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Complicit or Critical?

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出版者	Department of Global and Interdisciplinary Studies, Hosei University
journal or publication title	GIS journal : the Hosei journal of global and interdisciplinary studies
volume	1
page range	113-134
year	2015-03
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10114/10187

Gender Research in Japanese Sociology: Complicit or Critical?

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Abstract

To assess the impact of critical gender research on sociology in Japan, I analyzed 558 theoretical and empirical articles published between 1989 and 2010 in the official journal of the Japan Sociological Society, *Japanese Sociological Review (Shakaigaku Hyoron)*. All the articles were coded for topic/subarea, methodology, and gender, affiliation, and professional status of the author(s). In addition, the gender-relevant articles were analyzed to gauge the extent to which a critical gender approach was adopted that challenged conventional sociological research, theories or concepts. It was found that while men authored the vast majority of the articles published, women authored the vast majority of the gender relevant articles. Further, there was no sign of vibrant critical gender research among junior scholars. However, despite the limited impact of gender research on sociology, there were also clear signs of critical challenges to the conventional practice of sociology.

Introduction

At the end of 2011, *The Possibility of the Social Sciences of Gender*, comprising four thematic volumes, was published (Tsujimura & Osawa, 2011). A few years earlier in 2008, a new edition of *Feminism in Japan*, comprising 12 volumes, was published (Inoue et al., 2008). These publications have created an impression that feminism is making an impact in the social sciences. Indeed, in one of the opening speeches at the event celebrating the publication of *The Possibility of the Social Sciences of Gender*, one professor mentioned that there was no need for a “Sociology of Gender” in Japan, as gender research has already been well integrated into Sociology. I was curious at the bold claim because there actually has not been any assessment of the impact of gender research on Japanese sociology.

A full assessment of the extent to which and the nature in which gender research is incorporated into sociology in Japan would require a multifaceted analysis of the place of gender in the various sites where sociology is practiced, including journals, publications, and

teaching in higher education. As a first step, this paper analyzes articles published between 1989 and 2010 in the official journal of the Japan Sociological Society.

“The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology”¹

The 1980s saw the first comprehensive assessments of the impact of feminism on sociology in the United States and Britain. Summarizing feminist criticisms of sociology, Ward and Grant (1985) noted the underrepresentation of women as subjects in sociological research, the domination of topics that were more relevant to men’s than to women’s lives, the use of concepts and framework that better captured men’s than women’s lives, and the use of men and their experience as the norm against which women’s experiences were compared and evaluated. Dorothy Smith (1990, 1999) likewise argued that there was a disjunction between how women experienced the world and the concepts and theoretical schemes by which a society’s self-consciousness was inscribed. She attributed this gap to the grounding of mainstream sociology in men’s experiences and relationships, and proposed an alternative way of doing sociology by taking women’s experiences seriously and making them the basis of research and theorizing.²

There is no consensus among feminist sociologists as to how significant an impact feminist scholarship has made on Sociology as a whole. However, most concur that the impact, even if significant, is confined to certain areas in sociology. In one of the earliest assessments of the impact of gender research in sociology, Stacey and Thorne (1985) compared the feminist transformation in sociology to that in anthropology, history and literature in the United States. They concluded that feminist perspectives had largely been contained or absorbed into Sociology or ghettoized. Writing some 25 years later, Walby (2011) gave an overall positive assessment of the impact of feminism, asserting that feminism had made a “major impact” on British sociology with respect to intellectual content and institutional location.

Despite differences in the general assessment, most agreed on the unevenness of the impact. Comparing fields in sociology, Stacey and Thorne (1985) noted that feminism had more successfully influenced research in the family, kinship and domestic relationships, but less so in conventionally defined political or economic relations. This unevenness has

¹ I borrowed the title of the much-quoted paper by Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne (1985).

² There is now a substantial body of literature that critiques the epistemological and methodological basis of conventional sociology (see, for example, Harding, 1987; Collins 2009).

apparently remained unchanged as Walby (2011) likewise noted the strong influence of feminist scholarship in fields that were not central to sociology, such as cultural studies and the analysis of violence, but much less so in the core fields of social theory and political sociology (see also Roseneil, 1995; Komarovsky, 1991).

Writing about social theory, Maynard (1990) noted that the focus on ‘agency’ in feminist theory might have disposed feminist scholars towards middle range theories rather than macro theories. Writing 10 years later, Stanley and Wise (2000) not only confirmed that no meta theory has developed from a feminist perspective but that feminist theory has come to resemble mainstream social theory in becoming the specialty of a limited number of individuals. They argued that this development had undermined the meaning of feminism in academia.

The impact of feminism on sociological research methodology has also been discussed. Maynard (1990) observed that feminist sociologists tended to use qualitative methods. However, Platt’s study of over 2500 articles in three major Sociology journals in Britain from 1950 to 2004 did not find any clear gender pattern in the use of qualitative methods (2007). Cohen et al. (2011) analyzed 259 articles in 19 cross-disciplinary journals with a focus on women, gender or feminism from the ISI citation index in 2007 and found that while most articles used quantitative methods, those that engaged with feminist literature or epistemologies were less likely to be quantitative.

