

Bourdieu in Japan: Selective Reception and Segmented Field

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Abstract: Bourdieu's overall theory of social inequality explains that the existence of social inequality has been perpetuated in the reflexive relationship between the theory of *cultural reproduction* and the theory of *symbolic violence*. Regardless of their inseparability, an asymmetrical development in the reception of Bourdieu's ideas is apparent in the relevant fields of study in Japan. The myth of an egalitarian society and strong domestic political interests to establish the positive relationship between the proliferation of educational opportunity and upward social mobility have contributed to keeping scholars primarily focused on the theory of cultural reproduction. On the other hand, the theory of symbolic violence has been rejected as being specific to the French context. The general lack of reflexivity between the theory of cultural reproduction and the theory of symbolic violence indicates that Bourdieu's habitus theory has been appropriated in the Japanese cultural context as a simple analytical tool, while his overall theory exists as a discursive totality in discourses. Due to this asymmetrical development, regardless of the fact that Bourdieu, himself, pointed out the relevance of his theory to Japanese society, those studying Bourdieu in Japan itself have failed to produce relevant knowledge regarding the nature of social inequality in Japan.

Introduction

In a series of lectures held at Tokyo University in 1986, Pierre Bourdieu pointed out the relevance of his overall theory of social inequality to Japanese society.¹ More specifically, he suggested the similarity of the mechanism, through which existing social inequality is justified and reproduced, in France and in Japan, given the similarity regarding 'the exceptional importance that is traditionally attributed to education'.² Twenty years later, one of today's leading scholars in the field of the sociology of elites, Michael Hartmann, confirmed in articles written in 2007 and 2011 that this statement by Bourdieu demonstrates that meritocratic elite selection in France and in Japan, in fact, embodies a strong class bias.³ Surprisingly, the voice of Japanese scholars regarding this issue has scarcely been heard. Due to a tendency towards the piece-meal appropriation of ideas, the Japanese field of Bourdieu study has failed to offer a relevant tool to elucidate the nature of social inequality in Japan. My article, at first, provides an overview of the field of Bourdieu study in Japan from 2001-2015. From this basis, I proceed to identify and exemplify the segmentation in the study field of Bourdieu's theory. The asymmetrical development in the field that I identify may serve as a step towards formulating criticisms specific to the Japanese field of Bourdieu study. As it suggests, despite its long-term interest in social stratification, that the field of sociology of education in Japan has shelved the analysis of 'the situation of social stratification in a society as a whole.' As the final consideration, I will introduce the latest advancements worldwide in the effort of overcoming the criticisms of Bourdieu's theory of social inequality.

La Reception de Bourdieu au Japon extended

Ishii Yôjirô (1951-), one of the leading specialists regarding Pierre Bourdieu in Japan, published a quantitative summary of some trends noticeable in the reception of Bourdieu's thought in Japan in 2001. The article, written in French and titled *La Reception de Bourdieu au Japon*, was published in the *Bulletin of Department of Area Studies* of Tokyo University. Together with the fact that the article is not available online, this article was addressed only to a limited audience. Since that time, no further article exclusively concerning the reception of the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu has appeared in Japan.⁴ In his article, Ishii does not deal with how Bourdieu's thought has been received in the Japanese academic context, beyond his own use of Bourdieu's ideas. This suggests the necessity of a supplementary work bringing the field up to date, and more importantly initiating a qualitative inquiry.

