

日本におけるベック理論の受容——環境リスクから個人化へ

Acceptance of Beck's Theory in Japan: From Environmental Risks to Individualization

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Ulrich Beck, Individualization, Risk, Japan, History of Sociology

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U. Beck's social theory holds an unshakable position as an essential tool for analyzing modern society in sociology in Japan. Yet, when his work was first introduced in Japan, the response was a far cry from the explosive reception; the areas of research that found acceptance in Japan were also limited. Full-scale examinations of Beck's works began in the late 1990s in Japan. Against the background of fear of environmental risks Beck was accepted as a theorist of environmental sociology. However, as the recession that began in 1990 became increasingly grave and protracted, people's attention shifted to risks in individual lives. From around 2004, references to Beck's theory of individualization began to grow. This was because, coupled with the spread of the notion of "globalization," people gradually came to acknowledge that the recession had been caused not by mere business cycles but by profound structural changes. As a result, Beck's structural change models have been spreading rapidly.

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The aim of this paper is to show that Beck's theory has been gradually accepted in Japanese society as the structural transformation has undergone, and to insist on the importance of his theory of reflexive modernity and of individualization to solve actual problems in Japanese society.

1. Acceptance of Beck Beginning with Environmental Risks

It was in 1988 that *Risk Society* was first translated and published. It is worth noting, however, that the second part dealing with "individualization" was not translated into Japanese. *Risk Society* mainly discussed two types of risk: "ecological risks in modernization" and "social, biographical, and cultural risks and uncertainties"; in other words, "the risk of being individualized"⁽¹⁾. The type of risk that first drew attention in Japan was the former; the focus on the latter lagged behind. At that time, the issue of "individualization" was not yet conspicuous, thus the translator of *Risk Society* introduced the work as a book dealing with environmental issues. But even environmental risks such as global environmental issues began to draw attention only in the 1990s. More specifically, even the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster, which shocked Europe, was reported and understood in Japan in the context of the collapse of the governing structure of the former Soviet Union. Thus it was after 1998, when the complete translation of *Risk Society* was published, that the book gained wide readership in Japan.

Around the time the Earth Summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the issues of ozone holes and global warming made national headlines, arousing immediate interest in global environmental issues. Coupled with heightened anxiety over risks that people could not directly perceive, fear of contamination by toxic chemicals found in our daily lives also rose. In one case that made big headlines, HIV-infected hemophilia patients filed lawsuits against the Ministry of Health and Welfare and drug companies in the period between 1989 through 1996, claiming that they had contracted HIV via tainted blood products in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1997 publication of *Our Stolen Future* by Theo Colborn led to heightened fear and anxiety about endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) such as dioxin. In 1999, provoked by the TV coverage that "the dioxin concentration is higher in vegetables grown in Tokorozawa where there is an industrial waste disposal plant," the price of spinach plummeted, resulting in a lawsuit against the TV station by a group of local farmers. In 2001, BSE-infected cows were found in Japan, leading to the blanket testing of cows. However, in 2003, when the same thing happened in America, and Japan banned all U.S. beef imports, there was a conflict between the public seeking blanket testing and the Japanese government and corporations calling for an early resumption of U.S. beef imports. Furthermore, one should not forget that accidents took place repeatedly at nuclear power plants and related facilities from around the mid-1990s through the early 2000s.

In 1999, the runaway bestseller *Don't Buy Them!* —naming food and everyday items containing dangerous chemicals—was published. This was a time of increased momentum for life politics that valued consumer choice, while consumers became aware of the risks of chemicals.

Beck's theory differs in the process of its acceptance from the theories of N. Luhmann or J. Habermas in terms of the order of fields that were accepted. The works of Luhmann and Habermas were intensively studied and translated by researchers of theories, after which application advanced to the empirical field. In Luhmann's case, dissemination

to the empirical field was extremely limited. By contrast, although the first to launch research on Beck's theory were researchers of theories ¹⁾, shortly after the publication of the complete translation of *Risk Society*, or from around 2000, researchers from various empirical fields began to actively adopt Beck's theory. Noteworthy results by theory researchers were that Beck's theory was examined by comparing and contrasting it with Luhmann's risk concept ⁽²⁾. Because of Luhmannian sociologists' vigorous introduction, his risk theory became widespread earlier, and comparison to Beck was made over the appropriateness of risk concepts.