In addition to the foregoing analyses, other studies paid attention to the type of feminist impact on Sociology. In an overview of American sociology, Komarovsky (1991) observed that in the 1960s gender-sensitive work primarily focused on revealing problems in American sociology, such as the neglect of particular topics and the inadequacy of concepts to examine gender inequality. Ward and Grant (1985) conducted an empirical analysis of 10 major sociology journals in the United States between 1974 and 1984. No linear trends were found over the years; gender articles constituted slightly less than one-fifth of the 3674 articles analyzed. They classified 45% of these gender articles as “additions” (treating “sex” as a variable), 44% as “modifications” (going beyond gender differences to revise concepts and theoretical frameworks and explore previously neglected aspects of women’s lives), and 10% as “recasts” (centering on women’s lives and dismantling male norms).

Walby (1988) devised a framework of four stages to analyze political sociology in Britain, namely “total neglect”, “criticism”, “additive” and “full theoretical integration of the analysis of gender into the central questions of the discipline itself” (p.215). Oakley (1989) adapted this framework to look at women’s studies in British sociology and concluded that the impact of

feminism in sociology consisted mostly in adding women's experiences to areas where they were missing. However, there were also critiques of current assumptions and development of new insights, such as the re-conceptualization of "work", "social class" and "reproduction" that consequently "demonolithize[d] the sociological analyses of men's experiences" (p.450) and facilitated theoretical integration.

These analytical frameworks are useful in mapping the impact of feminist scholarship in sociology. At the same time, however, categories such as "additive", "integrative", and so on are frequently not as distinct as they appear. Further, an "additive" approach can have far-reaching critical consequences on the practice of sociology. The very addition of women's experiences potentially introduces new questions for sociological inquiries and reveals biases in extant sociological concepts. An "additive approach" in empirical sociology can re-define the "proper" subjects for sociological inquiry. For example, violence, especially as it affects women, has become a legitimate subject of inquiry as a result of "adding" women's experiences. Similarly, studying women's labor has broadened the meaning of "work" beyond "paid work", made visible the connection between the public and the private, and led not only to the reconceptualization of social class but also the way class analysis was conducted (Maynard, 1990; Oakley, 1989; Komarovsky, 1991).

To summarize, extant studies showed that while feminism has made important contributions to British and American sociology, the impact tends to be found outside the "core areas" in sociology. Some have attributed this to the characteristics of sociology as it has been institutionalized. Oakley (1989) suggested that the disciplinarity of sociology has made it resistant not only to a body of knowledge that is interdisciplinary but also to feminist epistemology, which challenges dichotomization and emphasizes holism and complexity. Stacey and Thorne (1985) traced the "missing feminist revolution" in Sociology to the containment of feminist perspectives in sociology: the conceptualization of gender as the property of individuals, as "roles" and as a variable rather than theoretical category. In addition, they noted the ghettoization of gender, especially in Marxist sociology, and the positivistic epistemological tradition that has served the interests of dominant groups in society. Bhambra (2007), writing from a postcolonial perspective, examined the institutionalization of the discipline of sociology itself. She claimed that the "social" in sociology has two meanings: a restrictive meaning that differentiates the "social" from the rational, public "economic" and "political", and a broader meaning that lies beneath the differentiation of the discipline of sociology from other disciplines. Citing Habermas, she further associated the former with

“social integration” and the latter “system integration”. Bhambra argued that the so-called “missing feminist revolution” in sociology should best be understood as how identities, such as gender, have been addressed in a more restrictive sense as “social” rather than as pertaining more broadly to “system”. Therefore, for a real feminist revolution to occur, feminist sociologists would have to start with a critical examination of the emergence of sociology as a discipline, looking at how the objects of study were established and the general framework developed (see also Bhambra, 2010).

The foregoing review identified some characteristics and problems of the incorporation of critical feminist and gender research in sociology. Despite that the studies reviewed were about American and British sociology, the observations noted and questions raised are relevant to the present analysis of a major sociology journal in Japan. The analysis reported in this paper considered the number of gender-relevant articles, identified the fields in which the articles were found, coded the gender and professional status of the authors, and examined the approach to gender in the gender-relevant articles. In addition, the nature of non-gender-relevant sociological research published was also investigated to better understand the type of sociological knowledge that was produced and gauge the potential impact of the gender research on sociology.

Source of Data

The official general sociological journal published by the Japan Sociological Society, *Japanese Sociological Review* (Shakaigaku Hyoron), was first published in 1950. The present study analyzed a total of 80 issues in 20 years, from all four issues from Volume 40 (1989-1990) to the third issue in Volume 61 (2010), which was the last issue available electronically at the time of research (<https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/jsr/-char/ja/>). A total of 558 articles were identified, excluding presidential addresses, reports on local and overseas conferences, research trends, and book reviews and book review essays. Articles were in Japanese, and abstracts were available in both English and Japanese.