In his article titled *La Reception de Bourdieu au Japon* (2001), Ishii proposed an answer to the following question: To what extent has Bourdieu's work been received in Japanese academia? Ishii did so by focusing on quantitative parameters, to the exclusion of qualitative. By 2001, Ishii writes, the number of Bourdieu's works translated into Japanese still remained limited; eighteen books written by Bourdieu had been translated, and of them no less than fifteen titles had been published by the same publisher - Fujiwara Shoten.⁵ The price of each book was approximately three times that of the original in France. In Ishii's opinion, the price factor contributed to keeping Bourdieu's works from being widely read in Japan. Ishii added that the quality of the translation was questionable due to the limited number of translators who had extensive knowledge of sociology in Japan at the time. Although there were some explanatory works written by a few Japanese sociologists, Bourdieu's thought had generally been considered as being difficult to comprehend, especially his specific terminologies. Application of Bourdieu's theory of class reproduction had been endeavored, but due to the ideological characteristics of Japanese class society, analysis of the Japanese class society had tended to become an analysis of the constructed myth of the egalitarian society.

During the period of 2001-2015, a number of major works of Bourdieu that were previously unavailable in Japanese have been translated and published, including *La noblesse d'État* and *Raisons Pratiques*.⁶ The availability of Bourdieu's major works in the Japanese language has therefore increased in these fifteen years. They still, however, remain far from being widely read, and the price of Japanese translations is roughly twice that of the originals in France. Whether their relative price really is a factor to consider is debatable; academic translations in Japan are often more expensive than the original works. In comparison with other important French scholars, such as Michael Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Paul Sartre, Bourdieu has not been as visible in the Japanese media.⁷ According to CiNii database⁸, one hundred and forty two articles have been published with the keyword 'Bourdieu' from 1983 to 2000. Between the years of 2001 and 2015 the number increased to one hundred and ninety-five articles. Roughly speaking, these articles can be categorized into five major genres: biographies of Bourdieu, reviews of Bourdieu's thought, introductions to and explanations of Bourdieu's concepts, examinations of the applicability of Bourdieu's ideas to the Japanese context, and the application of Bourdieu's concepts to existing fields of study.

Bourdieu study in Japan

The pre-eminent scholars of Bourdieu in Japan are all theoretically oriented; conversely, indicating a seriously limited application of Bourdieu's theory in Japan.⁹ What could be called a strong *division of labour* characterizes the field of Bourdieu studies in Japan. Each leading scholar examines one or two of Bourdieu's concepts, theories and approaches, using original texts. Komatsuda

Yoshisada, for instance, has examined the theoretical implications of Bourdieu's concepts, principally *stratégie* and *champs*, and Yasuda Takashi has published a number of explanatory works regarding Bourdieu's ideas on *violence symbolique* and *habitus*. Miyajima Takashi has studied cultural reproduction and inequality, and in his recent works inquired into the social exclusion of ethnic minorities in Japanese education, while Yamada Masayuki focuses solely on aspects of *pratique* and its relationship to the development of the field of self-education. Using an analogy from the field of religious manuscripts, each scholar's understanding of the concepts to which he has devoted himself is specific and concrete. However, the field of study lacks any effort to mitigate the differences between the conceptual and theoretical understandings of each individual scholar.

The strong division of labour is not unique to the characteristics of the study field of Bourdieu's theory. In fact, the history of the development of intellectual thought in the West and in Japan has suggested to a number of scholars the possibility of the existence of different conceptions of time and order. For example, Ogino Masahiro recently proposed that thinkers in the West have advanced the development of their philosophical ideas by a process of ongoing challenges to existing thought; ideas were only accepted once they had been 'challenged and sublimated'.¹⁰ The result was, in his view, a linear development of thought over time. Ogino was developing an idea that Maruyama Masao had earlier suggested, namely that the field of Japanese philosophy has lacked any real process of challenge and sublimation, and that Japanese scholars 'simply affect a spatial rearrangement' of ideas.¹¹ This has enabled and enables various philosophical ideas to coexist simultaneously and timelessly, without any unity. In practice, the division of labour within the study field has contributed to making it possible for each scholar to establish his own field of speciality and, at the same time, to collaborate with other scholars without any danger of conflict.