Although application to empirical research began initially in environmental sociology, the acceptance of Beck proceeded from one area of sociology to the next in fields such as the sociology of social movement, family sociology, and social security. One reason why there was early positive acceptance in the empirical field was that Beck himself was a theorist who formed his theories while at the same time also valuing practical fields, as D. Brock described, "thanks to the social theses of Beck, sociology has moved out of the ivory tower and returned to the field of actual sociopolitical discussions and general future issues"⁽³⁾.

There is one more thing. The awareness that Japanese society had experienced a major structural change from around 1995 began to spread in the early 2000s in every empirical field. Those who theorized socially disconnected, structural changes were neither Luhmann nor Habermas, but Beck and A. Giddens. Thus, after 2000, Japanese sociologists became keenly aware of the necessity of conducting empirical studies premised on those structural changes. We predict that the trend of using Beck's theory as a frame of reference will further spread even among researchers of theories.

2. Change in the Awareness of Environmental Risks

Immediately after the full translation of *Risk Society* was published in 1998, the first to accept it were environmental sociologists. This demonstrated that the awareness of environmental risks had already changed in Japan, and there was a foundation to accept a frame which Beck called reflexive modernization. N. Higuchi and others, by perusing of newspapers dated between 1975 through 1995, showed that the social changes over environmental risks—what Beck called "reflexive modernization"—were applicable to this period in Japan.

Higuchi and others classified 1,023 newspaper articles on environmental risks during this period from various perspectives, and then identified several conspicuous trends by analyzing the time-sequence change. First, concerning the "damage area" of environmental risks reported in newspaper articles, there were initially many cases whose damage was limited to certain areas, and then the case of damage in wide-ranging areas increased in number. Second, regarding the "damage level," there was an increasing number of cases of reporting concern about the influence of "chronic toxicity" on carcinogens and genes instead of "acute toxicity" that directly harms health, or "changes in the ecosystem and environment." Third, concerning the "form of environmental damage", cases of "damage as a probability"—in which future risks could be predicted—increased in number, replacing "past damage" cases in which health hazards or environmental pollution had already taken place. Fourth, in terms of the "point of attribution," there were more and more cases in which it was deemed "impossible to separate self-attribution from attribution to others" replacing cases of "attribution to others" in which the cause of risk or damage was attributable to specific others.

The above findings, though there is some dispersion in the period and scale of change, demonstrate that the changes Japan experienced in the period before and after the 1980s were consistent with the thesis of reflexive modernization. In other words, a foundation to accept the assertions of *Risk Society* had been already established.

During Japan's postwar period of high economic growth, pollution-related diseases such as Minamata disease became a major social issue. In *Risk Society*, Minamata disease was cited as a positive case in which the company admitted corporate responsibility for the disease even while the cause of the disease had not been scientifically identified. Yet, the Minamata lawsuit still lingers in the courts, hamstrung over how much compensation the victims should be awarded. The politics over the distribution of risks is not easily resolved. While the pollution trial continues, and so long as the relationship is such that the "victim" sues the "offender" in a case that already took place, this is classified into the old-type movement. As Higuchi and others have pointed out, as far as the media coverage of environmental risks in recent years is concerned, the causal attribution model in line with the "victim-offender relationship" is already obsolete. Also, the social movement over risks since the 1990s has failed to identify the "victim," thus residents who are highly likely to incur potential risks are the main actors in the movement⁽⁴⁾.

3. Increasing Focus on Sub-Politics

When the full translation of *Risk Society* was published in 1998, coincidentally, the social movement against environmental risks became very active in Japan. To analyze that movement, Beck's concept of sub-politics was frequently used in the fields of sociology and political science.

One event that helped draw attention to social movements was the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Once the media began reporting on this devastating earthquake (which left 6,434 dead and 43,792 injured) and the conditions of those in the disaster area, disaster-relief volunteers from across the nation—mostly young people—began to gather in Kobe. Never before had an unorganized, spontaneous volunteer movement received so much attention. That year was later dubbed "The First Year of Volunteerism"; consequently, the roles of volunteers and NPO activities drew much attention from the general public and the media.

Needless to say, since an earthquake is a natural disaster, it does not fit the category of what Beck called man-made risks. Yet, two major events of 1995 in Japan, this quake disaster and the sarin-gas attacks on the Tokyo subway train by the Aum Shinrikyo religious cult (the Tokyo Subway Sarin Incident), made Japanese people realize that, like it or not, Japan was no longer a "safe" country, instilling a nebulous sense of fear in them. A sense of "solidarity by anxiety" on a national level began to emerge from around that time.