The year 1990 was chosen as the starting point for the analysis because courses and publications on gender and sociology appeared in noticeable frequency in the early 1990s in Japan. A course entitled “The Sociology of Gender” started to be taught at the Open University by Sophia University professor, Meguro Yoriko, in 1994. A keyword search of “gender” and “sociology” of a major database of Japanese journal articles (CiNii – Citation Information

by the National Institute of Informatics) yielded 715 articles in total. While 1984 marked the publication of the first “gender/sociology” article in the database, 697 of them were published in 1990 and later. The 1990s also saw the publication of books with titles like *The Sociology of Gender* (jendra no shakaigakku), most of which were textbooks for an Open University course (authored by Meguro Yoriko in 1994, Ehara Yumiko and Yamada Masahiro in 2003 and 2008, and by Ito Kimio in 2008). *Learning Sociology through Gender* (jendaa de manabu shakaigaku) by Ito Kimio and Muta Kazue was published in 2006. Late 2011 saw the publication of four volumes of research under the title, as noted in the introduction, *The Possibility of Gender Social Science* (jendaa shakaikagaku no kanousei).

Gender-relevant Articles

In this study, articles were considered “gender-relevant” if the title, abstract or author-submitted keywords included such terms as gender (*jendaa*), male/men (*dansei/otoko*), female/women (*josei/onna*), sexuality (*sekushariti*), specific gender roles or gendered groups (housewives, maids, young men, gentlemen, women trade unionists), sexual minorities (transsexual, GID, gay men, lesbians), comparison or difference between men and women/male and female (*danjo, seibetsu, seisa*), gender in/equality (*danjo kyoudou sankaku*), feminism or feminist perspective (*feminizumu, feminisuto shiten*). The intentionally broad criteria aimed to capture articles with a clear gender-focus as well as those that contained parts that were apparently gender-relevant. From a total of 558 articles, 59 articles, or 10%, were identified to be “gender-relevant”.

It is hard to make a definitive judgment on the one-tenth presence of gender research. Considering that sociology is diversified into many subfields, 10% seems quite significant. At the same time, if we do not consider “gender” as a subfield, but as a perspective that can be incorporated into any subfield, then 10% does not suggest prominence in the field of sociology.³ To better assess the significance of gender-relevant articles and derive implications of the impact of gender research on sociology, the institutional status of gender research was analyzed with respect to the gender, affiliation, and professional status of the author(s). Next, the special issues were analyzed for the thematic focus and presence of gender research.

³ Ward and Grant’s analysis yielded close to 20% gender articles in 10 major sociology journals in the U. S. between 1974-1985. Other regional sociological associations in Japan also publish general sociology journals, which should be analyzed to give a more accurate depiction of the centrality or marginality of gender-relevant research. At the same time, there is no obvious reason to suspect that *Japanese Sociological Review* is less or more accommodating of gender research.

Further, all articles, gender-relevant and non-gender-relevant, were coded for topics/subareas. Last, to understand the nature of gender research in sociology, the gender-relevant articles were analyzed for their content.

Institutional Presence: Gender and Status of Authors

To analyze the gender distribution of authors, each author of each publication was counted as a case. Excluding two organizations that were listed as authors, the total number of cases added up to 590. Of the 590 authors of the 558 articles published, 473 were men and 117 women; among them, 29 male authors (6% of all male authors) and 34 female authors (29% of all female authors) wrote gender-relevant papers. In other words, while female authors constituted only about 20% of all the authors, they made up 54% of the authors of gender-relevant articles. There was therefore a big gender gap in which 80% of the 590 authors of the 558 articles were men. At the same time, only 6% of the male authors wrote gender-relevant articles, compared to over 30% of the female authors.

The information on professional status was not consistently provided; the total number of authors coded for professional status was 554. Authors in postgraduate programs and others of similar statuses were the most numerous, totaling 179 and accounting for 31.2% of all authors. Full professors and authors of equivalent statuses were next, totaling 136 and making up 23.69% of all the authors. Assistant/associate professors totaled 126 and made up 21.95% of all the authors. There were 30 part-time lecturers and 53 *joshu*,⁴ lecturers and similar statuses among the authors, making up a total of 14.5% of the authors.

Despite that graduate students or those with comparable statuses were the most numerous among the authors, the proportion writing gender-relevant articles was not high. Only 14 among 179 authors of graduate student status (7.8%) wrote gender-relevant articles, in contrast to 8.8% of professors and 14.3% of associate professors. Gender research was therefore not particularly vibrant among younger researchers, leaving a discouraging note on the future of gender research in Japanese sociology.

⁴ Literally “assistant”, but the status has been translated variously as research associate, lecturer, instructor, and assistant professor. The system of ranks has also changed, and I coded only “*jokyojyu*” as “assistant professor”.

The Larger Context

Moving beyond individual characteristics to the field of sociology itself, this section focuses on the special issues, the overall distribution of articles by subareas, and the place of gender research in both.

Special Issues

There were 26 special issues, and two other issues with a concentration of papers on a similar topic. None of these issues focused on gender. Among the 26 special issues, six were about the field of sociology or sociological education, four on general social theory, and two each on social stratification, globalization, and social research.

Despite the lack of a special issue on a gender-related theme, there were gender-related articles in these special issues. However, the number was small overall. Among the 202 thematic articles published in the 26 special issues were 19 gender-relevant articles, constituting 9% of all the articles, across 13 special issues.