Needless to say, a similar tendency also imbues the field of Japanese sociology. Yamanouchi Kenshi, developing a view advanced thirty years earlier by Aso Makoto, regards one field of sociology of education as lacking in any consensus on an overarching framework, with a resulting restriction on the accumulation of research developing consistently, something that in turn has prevented it from developing into a systematic field of study.¹² A general lack of effort to challenge prior ideas has led this field only to adopt existing ideas, but not to integrate them or attempt 'the creation of new, overcoming' ideas.¹³ Ogino considers that this tendency could be taken to mean that the Japanese field of social science as a whole has long had post-modern characteristics, and it has even become trapped in post-modernity.

Whether modern Japanese philosophy should or should not be considered essentially post-modern is not the point here. That this view is advanced in Japan is what should be noted here. When it comes to criticizing the assignation of any postmodern characteristics to the Japanese field of social study, I do not claim that it should become either more modernized or more westernized.¹⁴ What is noteworthy is that there exists a degree of consensus that modernist assumptions are already deeply rooted in Japanese thought. Ideas regarding Japanese society have been constructed in conversation with the academic discourse of western modernism. The intellectual historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki writes:

The dualism between "West" and "East" emerged from a worldview which was integrally related to the structure of nineteenth-century European thought, and the idea of enduring, integrated ethnic "cultures" grew from attempts to apply the models of classical western science to the study of societies. Analyses which try to use the category "Japanese culture" as a means of escaping the grasp of the Modern western worldview seem therefore to be destined to find themselves, after many speculations and struggles, still trapped within the extended hand of a self-defined "western modernity" (Morris-Suzuki 1995: 775)

Japanese scholars have studied western thought, and western ideas have been influential in Japan. But what I find important in Morris-Suzuki's work is the disturbing implications of the combination of the two trends -modernist assumptions that are already deeply rooted in Japanese social studies, and the timeless coexistence of ideas. The timeless aspect of the reception of ideas has only been possible when western theories do not influence a field of Japanese social studies in their entirety.¹⁵ Components of theories are deprived of the intellectual contexts in which they were formulated, and function in Japan merely as analytical tools. The unconscious construction of modernist characteristics in Japanese social studies, in the notion of the differentiation of 'Japanese culture' or 'Japanese society' from Western worldviews, renders it immune from any overall criticism directed toward modernism.

Bourdieu's critics of modernism in the field of education

In the modernist discourse, education is said to make it possible for anyone to achieve any social position, regardless of his or her social origin. Everyone is assumed to be free to achieve a life they value, and everyone has an equal right to do so. This line of thinking goes hand in hand with the idea of human capital. Education augments individuals' value as labour, which leads one to achieve one's social position according to economic relations. Different jobs lead individuals to accumulate different amounts of economic capital, which is used to pursue one's freedom in consumption¹⁶ On this basis, education is presumed to deconstruct social hierarchies constructed in the past. In this sense, the proliferation of educational opportunity is seen as a policy, which directly results in the reduction of social inequality; it indicates that social inequality persists due to institutionalized inequality of opportunity. On the other hand, difference in individuals' achievements, which is an expression of naturally distributed difference in talent, is considered justifiable. As a result, social competition in terms of merit has become ever more inclusive. Surely, there are social groups, which are facing systematic social exclusion. Given a situation of persisting gender inequality, discrimination against sexual minorities, and racism (among other examples of inequality), the process of inclusion via equality of opportunity requires even more effort to bring it to fruition. However, it is increasingly apparent that the result of inclusive social selection still remains biased as socio-cultural.

