according to the system, regardless of how reality is. So, if there is a law that prohibits A, but allows B, a person can use B to their advantage.

Example: The koseki doesn't allow two persons of the same biological sex to legally get married. But if a person adopts their same-sex partner into their family, the partner will be registered as a child in the koseki, but reality is that they are, of course, in a relationship.

2. Why the Koseki System is Gendered & Patriarchal

In their article *Same-Sex Marriage and the Question of Queerness*, Dale describes Institutional Performativity as described above, and matters about the *koseki* system in Japan.

- The current system of *koseki* allows only one head of the household and expects the family unit to use only one surname. The *koseki* system also requires there to be a husband and a wife, two wives or two husbands are not accepted, which is the reason that same-sex couples often resort to adoption, which grants them benefits such as tax breaks, health insurance and inheritance rights, as well as decision-making in case of death.
- People in the *koseki* are registered by their role in the family unit; birth order (*tsuzukigara*) plays a large role in matters of succession. Historically, adult adoption was already common practise if a family unit did not have a (male) heir.

- Critical movements against the *koseki* system in its current form opposes, among other things, the obligatory usage of one last name and the system of birth order. More and more couples are refusing to get married; but the current system almost forces people to marry, especially if a couple wants children, which they then must register as illegitimate when they aren't married, which means the child will not have the same rights as a legitimate child. Getting married also has a psychological aspect; people feel like if they aren't married, they aren't considered "real" adults.
- Some local governments have begun to issue same-sex partnership certificates, but these don't grant the same rights as marriage.

In conclusion, many people are still trying to seek recognition, both for themselves and in the eyes of society, through social institutions such as marriage. Within the *koseki* system in its current state, people that refuse to or cannot conform to its standards are left out of an important instrument of social acceptance.

3. Enabling Same-Sex Marriage: Pros & Cons

Pros:

- Queer couples would receive the same social benefits as any other married couple
- Trans-individuals, who are currently required to undergo a complete sex-change surgery (which isn't covered by insurance) before being able to legally change their gender and get married within the current system, would no longer be forced to make this decision.
- Integrating same-sex marriage into the *koseki* system would force a rethinking of what "family" means, as well as the gender roles on which "family" relies.

Cons:

- It would maintain a system that socially excludes anyone that doesn't want to fit within the *koseki* system.
- It would reinforce the social and psychological pressure of getting married to be a "real adult".
- If a new system, outside of the *koseki* system, were to be created, it would symbolise for the exclusion and inequality of same-sex couples.

In conclusion, there are always two sides to a coin, especially in the case of the family unit system in Japan. On the one hand, integrating same-sex marriage into the current system could in essence "queer" the institution of marriage in Japan, but would at the same time reinforce a system that is inherently unequal and pressures people to get married to "fit in".

Week 11: The Anthropology of Disaster

1. Definition of Disaster

In their article *Why anthropologists should study disasters*, Hoffman and Oliver-Smith define a disaster (in shorter terms) as such:

"A process/event, that combines a potentially destructive force coming from the natural, modified or constructed environment and a population in a social and economical state of vulnerability, which results in the (perceived) disruption of the normal daily life of a population."

- In simpler terms, it is something that happens unintentionally, that has such a large impact on (a group of) people that it can potentially affect both their physical and emotional/mental state in such a way that they (feel like they) can no longer function in a way that is "normal" to them. It tests, albeit in probably the most dramatic way, how well

(or not) a community has adapted to its environment (and resulting vulnerabilities) and exposes the way in which people construct or “frame” their peril (see point 2).

- This excludes anything that was done with intention (the bombing of a city).

2. Why Study Disasters & “Framing” Peril

According to the article, there are a number of things that studying disasters could teach us:

1. Disasters show how well adapted societies are to their environment and how a society responds to and deals with the effects of disasters.
2. It allows us to expose the cultural perceptions of disaster, for instance believing that a disaster happened because a god was angered or the like; these kinds of ideological ideas may be rooted into a community due to historical events (like a big disaster in the past that was attributed to something supernatural).
3. Disasters reveal how resources and support are distributed; does a society focus on victim relief and support, or does a society act out of self-interest?
4. Understanding these social responses and the way people feel about disasters can help support the creating of possibly more effective and supportive policies.