The special issues in which gender-relevant articles were published might be more telling than the absolute number of such articles. Overall, the special issues reflected a consistent interest in the field of sociology as a whole or in social theory, with a total of 80 relevant articles in 13 issues. Among these articles, there were only seven gender-relevant articles, a mere 7.2%. Most gender-relevant articles – six out of 19—were published in one special issue on “Japanese society approaching 60”. Further, most of these six articles took up issues related to the family or social stratification. If the special issues indicated that these were important concerns of Sociology in Japan, then the small number of gender-relevant articles among them showed not only the invisibility of gender research, but also its marginal status in steering the course of sociology.

Subareas

All articles, gender-relevant and non-gender-relevant, as well as the special issues, were coded for topic/subarea, so as to place gender research in the context of the field of sociology in Japan.

The subareas were coded following conventional classification and the coding was data-driven, being derived from the main focus of each article (see Appendix). These categories of subareas or topics coincided with the classifications adopted by the Japan Sociological Society at the latest annual conference at the time of research.

Articles addressing particular theories or theorists were the most numerous, totaling

124 out of 558 articles, or 22.22%. Closely related were nine articles on key concepts in sociology, leading to a total of 131 articles that were theory-related, or nearly a quarter of all the articles published. Some of the 131 articles classified as “theory-related” (codes 18 and 20, see Appendix) took up general theory formation or mainstream theoretical traditions (e.g. neofunctionalism, ethnomethodology, social constructionism and so on) and key concepts (e.g. order, norms, and so on). Most of them, however, focused on a particular sociologist or philosopher. A relatively large number of articles took up such theorists of modernity as Luhmann, Durkheim, Weber, and to a lesser extent, Habermas and Parsons. Importantly, none of these articles (totaling 42) referred to gender or took a gender perspective.

The 49 non-gender-relevant articles on “the state” and “nation formation” were diverse in their emphasis, but a sizeable number among them addressed the issue of the public sphere or publicity (10), and various aspects of state formation, type of state or such related issues as citizenship (18). The two gender-relevant articles addressed the issue of the public/private split (50412TG)⁵ and the emperor system in Japan (5524G).

The 44 articles on the field of sociology were more dispersed, covering such traditional subfields as historical sociology, family sociology, and social class; newer areas like visual sociology, and disability studies; as well as gender studies and men’s studies. There were analyses of sociological education and textbooks, among which were four gender-relevant articles, including one each on gender studies (4929G) and men’s studies (5145TG), and two on sociological education/textbooks (6033TG, 5632TG).

Most of the 41 articles classified under “labor, employment and organization” addressed the nature of employment, such as autonomy, social network, part-time employment, emotional labor, and so on. Others were about management, organization and/or labor relations. Besides one article on women trade unionists’ activities, the rest of the eight gender-relevant articles were all about employment, including gender and employment, women’s employment and education, the meaning of employment for women, and men in pink-collar occupations.

A large number of the 43 articles in the closely related area of “social stratification” included analyses of status attainment and intergenerational mobility (13) or particular social class or rank in the social hierarchy, such as the underclass, homeless, the elite, the new middle class and so on (15). The nine gender-relevant articles were also found among these analyses of status attainment/social mobility or particular social class/stratum. The rest of the articles classified in this category considered the subjective evaluation of strata or undertook macro-

⁵ This and similar numbers are identification numbers of coded articles.

theoretical analysis of social stratification.

The foregoing analysis shows that there were few gender-relevant articles in the subarea where the largest number of articles was published, namely, theories/theorists and key concepts. The tendency to focus on particular theorists might lead to genealogical analyses that exclude totally new or hitherto neglected considerations, such as gender. On the other hand, such subareas as “labor, employment and organization” and “stratification” might be more able to accommodate gender within the same theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis. Since close to half of the gender-relevant articles (25) were found among the 293 articles in the most well-represented subareas⁶. While there was no sign of the ghettoization of gender-relevant articles, there was also no sign of a prominent presence of gender research in the core.

Centering the analysis on the gender-relevant articles, it could be seen that most of these articles were related to “family and marriage,” “body and norms”, “intimacy and sexuality”, and “social stratification” (9 articles in each, or 32 (45.75%) in total). The next most popular subareas were “labor, employment and organization” and “social network” (7 (11.86%) and 5 (8.47%) respectively). Therefore, the gender-relevant articles were concentrated in a very small number of subfields, and among them, only two topics belonged to the core cluster. Further, the rest could be considered “gendered” fields in which studies on women, in particular, are generally concentrated as well as legitimated.

A closer look at the 59 gender-relevant articles out of 558 articles revealed the marginal status of gender research in sociology in Japan. Considering “gender” as a perspective that can be applied in any subarea in sociology, the concentration of gender-relevant articles in a limited number of subareas and the small number of such articles in the core areas might well indicate the marginal status of gender research in sociology.

Obviously, to gauge more precisely the contribution of gender research in sociology, one needs to go beyond mere counts to an examination of the nature of the gender-related articles.

⁶ In addition to theory-related articles, this group included articles in the subareas of state and nation (51), the field of sociology (44), social stratification (43), labor, employment and organization (41), and communication (31).