In terms of a social movement regarding man-made risks, a local referendum movement against the bid to attract an industrial waste disposal facility or a nuclear power plant is most applicable. Since the mid-1990s, out of fear of such risks as soil contamination by dioxin and radiation leaks, local referendum movements against such facilities have sprouted in many parts of the country. W. C. Sung, citing Beck, claimed that those movements whose point of dispute was environmental risks "signal of the arrival of risk society"⁽⁵⁾.

There had not been many cases in which solidarity by anxiety came to fruition as a citizens' movement. In the first place, the mechanism of making decisions on the bidding of a facility by referendum is not incorporated in the normal procedures of local government. The first thing that must be done is to lobby the Assembly for the enactment of a "public referendum ordinance." Yet, even if a decision is made by referendum, it does not necessarily bind the judgment of government leaders. Even with this institutional vulnerability, the necessity of the referendum system attracted attention quickly. This was because, previously, local governments were controlled by the logic of public works projects, that is, the logic of central bureaucrats. However, once the economic benefits of public works became less obvious due to the long-term recession beginning in 1990, local citizens' opposition to the imposition of public works projects grew, leading to an elevated awareness of decentralization. In other words, those movements

were also movements to express dissatisfaction with the highly bureaucratic national government in the “first modernity.” On the other hand, those movements differed from movements that made accusations against corporations or the national government as “offenders,” as in the Minamata pollution trial.

As a result of a referendum, if a proposed facility is rejected, the problem does not necessarily get solved. The next problem to emerge is the issue of “the distribution of risks.” For example, 70% of U.S. military facilities in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture. Thus, even if local residents decide to reject a facility, it would not be easy to settle the issue of what other regions would have to bear the burden of such risks as noise pollution, soil contamination, and crime.

4. Discussions over Participatory Democracy

To explain those movements of local residents, Beck’s concept of “sub-politics” has often been used in sociology and political science. It seems that the concept is commonly melded into conventional contexts such as theories of civil society and the public sphere.

Those two concepts have come back into currency in the field of political science since the grass-roots civil movement attracted attention in the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe. Also, one indirect influence was the fact that the English translation of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was published in 1989, which helped advance the study of the Frankfurt School in the United States. Japan, until then, had a tremendous accumulation of studies on *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* under the influence of A. Smith and Hegel. Those discussions, centering on *Zivilgesellschaft*, included public movements, NPOs, NGOs, and volunteerism, and was accepted as fresh and also labeled “the new civil society.” Thus, in the background was the fact that the criticism of bureaucracy-led politics gathered momentum; those discussions, though unintended, would later cause the problem of resonating with neo-liberal “big-government criticism.”

In those contexts, Beck’s concept of “sub-politics” has been discussed in parallel with discussions on participatory democracy. It is not only compared to A. Giddens’ “life politics,” but also explained in the same line of social movement theories by A. Touraine, R. Inglehart, and A. Melucci. It is also frequently discussed as one of the developments of public sphere theory in parallel with the “deliberative democracy” of J. Dryzek and others⁽⁶⁾.

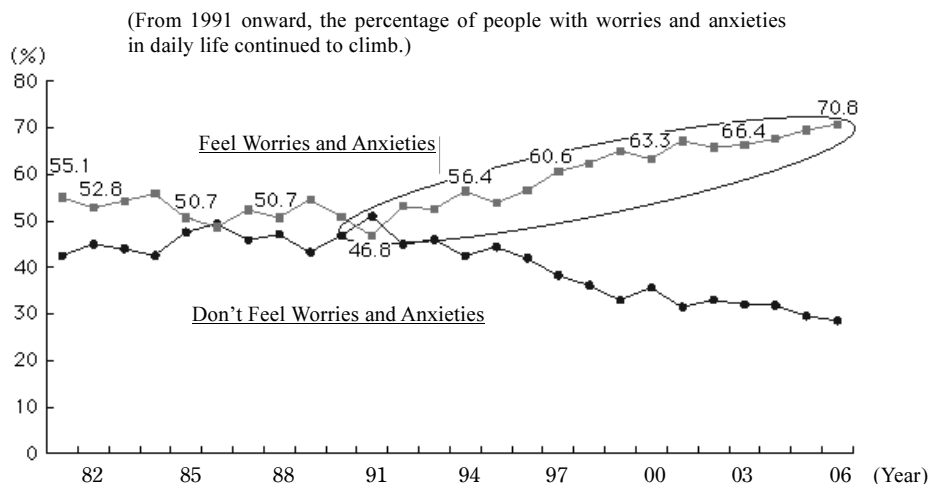
In terms of deliberative democracy, it is only recently that the importance of risk communication was pointed out. The first study by a political scientist that comprehensively introduced Beck was “Citizens’ Political Science: What is Deliberative Democracy?” by H. Shinohara. In this work, the “Consensus Conference” that had started in Denmark was introduced as an arena to discuss risks accompanying scientific technology⁽⁷⁾. In Japan, beginning in 1998, a Consensus Conference has been held three times by researchers of science and technology studies. The themes discussed were genetic treatment, IT technology, genetically modified farm produce, and the human genome project. In 2001 the Japanese Society for Science and Technology Studies was founded. Since then, the ideal of risk communication regarding scientific technology has been discussed by researchers of scientific philosophy and ethics.