Disasters expose how people construct or “frame” peril: in short, this means a community’s assessment of risk, making choices accordingly and dealing with the consequences; it exposes the people’s perception of danger. It is often a social construct and people influence each other. *Example: a town built on the coast had a sea wall installed; people trusted that this wall and the science behind it would give them more time to evacuate in case of a tsunami, which made them feel safer.*

In conclusion, it is important to research how a society deals in the face of a disaster and how and why certain choices are made. The way that people perceive their risk, or “frame” their peril, affects the ways in which people respond to and deal with disasters.

3. Disasters and the Elderly

In their article *Ageing society, health issues and disaster*, Otani Junko assesses the 3.11 disasters and describes especially how a disproportionate number of elderly people were affected by it.

On the 11th of March 2011 at 2:46 pm, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Tohoku region in Japan, which was followed by a tsunami that reached up to 40m in height in some regions and would go up to 10km upriver. It damaged the infrastructure in the affected areas, severed electricity- and telephone lines as well as connection to drinking water and washed away entire communities, destroying fisheries and other places of work. The disasters caused almost 20,000 casualties, including any disaster-related deaths afterwards and led to a huge number of evacuees.

The elderly

- The 3.11 disasters hit communities with a high proportion of elderly people; nearly two-thirds of the recovered bodies were 65 years and older and one-quarter of the victims were in their 70s.
- Escape was hard for older people; they often had difficulty with mobility and were forced to weigh their options: go to the higher story of their home or try to go outside and flee. Often the former option was chosen.
- After the tsunami itself, many medical records were lost and older people who needed medical care could not get the support they needed. In 3.11 there was a high number of

cases of so-called tsunami lung, which is a necrotic form of pneumonia that affected survivors, as well as the cold weather that killed many elderly people.

- Many elderly people in temporary housing or emergency shelters were left alone by their family members, who moved away to different cities in search of jobs, which resulted in them becoming socially isolated. The feeling of loneliness on top of the emotional trauma of having lost everything sometimes unfortunately drove some of these old people to commit suicide.

The high number of casualties among the elderly made it clear that improvements had to be made in the existing disaster emergency procedures. Changes were made to help disabled people evacuate instead of assuming that everybody can escape on their own (or deaf people that cannot hear the tsunami warnings, etc.) and roundabouts have been constructed to allow for better traffic flow when people escape by car (without the need to rely on electricity for traffic lights and the like).

In conclusion, disaster relief for the elderly and disabled needed to be heavily improved upon. Not only does disaster relief see to the physical needs, but the mental and emotional needs of the people as well. Disasters such as these don't only destroy cities and towns, they destroy communities and memories of people, resulting in great emotional distress to its survivors.

Week 12: Fukushima and Nuclear Power in Japan

1. **Why Japan Embraced Nuclear Power**

In their article *Radioactive Rain and the American Umbrella*, Shun'ya describes nuclear power in Japan and the influences that caused Japan to (mostly) embrace it.

- After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then U.S. president Eisenhower changed his policy on nuclear power; he declared atomic bombs a "last resort" and began promoting Atoms for Peace, which promoted nuclear energy as a clean source of power driven by economic priorities.
- Nuclear power was a much more attractive source of energy to Japan than having to import oil, of which the prices at that time were very unstable. Japan saw it as a way to become more self-sufficient. The government ended up awarding nuclear power companies like TEPCO monopoly in the power market.
- Meanwhile, manipulation of the mass media at that time encouraged the common people in Japan to accept nuclear energy; praising nuclear energy was used as a strategy to make people forget about the trauma from the nuclear bombs. The popular series "Astro Boy" was created to make the Japanese people see the "good side" of nuclear power.
- Nuclear power plants were built in small communities to minimise resistance and the communities hosting these plants were awarded economic incentives such as the building of schools and tennis courts, as well as gaining new employment opportunities as workers at the nuclear plant.