The Nature of Gender-Relevant Articles

Working from data and drawing partly on extant studies reviewed earlier, I arrived at five categories to capture the type of influence gender research has on sociology:

(a) “Critical gender analysis”

This category refers to analyses that show one or more of the following characteristics: adopting a feminist perspective, paying attention to dynamics and mechanisms of gender inequality, deriving insights from a gender analysis to raise questions about current theories.

(b) “Gender-aware analysis”

Articles classified here show an effort to analyze gender dynamics but do so less thoroughly than those classified under (a). An example would be an analysis that looks at sex differences but which provides only haphazard explanations of the differences thus found without reference to the larger gender order or inequality.

(c) “Gender as a variable”

Gender is incorporated into the analysis as a variable, without any consideration of the larger gender order or inequality. For example, an analysis might include “gender” (male, female) as a variable in a multivariate model, note whether the effect is significant or not, and yet refrain from exploring the mechanisms through which gender has or does not have an effect.

(d) “Gender as incidental”

Gender is apparently relevant in these articles, but the analyses treat gender to be of secondary importance. An example would be an analysis of women’s magazines that pays attention to the changes in the construction of ideal body size, recognizes that women are targeted, but does not examine the embedded gender meanings.

(e) “Total neglect of gender”

Classified here are articles that ignore gender totally despite its apparent relevance to the subject matter, such as an analysis of the category of “gentlemen” without any reference to gender relations or the construction of masculinity.

Considering all 59 papers together, just less than half (42.37%) presented a critical gender analysis, 14 showed a gender-aware analysis that could be further developed (25.42%), and seven took gender as a variable only (11.86%). Among the rest, gender was merely incidental in nine and totally neglected in three. This initial observation shows that despite the small number of gender-relevant articles, a significant proportion of them did not just add gender but

integrated it into a critical analysis.

Critical gender articles

The 25 critical gender articles took up a range of topics, but were more focused on labor, employment, and management (4) and social stratification (3). They also shared a few characteristics. Some integrated a gender analysis and made gender visible in a topic or area typically considered “non-gendered” but was actually masculinized, such as “the state”, whereas others proposed theories and perspectives that challenged extant knowledge, or directly adopted or critically examined a feminist perspective, and still others looked at women’s lives in greater depth.

Among those that looked at women’s lives in greater depth, some paid attention to the intersection of gender and other sources of inequality whereas others looked at gender dynamics in women’s lives. Included in the former were a study of how Japanese American women negotiated their identities (5014G), an examination of the diversity of women in the context of globalization (5745TG), and a historical investigation of the relationship between maids and middle-class housewives and the maintenance of gender division between husband and wife during the inter-war years in Tokyo (5226G). A case study of cooperative cooking in two farming communities showed how the practice could contribute to easing women’s labor and isolation (5931G) while another explored the various meanings and implications of women’s paid employment in dual earner families with children (56110TG). A quantitative comparative study of gender role attitudes of married women in the USA and Japan sought to map the structure of attitudes (pro-/anti-work; traditional/non-traditional) by social class and social status. Even though the paper was centered on methodology, the author took care to interpret the connections among social class, status, and gender (5026G).

How gender inequality and norms are reproduced were explored in two articles. One was an analysis of how the image of men in a women’s magazine—or specifically the “*amae* role” played by men—sustained the roles of women and reproduced the status quo (5415G); another examined how workplace structure, culture or practices worked against gender equality (5243G). Similarly, drawing from extant literature, an analysis of male pink collar workers explored the reproduction of as well as challenges to stereotypes and gender inequality, and also the emphasis or de-emphasis of masculinity as coping strategies (5835G).

Gender was made visible and its connection to the state or imperial authority clarified in a few analyses. A textual analysis of magazines in the Meiji period revealed how, despite the promise of a new relationship between men and women, feudal feminine virtues were

reproduced in the role of the housewife (4112G). Similarly, an analysis of ordinary women's fascination with the imperial family before the war showed that the support for the imperial family and the emperor system consisted in ordinary women's seeking an escape from the patriarchal *ie* system. As a result, the analysis offered a new interpretation of the connection between the emperor system and the *ie* system (5524G). Another critical analysis showed how the ideology of motherhood could induce intervention by the state, hence revealing state and medical control of women's lives (5034G). Despite the ostensible focus on spatial memory and politics, an analysis of social movement made women visible by being sensitive to gender inequality and the mixed implications of the activeness of housewives in a severely male-dominated space (5926G).

A few articles challenged or refined extant sociological theories and conceptions. Two social network analyses refined dominant conceptions of sex and status differences in roles and size of network by examining how roles were connected and how status interacted with gender in different types of network. As a result, these analyses reexamined extant concepts through a nuanced analysis of gender differences (5124G, 4733G). Similarly, an analysis of the strategies adopted and decisions made by homeless women with respect to their relationships launched a critique of the male bias of the dominant perspective that focused on "resistance and subjectivity" (5648G). A theoretical piece on the politics of "social status" explored the stake of grand theory in extant class categories, argued that it was impossible to represent women satisfactorily in class analysis, and proposed instead a focus on the articulation of the inequality women suffered rather than on the representation of women per se (5414G).