5. Heightened Anxiety and Social Structural Changes

As we have seen, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Tokyo Subway Sarin Incident of 1995 lead to the realization that there was no commonly accepted idea that Japan is a “safe” country. This was a turning point—a nebulous fear and anxiety began to spread throughout society. However, some statistics show that the percentage of

people with “worries and anxieties” consistently climbed from around 1991, immediately after the burst of the bubble economy (Fig. 1).

This reflects that Japan’s economy had long been stagnant since the early 1990s. In particular, the collapses of two major financial institutions in 1997, the bankruptcy of Hokkaido Takushoku Bank and the announcement of a voluntary closure by Yamauchi Securities, greatly affected the way Japanese people perceived their financial security. That those collapses were “allowed to happen” meant that the central government had finally abandoned the convoy-fleet system (wherein financial risk was spread evenly under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance). Symbolically it made people aware that even if one was employed at a major corporation, there was no guarantee of a stable “life course” under government and corporate protection. Japan had entered an era where economic conditions fluctuated wildly due to the influence of the global economy; faith in Japanese-style “lifetime employment” premised upon continuous economic growth collapsed like a house of cards. The “model of the normal life course”—all one need do was to find permanent employment at one company—no longer worked. It was around this time that the concept of financial engineering began to permeate the daily lives of people via the media.



Source: Cabinet Office “Public Polls on the Daily Lives of Japanese Citizens” (2008)

Fig. 1 Transitions in the Percentage of People with Worries and Anxieties in Daily Life

As more people learned that the lifetime employment system was on the verge of collapse, a new understanding emerged: one should not understand “risk” as a temporary event caused by the fluctuation of cyclical economic conditions; rather, it is the result of Japanese society undergoing structural changes. Consequently, *Risk Society* and *Reflexive Modernization* began to be viewed from around 2004 as books written about structural changes in society. As Japanese society is currently undergoing disjointed structural changes and people recognize it as a serious problem, what they expect from social theory are clues as to how a society can be fundamentally redesigned from scratch.

According to Brock, although *Risk Society* very quickly became a standard sociological work in the sociological community in Germany, the primary thesis of Beck’s theory—with the change in the industrial society, a historically

new epoch has already arrived—had been hardly discussed until 1991 when he wrote the paper⁽⁸⁾.

In Japan, a similar process was repeated. First, risk or risk society drew attention, after a while people realized that the times had been changing, and then, they became aware of Beck's notions of "second modernity" and "reflexive modernity."

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, *Reflexive Modernization* (1997) was translated and published prior to the complete translation of *Risk Society* (1998). Giddens' *The Consequences of Modernity* (1993) and *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1995) were translated and published even earlier; thus, the fact remains that the acceptance of Giddens preceded that of Beck. In other words, the terms that Giddens and Beck coined such as "reflexive modernization" and "from the first modernity to the second modernity" were understood relatively easily.

The reason for this easy acceptance lies in the background of the 1980s, when post-modernism enjoyed explosive popularity. Post-modernism was perhaps more popular in Japan than in Germany. Intellectuals in Japan were at least familiar at that time with the notion of the "post-modern" world. But as charged by Beck, while post-modern philosophy "deconstructed" things modern, it did not establish constructive thoughts⁽⁹⁾. To Japanese intellectuals who had already left no "modernity (what Beck called first modernity)" uncriticized, it was self-evidently impossible to return to (first) modernity and rebuild or reconstruct it. Now then, in what kind of society will we live in the future? Answering this question, the potential hunger seeking "constructive" thoughts already exists in the world of intellectuals, and this is believed to have led to the climate in which Beck's notion of "second modernity" would be quickly accepted.