Empirical studies show that individuals who are born into a privileged socio-cultural environment tend to be more advantaged, and those born in unfavorable socio-cultural environment tend to remain disadvantaged, in the practice of 'meritocratic selection'.¹⁷ This occurs because the principle of equality of opportunity does not, by itself, specify when exactly people have equality of opportunity.¹⁸ Especially under the principle of the substantive version of equality of opportunity i.e. *Fair Equality of Opportunity*, he or she needs to be qualified to have equal opportunity for a given social good. Owing to the fact that social competitions for economic capital via jobs and social competitions for the right qualifications for a given job do not happen at the same time in one's life, there is necessarily a degree of path-dependency between the two. In practice, a series of competitions for qualifications brings individuals back to their socio-cultural environment at birth. Despite their essential significance at a practical level in everyday life, modernists disregard temporality and socio-cultural characteristics of individuals for the sake of *rationality*. The gap between what equality of opportunity promises and how it functions in practice suggests that integrative policies with the idea of equality of opportunity functions as a translator of innate socio-cultural inequality to individuals' competence, while making the mechanism of perpetuating existing social inequality invisible.¹⁹ In short, from a modernist perspective, social struggles in everyday life are invisible, concealed with the logic of free and equal individuals: the idea of equality of opportunity exerts an ideological effect in practice.²⁰

Bourdieu was one of the first sociologists to criticize the assumption that the proliferation of educational opportunity results in a reduction of social inequality.²¹ He stated that a social belief in meritocratic achievements constructed social competitions as if they were:

Roulette, which holds out the opportunity of winning a lot of money in a short space of time, and therefore of changing one's social status quasi-instantaneously, and in which the winning of the previous spin of the wheel can be staked and lost at every new spin, gives a fairly accurate image of this imaginary universe of perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, without heredity or acquired properties, in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one, every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and every prize can be attained, instantaneously, by everyone, so that at each moment anyone can become anything. (Bourdieu 1986: 83)

In this passage, Bourdieu precisely identifies the ideological characteristics of equality of opportunity, given rise to with the lack of specificity of timing. In his research regarding the field of education, Bourdieu aimed at uncovering the role played by a hidden assumption embedded in the idea of an equality of opportunity in the process of the justification of existing social inequality – that meritocratic achievement derives from individuals' natural attributes such as competence, diligence and talent.²² Bourdieu points out that the results of social selection embody a strong class-bias in France, however such bias is naturalized with the logic of individual achievement on the basis of merit. In this sense, we can say that *misrecognition* of equality of opportunity is vital for Bourdieu's overall theory of social inequality formulated in the framework of *habitus*.

The field of justice study assumes that every time an individual faces an opportunity, he/she blindly takes it. Instead, Bourdieu considers that agents reflect on relevant factors, such as the chances of success, the cost of trying and the risk of failure, in order to decide whether to attempt or not, on each occasion they may be faced with a given opportunity. This reflection, generated via *habitus* – a schematic generator of perception, disposition and practice, is expressed in terms of individual *aspiration*.²³ On the one hand, teachers, who are inclined to meritocratic values, tend to find students who also place significance on meritocratic achievements, motivated, diligent, naturally talented or gifted. This is to say that students who have a similar disposition to the teachers tend to succeed in the meritocratic selection process – *cultural reproduction*. By reflecting the results in social competitions onto their amount of talent or effort, individuals constantly adjust their aspirations to a reasonable and realistic level – *symbolic violence*.²⁴ By definition, *habitus* corresponds to an individual's position in a social hierarchy; in this sense, each individual perceives the same opportunity differently depending on her ever-changing social position. In other words, different socio-cultural groups enjoy different 'social realities of possibility' on the basis of their *habitus*.²⁵ Opportunity is formally available for everyone, although perceived chances of success or failure are individually different depending on one's socio-cultural origin. This leads to the conclusion that people reproduce and perpetuate the social hierarchy, exactly by trying to achieve the life they value.²⁶ This is also to say that individuals justify the existence of social inequality while exerting effort to achieve the life they aspire.