Other articles engaged with feminism directly, laying out the conditions for feminist research through domestic violence research (53410G), critiquing the public-private dichotomy from a feminist perspective (50412TG), assessing men's studies in Japan and proposing a feminist agenda for it (5145G), analyzing the influence of the sociology of gender on everyday life (5715TG), exploring the problems and future for feminism in Japan (5725TG), deconstructing the dichotomy of essentialism and constructionism from a Butler-influenced philosophical perspective (5531T), and examining the possibility of empirical research developed from Butler's concept of performativity (6021G).

The empirical studies among these 25 papers mostly adopted qualitative methods of analysis, particularly interpretative analyses of qualitative, interview or ethnographic data or texts (11). None of these papers were co-authored. Only six of these articles (24%) were written by male authors; 10 (40%) were written by authors of full professor status, and seven

(28%) by assistant professors, associate professors or authors of equivalent statuses.

Gender-aware articles

These articles took up gender-relevant topics but did not engage in a critical gender analysis in the way the articles reviewed above did. The topics taken up varied⁷, but they were marked by one or more of the following characteristics: uncritical use of conventional sociological concepts, inadequate reference to pertinent feminist or critical gender research, and lack of a thorough exploration of the implications of gender in the analysis.

Biases embedded in key concepts were left unexplored in some analyses of class, gender and employment. As part of a composite analysis to explore the thesis of individualization in Japanese society, one article concluded that a woman's class identification was more influenced by her husband's socioeconomic status than her own. The author made a vague reference to gender roles but left untouched the male bias embedded in the basic premise and concepts of conventional class analysis (5444TG). A report on women graduates with a master's degree in sociology or sociology of education framed the analysis of women's lives and decisions in terms of the "special [biological and social] problems or issues of women," lending itself to an interpretation of these problems as problems of women per se (4335G-CR). Similarly, a study of women literary figures and works made women visible in the construction of literature, but the very concept of "literature" and the implication of gender in it were not taken up (6024G).

Other articles started with feminist critiques or theories without engaging with them thoroughly. One article on class analysis, for example, took up feminist critiques of class analysis more directly and resolved to consider women's class on their own terms, but only in one part of the analysis. In the rest of the analysis, only men's data were used without any explanation for the decision or its implication (5022TG). Another article explored employment and differences in the amount of time American and Japanese women spent in housework. Explanatory factors invoked included the fluidity of the boundary between paid and unpaid work, the centrality of children and the family structure in Japan; the obvious connection of these factors to gender norms and inequality was not explored at all (5036G).

Related to these articles were those that failed to contextualize the analysis in relevant critical gender literature. For example, while the author of a qualitative analysis of close schoolgirl relationships argued that such relationships should be considered as "romantic

⁷ The range of topics taken up included family and marriage (3), labor, employment, management (1), social stratification (3), body and norms/intimacy and sexuality (5), the field of sociology (2), community (1), and media and culture (1).

love”, she did so without problematizing the heterosexual norms embedded in the definition of romantic love or its implications for the gender order (5618TG). Likewise, a qualitative analysis of norms about the newly created public space of train transportation was undertaken mostly from men’s perspectives without discussing how the space was for women, despite a few observations about women as object and as subject in this space (5813G).

Studies of sexuality also did not necessarily predispose the authors towards critical gender analysis. The two articles on sexuality, one on coming out politics and another on the construction of the “justifiable party” with respect to gender identity disorder, looked at concepts related to sexuality critically. The former drew upon feminist literature in theorizing the public/private divide and critiqued heterosexual norms, but did not explicitly discuss the connection between gender and heterosexuality (5333G). The latter paper did not adopt any gender perspective at all, notwithstanding the meaning of GID as the crossing of gender boundaries (5918G).

In terms of methodologies and author characteristics, there were similarities and differences between these articles and critical gender articles. Even though more of the empirical papers in this group used quantitative analysis, the majority (9) still used qualitative analysis rather than quantitative methods (5). There were more female than male authors (9 to 6), and most authors were graduate students (8) or assistant/associate professors (4).

Gender as a variable

The seven articles that took gender merely as a variable conducted analyses in labor, employment and management (1), social stratification (1), family and marriage (3), and social network (2). Regardless of the topic, these analyses typically did not explore the larger gender order to explain the gender differences or similarities found. Once gender as a variable was entered into the equation, it was examined for effects (significant or not) on the dependent variable without a perspective rooted in gender analysis or any explanation of such differences at all. The point in these analyses was apparently not to understand gender dynamics but to explain the correlation or causal connection of various variables. For example, two articles on network and the elderly reported on sex differences without really explaining them (5544G, 5037G). Gender and gender-related factors were entered as variables (e.g. male, female) or invoked in an abstract, general sense as an explanation (e.g. sexual division of labor, gender roles, family role overload, gender norms)(4143G, 5613G, 4143G, 5615TG), on a range of topics from distress and marriage, adjustment and relocation, to the type of support given to the elderly.