6. Individualization in the Family

What fueled discussions not only in the sociology community but in the entire world of scholars and journalists in Japan in the early 2000s was the issue of widening gaps in society. Wide-ranging topics such as the validity of the assertion that the economic gap was growing, the influence of education upon the growth of social gaps, and the ideal way of providing the poor with public assistance were discussed extensively. One primary player in these discussions was family sociologist M. Yamada. He already having focused on "the family as a risk" before tackling the social gap issue, warned that while the family still played the role of risk buffer among the young poor, the family per se was now becoming a risk factor. In the best-selling book *Expectation-Gap Society* (2000), He applied the analysis from Part Two of *Risk Society* to Japanese society, showing that families and corporations had lost their functions as intermediary groups; as a result, family, education, and profession were increasingly fraught with risks⁽¹⁰⁾. His works were perhaps the first to succeed at using the two concepts of "risk" and "individualization" to analyze a Japanese subject. He continues to write educational books for the general public using Beck's theoretical framework.

As for the diversification or individualization of family structure, that understanding had been disseminated among family sociologists much earlier. In the field of family sociology in Japan, "individualization" was first used in *Family in Individualization* (1987) by Y. Meguro. In this book, she pointed to the fact that "family is heading toward individualization" by citing the changes that took place in American families after the 1960s⁽¹¹⁾. Although she did not rely on Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, what was discussed had a strong element of individualization with a statement of emancipation—particularly the emancipation of "women" from Ie (extended family) and the modern family. Since Beck had claimed that his "individualization" was not emancipation but an "unleashing"⁽¹²⁾, Meguro's study was not about "individualization" in the strict sense Beck had intended. Still, her prediction that starting a

family would become just another lifestyle option in Japan was also prophetic considering the situation in Japan today.

Another scholar who was researching the family from a similar perspective during the same period was E. Ochiai. In 1989, she discussed the “demise” of the modern family. The disintegration of the modern family premised on gender-role specialization was beginning to take place in advanced nations such as the United States, and thus, Japan might follow suit “enjoying emancipation from the ‘modern family’ after what has become ‘the modern family in fetters’ collapses”⁽¹³⁾. Although she did not mention “individualization,” she addressed the emancipation of women, children, and the elderly from the family, which she called the “demise” of the modern family. In this period Meguro and Ochiai were similar in that they perceived changes in the family as “emancipation.”

In 1997, Ochiai addressed “individualization” in her book *To the Twenty-First Century Family* (new edition). When the first edition was published in 1994, there was no mention of “individualization,” but in the updated 1997 edition, she added a chapter (chapter 10) entitled “Toward a Society Based on the Individual Unit.” In it she claimed that the system must require individuals as its unit, capturing an sense of “individualization as compulsion”⁽¹⁴⁾.

The following is a summary of research trends of those family sociologists. While pro-feminist family sociologists Meguro and Ochiai both regarded changes in the family as emancipation in their writings in the late 1980s, both subsequently reversed their positions. Ochiai’s works about a decade later and Yamada’s after 2000 focused more on the aspects of “individualization as compulsion,” noting the risks that accompany individualization. In other words, a change had taken place from “emancipation” to “compulsion.”

How did the reality of the family change during that period? As Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 show, the rate of singles by age group has been on the rise since 1980. In addition, since the 1970s, the divorce rate has been climbing steadily except for the economic boom periods of 1985-1990, and a period from 2003 through the autumn of 2008, around the time of the “Lehman Brothers shock” (Fig. 4). The total fertility rate dropped below replacement level (the level required to maintain a population over the long term) of 2.01 in the 1970s. Currently, Japan (1.37 in 2008) is at the forefront of decline along with Germany (1.38 in 2008) and Italy (1.37 in 2007)⁽¹⁵⁾.

As indicated in the above, the indexes regarding family underwent changes in a certain direction from around the 1970s. But the scheme of interpretation of those trends by family sociologists changed according to the period. Those changes coincided with the following changes in social structure in Japan.