A modernist paradigm constructed

As in France, academic certificates function as a certificate of individual competence in contemporary Japanese society. Takeuchi (1995) shows that the graduates of the most prestigious university in Japan do not earn as much as the graduates of the most prestigious university in France. However, the low economic profitability of academic certificates does not mean it has

low symbolic value. The ones who have more socially sought-after academic certificates in Japan tend to get more socially prestigious and politically influential jobs.²⁷ Prior to the 1950s, the sector of the population that was able to enjoy tertiary education was limited to those individuals coming from affluent families, who were often related to the families of the highest social class – the Samurai-class and the rich merchant families of the feudal era (1603-1886)²⁸ The distinction between the rich and the poor, and the noble and the commoner in the feudal era, had shifted its logic of domination from this lineage to that of academic competence by the 1950s.²⁹ Since then, social competitions on the basis of merit have gradually and steadily involved almost every Japanese citizen. In 2014, eighty per cent of high-school graduates went into higher education.³⁰ As no one is formally denied his or her right to choose to proceed to tertiary education, the logic of academic achievement as an expression of individuals' competence is also applied to those who choose not to or cannot choose to proceed to tertiary education.

Given the common social function, which education fulfill in Japan and in France, it seems adequate to apply Bourdieu's theory of social inequality to the Japanese context to study how it actually works.³¹ However, as soon as we inquire into the existing research, which applies Bourdieu's theory to study social inequality, an asymmetrical development is immediately noticeable. As previously mentioned, habitus theory underpins the explanation of the process of perpetuating social inequality with the theory of cultural reproduction and symbolic domination in a society; they are two sides of the same habitus coin. Regardless of its inseparability, the field of study in Japan exerts much energy in studying cultural reproduction theory; it has almost completely neglected the aspect of symbolic domination.³² The general lack of reflexivity between cultural reproduction and symbolic violence is most apparent in the formulation of *the role of school*. Bourdieu depicted the school as a *field* where symbolic violence is legitimately exercised. Education contributes to translating class-based distinctions among students into a universally accepted *logic of domination*.³³ On the contrary, among Japanese scholars, the school is assumed to be an apparatus, which 'teaches' habitus or, rather, at which students 'obtain' habitus. It is to say that cultural capital is understood as it means human capital in cultural skills, probably due to a limit imposed on to the field of the sociology of education as a whole.

Sociology of education

One of the classic topics in the field of the sociology of education in Japan has been the correlation between the opportunity to obtain education and social class. More recently the impact of education and social mobility has been added to this focus. The establishment of the Social Stratification and Mobility (SSM) Survey in 1955 and the field of the economics of education in the 1960s attracted strong attention to the topic of *gakureki* or 'educational background'. Within this research paradigm, Japanese scholars have been dominantly interested in Bourdieu's theory so as to study the Japanese educational system in relation to social stratification and mobility. The prevailing tendency of post-modernity to the field of Bourdieu's study indicates that his overall theory exists in Japan as a *discursive totality in discourses*. This enables each scholar to examine the applicability of Bourdieu's concepts to the Japanese context without referring to the social mechanisms that he seeks to explain with his over-all theory of social inequality.

The SSM survey has accumulated data, including participants' occupations, educational and social background, social networks, cultural consumption patterns and political orientations. The collected data is reorganized into a skill-based hierarchy of occupational prestige; the focus of the SSM study remains underpinned by its strong interests in employment relations. This is to say that the nature of social class is already prescribed as being determined by economic relations in the SSM study. Similarly, Bourdieu categorized social class on the basis of occupational groups and then connected such groups with a certain life style; there is a degree of economic determinism

rooted in Bourdieu's categorization of social class.³⁴ This criticism toward a hidden modernist assumption embedded even in Bourdieu's idea does not seem to affect the Japanese field of study. In fact, it methodologically escapes from a criticism of objective imposition of social hierarchy from researchers to research subjects; the hierarchy of job prestige, which lays the foundation of social stratification and mobility in the SSM study, is structured on the basis of the survey participants' evaluations of different jobs.³⁵ Nevertheless, the SSM study assumes that everyone in a society shares one view of the hierarchy of job prestige, and rationally seeks to find their social positions accordingly. I note that this assumption is empirically false.³⁶ In addition, the view of society in this field of study assumes economic functionality; individuals are understood as workers in capitalism within a nation-state.