The Lucky Dragon Incident: a hydrogen bomb test by the U.S. caused a Japanese fishing boat, called the Lucky Dragon, to be hit with radioactive ash, causing one death and the rest of the crew contracting radiation poisoning. It also turned out that fish, fruits, vegetables, and more were contaminated by radiation. The U.S. tried to claim that this wasn't radiation, but instead chemicals from coral (it wasn't), that the fishing boat was inside the US no-fishing zone (it wasn't) and the captain was a communist spy (he wasn't). Even after talks, the U.S. decided the best course of action was to set the "safe range" of radiation levels to a thousand times higher than before, but

still insisted that any food imported from Japan be tested with Geiger counters. This sparked an outrage in Japan, even among the conservatives who supported nuclear energy.

In conclusion, Murica. Also manipulation.

2. Impact of Fukushima Explosions

In their article *The Construction of Risk and Resilience of Fukushima in the Aftermath of the Nuclear Power Plant Accident*, Ikeda describes the impact on and the way the people understood the risks after the explosions at the Fukushima power plant.

On the 11th of March 2011 at 2:46 pm, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant was hit by a 9.0 magnitude earthquake, which caused the reactors to automatically shut down. Due to damage to the electrical grid, the back-up generators, which were in the basement, were triggered to keep the pumps that were cooling the reactor rods running. However, the tsunami that followed the earthquake flooded the basement and caused the back-up system to fail, which caused unit one to explode due to overheating, releasing radioactive particles into the air. The government ordered anyone within 20km of the plant to evacuate. Seawater is used for emergency cooling, but three days later, unit 3 explodes as well and another day later, a fire breaks out at unit 4.

- TEPCO was not well prepared for this kind of emergency because they assumed everything was safe, despite knowing the risks. The reactor buildings were not built to be able to resist the impact of such a strong earthquake, and despite knowing that the electrical system would be vulnerable to a potential tsunami, ~~the back-up system was stupidly put in the basement~~ no measures were taken.
- There was also a lack of knowledge and training on how to deal with the situation in case of an emergency.
- On the government side, who had been working together with the nuclear power industry to promote nuclear energy, there was a failure to ensure basic safety measures, despite the clear existence of risks and more or less disregarding the set standards.
- Their management of the accident and evacuation was lacking, as was their commitment to ensure the health and safety of the population. The people lost their faith in the government, and in the scientists that claimed that a certain level of radiation was still “safe”.

The impact of the Fukushima explosions had various impacts on the population. Many rumours spread among the population all over the country; the radiation from the explosions was blamed for an increase of various medical afflictions in the Tokyo area, without any medical evidence to back it up. A professor on TV claimed that any food from the Tohoku region was now contaminated and should not be consumed. And due to seeing the results of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombs, where babies were born with birth defects due to radiation exposure, women were told to not “spread their contamination to the rest of Japan”, despite the radiation exposure of Fukushima being many times less than the nuclear bombs.

In conclusion, not enough was done to ensure the safety of the Fukushima population and as a result, people lost faith in those that were supposed to protect them: the government and TEPCO. The explosions resulted in rumours to spread all over the country, which created misconceptions across Japan.

3. Peoples' Sense of Risk

Radiation risk is unfortunately not a hard fact; it depends on scientific determinations from researchers and regulations by the government. Trust in both had been lost by the population of Fukushima. It is difficult for regular people to determine what is safe or not; they can only really rely on what they already know and are easily influenced by others.

Societal expectations also have great influence; women, especially those with children, moved away from the area because they felt their risk was greater (need to protect their children) than that of men, many of which stayed behind out of a sense of obligation; men felt the need to put work and economic performance before their own health.

The children from the evacuated areas' perceptions changed as well; grass is suddenly dangerous, and their lives are being controlled by the number of micro sieverts of radiation. They want to go home and miss their community. The children worry about their future and their health, wondering if they will ever be able to have children.

In conclusion, not only is a people's sense of risk determined by their own knowledge and experiences, but it is also a social construct. Influences from societal expectations and rumours can greatly affect a person's sense of risk.

終わり