In the 1980s feminist philosophy became popular in Japan. Women, mainly relatively wealthy ones (after child rearing), began to pursue “their own lives” by participating in new social movements or by regularly attending culture classes at “culture centers.” This was also the period during which the “affluent society” arrived, and “self-realization” (expressing oneself by fashion) by consumption was pursued. However, as M. Kanda pointed out, the pursuit of women’s “own qualities” in the 1980s was carried out within the realm of economic dependence on men; their self-realization was just that ⁽¹⁶⁾.

At that time, few contemplated the possibility that if individuals, especially women, were emancipated from the very families that guaranteed their survival, the economic basis for making a living might be threatened. While in Western countries divorce laws were revised in the 1970s from the culpability principle to the breakdown principle, Japan experienced no such reform. Thus, while the divorce rate was on the rise, that trend was deemed an exceptional phenomenon. Since men’s lifetime employment system was still intact, marriage for women meant “permanent employment (or lifetime security).” Furthermore, the Equal Employment Opportunities Law was enacted (though incompletely) in 1985, and so the course of continuing to work began to emerge as one option for women. The economic foundation appeared to be rock-solid. We believe that those circumstances of the period

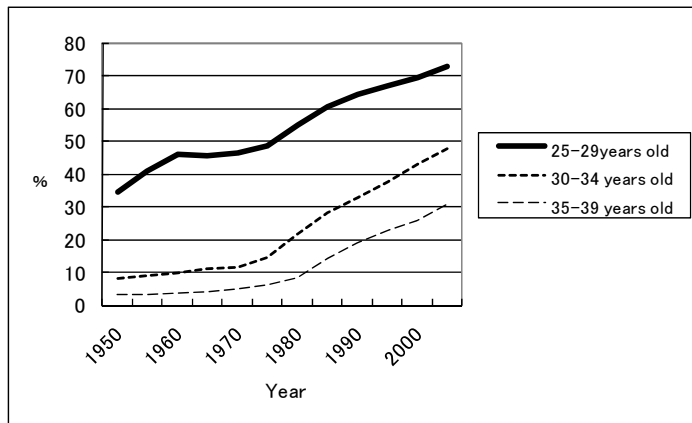


Fig. 2 The rates of single males (1950-2005)

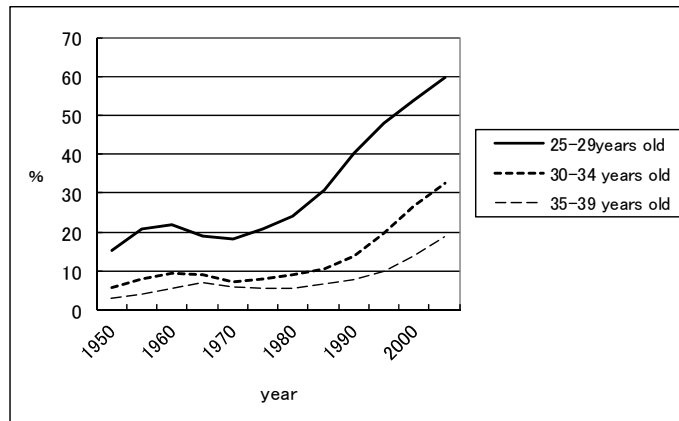


Fig. 3 The rates of single females (1950-2005)

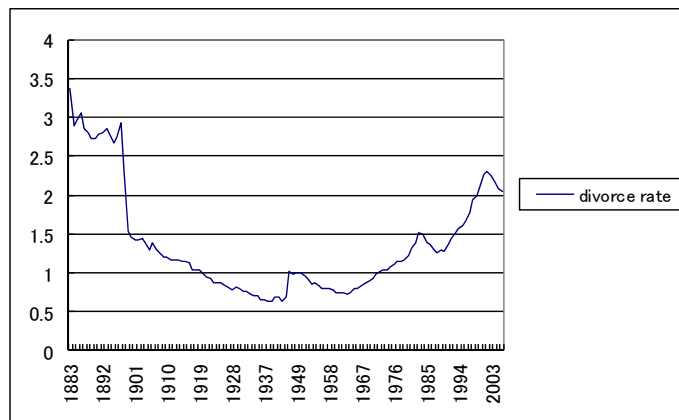


Fig. 4 Divorce per 1,000 population in Japan (1883-2007)

contributed to the highlighting of the aspects of emancipation.