Within this framework, the leading scholars of social stratification study Hara Junsuke and Seiyama Kazuo (2005) argue that Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory is not applicable to Japanese cases:

the theory of cultural reproduction argues merely that a certain cultural style possessed by family affects the level of educational attainment to some extent. Cultural capital is nothing more than a collection of vague variables which may be called a 'household cultural environment'. (...) (E)ven if cultural capital intervenes, the mediation of academic background will work to weaken reproduction. The importance of academic background as a means of landing upper stratus-type jobs has not declined, but rather increased. Japan is becoming more education-conscious society. (...) Becoming increasingly education-conscious society means that educational opportunities have expanded, which is contrary to reproduction. (Hara and Seiyama 2005: 56-57)

When capitalism is seen as an essential aspect of human society, social research loses the perspective to grasp human beings from outside the context of capitalism. From a capitalist point of view, education appears necessary to prepare individuals to acquire necessary skills as labour. In this sense, the integrative policies to proliferate equality of opportunity of education appear to be positive, because they maximize the number of potential workers by treating everyone equally productive. To keep capitalist value in social reality unquestioned, Bourdieu's theory to analyze the data from the SSM study must refrain from examining the nature of social class in Japan and also in perceiving the modernist imposition of capitalist value through education as a case of symbolic domination.

The field of Bourdieu's study

As a sub-section of the sociology of education, there are scholars who study the field of education with Bourdieu's theory. However, the general lack of reflexivity between the theory of cultural reproduction and of symbolic violence is apparent even in this field, as the following example demonstrates. Given the fact that his works, especially his translation of Bourdieu's works and explanatory books of Bourdieu's concepts are widely read among the Japanese scholars of Bourdieu's theory, the following example could be seen as a critical one. One of the leading scholars of Bourdieu's study, Miyajima Takashi (1999, 2003) has briefly explained that students who belong to ethnic minority groups are poor achievers in the Japanese schooling system due to their 'lack' of Japanese language skills and consequently reproduce their parents' low positions in the social strata in Japan. Following Bourdieu, Miyajima defined culture as the symbolic expression of values and habitus in the form of resources or capital. He considers that the social hierarchy expresses itself via culture and at the same time functions as a standard of social evaluation, which is conveyed through education. However, if habitus is the foundation of social class structure as Bourdieu considers, it seems inadequate to talk about habitus based on ethnicity. It might

be caused by Miyajima's effort to be faithful to the original texts. However, I find Miyajima's framing of linguistic-ethnic minorities problematic in the same way that Bourdieu was criticized for his socio-economic determinism rooted in his formulation of social class. In my view, this type of work shows an ethnic or national determinism. The premise underlining Miyajima's statement is that the Japanese schooling system selects students who possess a certain kind of cultural capital. Needless to say, it is necessary to possess a certain kind of cultural capital to succeed in the Japanese schooling system, as elsewhere.³⁷ However, what he means by 'lack' is, in fact, a qualitative issue, because he argues that it is necessary for minorities to 'adapt' their habitus. Differently put, he argues that the minority always has the wrong kind of habitus, and they should adapt to the right kind of 'Japanese' habitus via education in Japan.

Vester (2003) argues that habitus undergoes transformation. However, such transformation occurs as a result of fundamental social changes, for example general increases in the standard of living or trends towards mass education. While the hierarchical relationship between each class habitus remain unchanged, the characteristics of each class habitus may transform. Habitus transformation for Vester (2003) does not have the same implications as in the works of Miyajima. As long as ethnic determinism requires such integrative political projects, the question 'how to integrate ethnic minorities to the Japanese schooling system' remains very similar to the question 'how to culturally dominate ethnic minorities in Japanese schooling more effectively'. The understanding of the role of school as an institution to teach the right habitus to students does not acknowledge the socio-cultural differences of individuals. Moreover, it assumes the existence of 'Japanese habitus', which, in fact, does not exist. At first, I must note that it seems impossible for people to 'adapt' their habitus. Nonetheless, requiring someone to adopt a different habitus is clearly a form of domination, especially in the case that no changes in the social structure itself have been made.