Hypothesis-testing characterized many analyses. While the hypothesis might have been derived from a gender-sensitive literature, the testing of the hypothesis in these articles usually stopped short of deriving implications beyond statistical support or refutation of a hypothesis. For example, one analysis tested hypotheses on the connection between educational attainment and continuation of full time employment of women and concluded that there was no effect of education (4821G); no further discussion was in place.

Different from the other two groups of articles discussed so far, all of these articles conducted quantitative analyses and were authored overwhelmingly by men (9 to 1). In terms of professional status, five were assistant/associate professors, two researchers, and three lecturers.

Gender as incidental

The nine articles in which gender was merely incidental spanned a range of topics.⁸ Despite its relevance, “gender” was only of secondary importance in these analyses. For example, one article examined the concept of “liberation” in Gender Studies. However, the analysis could well have been carried out with respect to any field because the very history and politics of Gender Studies was not explored at all (4929G).

Gender was also incidental to an analysis when a single-gender sample was used in an empirical study without discussion of the genderedness embedded in it. For example, a report on a women’s trade union in Italy focused on the impact of unions on regional economics without integrating into the analysis the meaning of a women’s union (4245G). Similarly, an analysis of women’s migration to the city and social mobility focused on urbanization and mobility, and the sample of women was merely incidental (4635G). Another piece on aging, roles and distress described sex differences without undertaking a gender analysis (5211G).

At times, a gendered social category was the focus, but the genderedness was left unexplored. For example, one article which analyzed the use of the gendered category of “mother” or “housewife” as a collective action frame focused only on the articulation of such a category with cultural domains in society (4923G). Another that focused on mother’s well-being looked at fathers’ participation and the composition and density of network, without exploring the mother’s role or circumstances (5213G). A textual analysis of a women’s fashion magazine traced the change from an embracement of diverse body size to a standardized ideal

⁸ The topics taken up included labor, employment and management (1), social stratification (2), family and marriage (2), social network (1), social movement (1), body and norms/intimacy and sexuality (1), and social theory (1).

body size with the development of ready-made clothes. It did make some reference to women but did not thoroughly analyze the issue of women and body (56112TG).

Besides one theoretical paper and one paper that used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, five used quantitative methods (55.6%), and two qualitative methods (analysis of texts) (22.2%). Seven among the 10 authors were men, but there was no pattern in terms of the status of authors except that there were no full professors among them.

Total neglect of gender

Since there were only three papers that did not take up gender at all, it is difficult to identify any pattern by topic, method, sex or status of the author. These articles were coded as “gender-relevant” because they satisfied the criteria used. However, a closer analysis revealed “gender” to be practically absent in the analysis. For example, an article based on the author’s experience in making a “sociology of gender” textbook without referring to gender at all; the focus was on the process of making a textbook (5632TG). Similarly, an article on “the gentleman” did not mention the gender aspect of the category but focused on how westernization was negotiated in Japan as it modernized (56312G). A discussion of the feminization of international migration was about laws and regulations and agreements between countries; there was no reference to the gender dynamics involved (6033TG).

The nature of gender-relevant articles: Summary

There was no clear pattern of any connection between the topic and the level of gender sensitivity shown by the gender-relevant articles. There were articles on stratification and labor, employment and organization in all types of gender-relevant articles, showing that the same topic was approached in different ways. The partial exception might be papers related to body and norms/intimacy and sexuality, as one out of the six articles was written from a gender-sensitive perspective, and five from a gender-aware perspective. The type of analysis undertaken did differentiate among these articles: critical gender-sensitive articles were most likely to use a qualitative method of analysis. However, one cannot say quantitative analyses are not compatible with gender sensitivity because some gender-sensitive articles did use quantitative analysis.

The gender of the authors also showed a clear differentiation among the gender-relevant papers: there were more women than men among authors of critical and gender-aware articles and the pattern was reversed for the rest. There was also a discernable pattern by status of the author. Of the 12 full professors who wrote gender-relevant articles, 10 of them adopted a gender-sensitive approach. Of the 14 graduate students or authors of equivalent statuses who

wrote gender relevant articles, only two adopted a critical gender perspective and 8 (36%) a gender-aware perspective.

Concluding Thoughts: Gender Research in Sociology in Japan

A total of 558 articles in 80 issues of the *Japanese Sociological Review (Shakaigaku Hyoron)* from 1989 to 2010 were analyzed to understand the place of gender research in Japanese sociology. Using gender-related keywords, a total of 59 gender-relevant were identified, constituting about 10% of all the articles. The vast majority of all the articles published were authored by men, but only a small minority of the male authors wrote gender-relevant articles, compared to almost one third of all female authors. In other words, women authored the vast majority of the gender relevant articles. The authors were of various statuses, even though there were slightly more graduate students and fewer part-time instructors or those of similar professional statuses. There was also no clear pattern of status and authorship of gender-relevant articles, with the partial exception that relatively more researchers authored gender-relevant articles, compared to authors of other statuses.

Special issues were coded for content, and the articles were coded for topic/subareas, gender and status of authors. The gender-relevant articles were further assessed for the extent to which they brought a critical perspective to sociology. None of the special issues was about “gender”, and gender-relevant articles constituted only 1/10 of the total number of thematic articles. The largest number of articles across a few special issues focused on the field of sociology, and again, only a small number among them were gender-relevant articles. Further, the gender-relevant articles were concentrated in an issue on post-war Japanese society. If the topics taken up in the special issues reflected the core concerns of Japanese sociology, then the number and distribution of gender-relevant articles across the issues indicated that gender research has had but a marginal status in steering the course of sociology in Japan.