The bubble economy collapsed in 1991 and remained stagnant for a long period. The employment situation for the young, both male and female, became grim, so grim in fact that the term “the ongoing ice age for employment” became a common phrase. In 1997 Ochiai’s book addressing “individualization as compulsion” was published; as mentioned above, it was also the year Japan experienced the collapse of major financial institutions. Those events made people realize that a safe normal life-course had turned into a risky life-course. The presence of divorcees and lifetime singles in the midst of unstable employment conditions made people keenly aware of the risk of slipping into poverty without the protection of the family. The layoff of adult male employees as part of restructuring made them realize that even if one may have a family, the function of family as risk-buffers was increasingly eroding. To sociologically examine those situations, we believe, family sociologists in Japan have begun to focus on “individualization as compulsion” and “risk.”

7. Development of Individualization Studies

In addition to family sociologists, many other researchers of theories examined Beck’s individualization theory, but they did not succeed in producing any notable trends. For example, M. Ito held a presentation on Beck’s individualization in 1998 at the Japan Association for the Study on the History of Sociology, while M. Obata, who had translated a number of writings by Giddens, focused on Beck’s individualization as of 1999⁽¹⁷⁾. N. Tanaka mentioned “individualization” of lifestyles together with G. Schulze’s *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft*⁽¹⁸⁾ while T. Nakano touched upon Beck in the context of discussing Melucci’s individualization theory⁽¹⁹⁾.

Including Z. Bauman and Melucci, the opportunity for “individualization” to enter the limelight in the sociology community in Japan came when a special feature of the *Japanese Sociological Review* (the in-house magazine for the Japan Sociological Society) picked the subject titled “Individualization’ and Social Transformation” in 2004. In this issue, individualization was discussed in nine categories including medicine, family, labor, social security, and citations and references to Beck were made in six of them. However, the interpretation of the concept of individualization differed greatly depending on the author; some authors even deemed individualization to be the same as individualism.

It is only in the last several years that theoretical research on individualization has become active. This cannot be unrelated to the fact that as many as ten books of Bauman have been translated since 2000. Ito re-summarized Beck’s individualization theory based on his papers on individualization, and discussed the significance of Beck’s individualization theory in German sociology⁽²⁰⁾. M. Suzuki conducted ideology analyses on recent statements and policies about gap theory and criticized the fact that there are numerous researchers who automatically affirm individualization without criticism⁽²¹⁾. A. Kashimura pointed to the difficulty of reflexive subject formulation today from the standpoint of psychoanalysis⁽²²⁾. T. Mikami, while acknowledging the foresight of Beck connecting risk and individualization, claimed that the currently popular individualization theory lacked a solid concept of the “individual” (or the “society” to which it is contraposed) to correspond to; thus, he has done the work of supplementing and amplifying that point. Specifically, on the one hand, he attempted to theoretically refine the more closed, reflexive self, and on the other hand, he reexamined the concept of “society.” He found that the society that had been considered a presence beyond individualities in the sociology of “first modernity” is currently acknowledged as a society different from individuals while still being an equal presence⁽²³⁾.

Although small in number, there *are* researchers in the field of social security and welfare who take Beck into

account. Of them, S. Takegawa is the one who most energetically accepts Beck's theory. He contributed to the aforementioned special feature of the *Japanese Sociological Review* (2004), and went on to write "Social Governance Between Globalization and Individualization" (2006) and *Solidarity and Recognition: Welfare State between Globalization and Individualization* (2007). In those works, he cites individualization along with globalization (cosmopolitization) as the contributing factors that regulate the transformation of the modern welfare state. This is because in the welfare state, the national economy must be relatively independent from the international economy and the national government must secure a certain degree of freedom for domestic politics, while globalization makes this difficult to do. On the other hand, since the welfare state is a mechanism established in the Fordist era, it is well-suited to mass production and mass consumption; thus, the uniform goods and services provided by a welfare state may not fit individualized people seeking more diverse and flexible goods and services. Moreover, globalization and individualization, by nature, promote each other. For this reason, he concluded, what is required of the central government in a globalized and individualized society is not to be a powerful managerial organization that single-handedly undertakes integration, but to be a coordinating body at the global and local level⁽²⁴⁾.

His research is a good example of an empirical study where Beck's individualization and globalization is employed as a frame of reference to analyze modern society³⁾.