Bourdieu's theory has been criticized in Japan for its strong French orientation. For instance, Japanese entrance examinations require, not like those illustrated by Bourdieu in French cases, very factual knowledge; the cultural selection of students in school seems not applicable to Japanese field of education. The result is that the structural differences between French and Japanese institutions appear remarkable. Ogino writes:

Naturally, the concept of class exists in Japan as it does elsewhere, and inequalities are seen and studied as the major problems they are. However, Japan lacked the strength of (philosophical) foundation to handle Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. As a result, debate about Bourdieu's theories in Japan was characterized by considerable emphasis on whether or not Japan's cultures were as deeply rooted in class as they are in France. (Ogino 2013: 98)

In short, the common functional mechanisms regarding social structure have been almost entirely ignored.³⁸ This occurs because Japanese scholars of Bourdieu's theory have reconstructed Bourdieu's theory hermeneutically and faithfully with the original works of Bourdieu. The effort to assimilate the underlying structure of social inequality in Japan via Bourdieu's sociological establishment has been absent. The criticism is plausible as a means to explain why the reception and influence of the theory of symbolic domination remain limited in Japan. However, when we link the criticism to the popularity of the theory of cultural reproduction, it loses its plausibility. I argue that this criticism contributed to separating Bourdieu's theory from its French social context, and a part of his theory has been appropriated to the Japanese context as a mere analytical tool.

The asymmetrical development can be explained by the fact that Japanese scholars have been reluctant to tackle the topic of symbolic domination in the combination of the myth of the egalitarian nature of Japanese society and strong political interests in education. Shirahase (2014: 3-4)

writes 'There has been a strong belief of egalitarianism in Japan', and Miyajima (1992) pointed out twenty years earlier that belief in egalitarianism kept the sociology of education in Japan from approaching the questions of stratification and education. Consequently, the focus of applications of Bourdieu's approach has been mainly directed to patterns of cultural reproduction and cultural consumption, but not to symbolic violence. As a result, the asymmetrical development of Bourdieu's study is contributing to reproducing post-modernist tendencies in Japanese academia. The myth of egalitarianism has slowly dissolved since Tachibanaki (1998: cited in Shirahase 2014) and Sato (2000), and the field of stratification study has greatly contributed to elucidating patterns of mobilization and stratification in Japanese society. Regardless of these trends in one field of sociological study, it is still apposite to ask whether the question of the existence of class structure in Japan is reflected upon in any way in the field of Bourdieu studies. This in turn led Japanese educational sociologists to measure the impact of investments in education on overall national economic growth.³⁹ More recently, Kondo (2011, 2012) has pointed out that the sociology of education in Japan has focused on measuring the impact of educational policies and educational systems for students' academic achievements. Strong political interests, rooted in the research framework, contributed to creating a tendency to avoid any politically critical aspects of underlying theory.⁴⁰ In other words, despite its long-term interest in social stratification, the research agenda has shelved analysis of 'the situation of social stratification in a society as a whole'.⁴¹

There are scholars who grasp the role of the educational system as a system for social selection, though it has not been sufficiently emphasized. Applying the method used by Bourdieu, Kondo (2012) convincingly shows, on an empirical basis, the influence of students' cultural capital on the process of academic achievement has been underestimated. In this sense, fundamental questions regarding meritocracy in terms of symbolic violence are generally ignored.⁴² To sum up, asymmetrical developments have constructed a research paradigm, and the paradigm makes it very difficult for scholars to tackle the topic of symbolic violence. I would like to emphasize again that this tendency of a piece-meal appropriation does not contribute to producing a relevant tool for understanding the mechanism of persisting social inequality in the contemporary social world, but rather, it will contribute to making it invisible.⁴³