Nearly one-quarter of all the articles published were about theories/theorists or key concepts, and there were only three gender-relevant articles among them. The most numerous among this group of articles were about a theory or a theorist, and none was gender-relevant. Besides the more popular areas of “social stratification” and “labor, employment and organization,” the gender-relevant articles were mostly related to “family and marriage”, “body and norms,” “intimacy and sexuality,” or, in other words, conventionally feminine fields.

The gender-relevant articles were analyzed to gauge the extent to which a critical gender

approach is adopted that challenges conventional sociological research, theories or concepts. About 2/5 of the gender-relevant articles adopted a critical gender perspective; they were more likely to be written by women and to use qualitative methods. A smaller number of articles that showed some gender awareness but did not adopt a critical perspective on extant research or theories were also more likely to use qualitative methods and be authored by women. The articles that took gender as a variable or in which gender was merely incidental were more likely to be authored by men and to use quantitative methods. There was no clear pattern connecting how critical the approach was and the topic, suggesting that the topic itself did not in and of itself impose any constraints on gender analysis. Beside gender distribution, there was also a discernible pattern by the author's professional status: the full professors who wrote gender-relevant articles were more likely to take a critical gender approach, while the graduate students or authors of comparable statuses were least likely to do so.

The male domination in authorship and the absence of gender relevant articles among the papers on the most popular topics showed the lack of a strong impact of gender research in Japanese sociology. At the same time, among the gender articles published, a good proportion adopted a critical approach that challenged extant sociological practice and concepts or came close to doing so. That such an approach was more likely to be adopted by full professors than by more junior academics might indicate that a stable professional position allowed one the freedom or authority to critique or challenge accepted ideas in sociology. Without looking outside of sociology or into other more specialized and perhaps less mainstream sociological journals, it is hard to conclude if junior scholars are engaging in gender-critical research outside of the mainstream of sociology and what the impact might be. Similarly, the finding of a lack of a clear association between gender research and the approach or the topics taken up needs to be further tested in analyses of specialized journals in such areas as family, marriage and sexuality, or those published in English in Japan. What can be concluded from the present analysis is that while there has not been a feminist revolution in Japanese sociology, there are signs of critical challenges. The promise or limits of such challenges depend not only on the nature of gender research, but importantly, on the very nature of sociology in Japan.

Appendix A

Categories of topics/subareas coded, with selected examples or brief explanation

1. Work, employment and organization: labor relations, labor process and related topics; work, occupations and employment issues; management; organization and corporations; industry
2. Social stratification: status attainment and intergenerational mobility, social strata/classes, subjective evaluation of strata, theoretical and macro analysis of social stratification
3. Education
4. State and nation: politics, social changes and society (postmodernity, modernity and so on), national community and the public sphere/"publicity", nationalism and national identity, macro-level social policies
5. (A) Globalization: world capitalism, mechanisms or aspects of globalization, connection between the global and the local, particular aspects or instantiations of globalization
(B) Migration: theories about globalization that focus specifically on international migration, and various aspects of international migration, especially with respect to labor
6. Race and ethnicity: Identity, attitudes towards and experiences of particular ethnic groups in a society, and issues of inequality/discrimination
7. Family and marriage: various aspects of the institution of the family, dynamics inside the family
8. Social network (excluding network at work): social support
9. Community/region: various aspects of the local community, including the sense of belonging, the building of a community in the city, heritage, spatial memory, local politics
(A) city/urbanization/civil society: more directly related to civil society and neighborhood organization or the process of urbanization itself
10. Social movement: various types of social movements, theoretical analysis of social movement
11. (A) communication (micro level): social interactions, theories related to such interactions, dynamics of groups, conversation analysis, construction of specific identities
(B) language, linguistics
12. Media and culture: the mass media, analysis of pop culture, literature, children's songs
13. Religion: religious practices, changes in religion, the connection between religion and politics

14. Welfare, health, medical services: aging and retirement, disability, various aspects of welfare and health care
15. Crime and deviance: crime, suicide, and mental disorder
16. Analysis of attitudes: attitudes towards Japan, the environment and gender roles
17. Science and technology: medicine, biotechnology, the institution of science
18. Key concepts: the self, choice, autonomy, authority, value orientations, order, society, human, performativity, rational, discrimination, memory
19. Body and norms: norms regulating the body and image
(A) sexuality and intimacy: love, romance, intimate relationships, politics of sexuality
20. Theory/theorist(s): general theory formation in sociology or social sciences, particular theories or theoretical paradigms (e.g. historical materialism), specific theorists, considered alone or together with one or more other theorists
21. The field of sociology, subfields of sociology, including sociological education
22. Methodology and research methods: various types of social research methods, mathematical modeling, methods of analysis, history of research methods, problems of ethics
23. Memory and space: not a conventional category but the articles categorized here are in a special issue on this theme and which cannot be satisfactorily classified elsewhere

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