8. Envisioning a New Society

The individualization in "second modernity" refers to the situation in which intermediate groups such as the family, workplace, and class are weakened, and then individuals become the unit for social reproduction without being reintegrated into any group. This way, individuals may directly incur risks (the individualization of risks), though the role of risk buffer has not been shouldered only by intermediate groups. In other words, risk avoidance in the form of pension plans, unemployment insurance and health insurance has long been implemented at the nation-state level. Yet the reality is that it has been increasingly difficult to do so, and one of the contributing factors is cosmopolitization (globalization), which is, in a nutshell, the globalization of risks. In that case, the risk society as a characteristic of "second modernity" is related to both individualization and cosmopolitization.

If this is the case, it is possible to classify new research projects in sociology on "second modernity" into the following. First, there are those that deal with the transformation of the self. Second, there are those that examine the weakened functions of intermediate groups (both as risk buffers and identity-granting bodies). Finally, there are projects that explore the issues of society or "the social" (as something to be contraposed to individuals) in the midst of cosmopolitization and weakening of intermediate groups—in other words, those which reconsider "the relationship between individuals and society."

The first category is the theme of study on self, for instance, the multi-dimensionalization of self, or in Beck's words, "from Individuum to Dividuum." In the second, the weakened functions of intermediate groups apply to such studies as political sociology (social movement theory), family sociology, and labor sociology in the field of hyphenated sociology. Points of contention in the third can be found in studies, for example, on how social security and the welfare society can be rebuilt in the midst of individualization and cosmopolitization, as previously seen in Takegawa's studies, and how once "separated individuals" and "the social" can be "connected" once again, as seen in Mikami's theoretical studies.

In any project, when researchers in respective fields of specialization attempt to discuss their projects by relating

them to common issues in society as a whole, reference is commonly made to Beck's studies. To those researchers, Beck's theory, which discusses a multiplicity of different themes, is highly useful. On the other hand, even though an enormous number of works already cite and refer to Beck, those studies actually tend to use only parts of his theory; a comprehensive study that is "inherently Beckian" has yet to emerge.

In the first place, the question of whether the "second modernity" model can be applied to Japanese society remains unresolved, even for Beck. Presently, Japanese sociologists may be sharing the feeling that somehow "first modernity" has ended. But the image of "second modernity," that is to arrive next or is expected to arrive next, must differ in Europe and Japan. We already know that the characteristics of "first modernity" are different between Europe and Japan. So long as that is the case, the characteristics of "second modernity"—which have followed different paths—should also diverge into the "German" type and "Japanese" type. Only by regarding Beck's theory as the ideal type and making it the standard to compare with the realities of respective societies, can its true value be measured. Thus, studies that are "inherently Beckian" should be conducted following Beck's principle of methodological cosmopolitanism.

In recent years, discussion on individualization has been vigorous. This is because individuals' lives have become riskier due to the influences of globalization and neo-liberal policies, and that realization has become widespread. It is generally acknowledged that one reason for people's anxieties over life, continuing since the 1990s, is neo-liberal policies, and not just a business-cycle recession. Even researchers share a common feeling that excessive neo-liberal policies should be curbed. However, the prescription for the problem necessarily varies depending on whether one believes that the problem stems from neo-liberal policies or individualization. Some among anti-neo-liberalists hope they can return to collective risk-handling centered on corporations and family. Others say that risk handling is an individual responsibility and what we need are policies to empower individual will and decision-making. But as individualization studies progress, it will be apparent that neither of those choices is correct.

Looking at the issue of household chores or nursing care, for example, it is unthinkable that individuals, women in particular, who have had the experience of "being unleashed" thanks to individualization can once again return to family-dependent welfare. On the other hand, it is all too obvious that unrestrained individualism, which lays all responsibility at the feet of individuals, will invite more ontological anxieties.

Now is the time that we must begin to demarcate areas of responsibility vis-à-vis risks—the extent to which national governments, markets, groups, and individuals should assume risks. In order to further that discussion, the key issue then will be to acknowledge the trend of individualization as fact, and how the pros and cons of individualization should be evaluated. In order to envision a new society in an age of social upheavals—as a grand theory in times of no grand theory—further research on Beck's theory is expected.

Notes

- 1) Ren Azuma, who translated *Risk Society* into Japanese in 1988, is an exception. A geographer, he studies allotment gardens in Germany.
- 2) *To the Twenty-First Century Family* was later translated into English and Korean, and became an introductory book on family sociology; no citation or reference was made to it in studies by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim.
- 3) However, when it comes to globalization, Takegawa more often cites studies of theorists other than Beck.

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