New developments

Besides its applicability to the Japanese context, Bourdieu's theory has been criticized due to its structural determinism in Japan. The scholars of Bourdieu's study have advanced their discussions and developed new approaches worldwide, including Japan, so as to overcome these criticisms. Criticism of the habitus theory for its applicability to other cultural contexts is relevant to the fact that Bourdieu did not develop a systematic methodological tool to confirm the existence of the reproduction of habitus.⁴⁴ This renders it difficult for other researchers to examine the process of perpetuation of social inequality that he suggested, and to make comparisons in different geographical areas and also over different time periods. Since the 1980s, there have been a number of projects aiming to construct a systematic methodology based on Bourdieu's work, including the *milieu approach*.⁴⁵ In Japan *Geometric Social Space Analysis* has been carried out by Kondo (2011, 2012). The research is posited on Bourdieu's account of habitus, and reconstructs the distribution of social spaces quantitatively. Higuchi et al. (2010) applied the *milieu approach* developed in Germany to the Japanese context. Their approach is a reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory of habitus based on Durkheim's concept of *milieu*.⁴⁶ The introduction of Bourdieu's methodological approach greatly contributes to demonstrating the applicability of habitus theory to other cultural contexts.

The *milieu approach* also suggests the possibility of overcoming the criticism of structural

determinism. This criticism derives from Bourdieu's framing of social class; he categorized occupation types as social class and then later connected each category to life styles. His way of framing social class and life style, mediated by the concept of habitus, is inspiring, yet, ultimately too simplistic. Rehbein and Souza (2014, pp. 16-17) suggest overcoming this criticism by using the concepts of *symbolic universe* and *social reality*. Symbolic universe is a concept, which grasps the nature of social inequality among the 'free and equal' citizens ideologically defined in democracy and capitalism. They explain:

Socioeconomic parameters and rank no longer allow for predictions of an individual's life-style, let alone concrete choices in everyday life. We agree that predictions of this kind, including the ones made by Bourdieu (1984), are empirically incorrect. What is worse, they contribute to the invisibility of the mechanisms reproducing inequality. It is precisely the apparent individualization that makes these mechanisms functional. It goes hand in hand with a recruitment for important positions, which is apparently based on merit. (...) Any reality check confirms these stereotypes because they have been embodied by the individuals in their respective social environments. Thereby, the traits mentioned are naturalized together with their negative value (Souza 2009). This is why the symbolic universe magically fits social reality even though it is not intentionally constructed by the ruling class for the purpose of domination. (Rehbein and Souza 2014: 22-23)

The international field of social inequality study still places its focus mostly on the distributive disparity between different groups of people caused by inequality of opportunity. In fact, recent studies of social inequality predominantly channel their analytical focus to socio-economic factors, especially *income*. The analysis of income variable necessarily leads us to observe economic disparities among different groups of people in a society within a lifetime. The result has been that the meaning of social inequality, which indicates qualitative differences of social values, has been diminished to indicate straightforward economic disparities.⁴⁷ Linking this academic trend to the emerging social reality of neo-liberalism, under which economic disparity has come to be considered more and more justifiable by upholding the notion of meritocracy, we cannot avoid the conclusion that social science has contributed to concealing and justifying social inequality under the guise of equality and fair selection.

Exclusion of one or more social groups from participating in a social competition, which is clearly a form of social discrimination, has been condemned as unjust. As a result, social competition is becoming more and more inclusive. The inclusive nature of social competition leads the participants to exclude themselves from having an opportunity. It is to say that when one does not have the correct qualifications, one does not have an opportunity for the job. As the opportunity for qualifications is *theoretically* available for everyone, no one is excluded from attaining qualification, by law. This means that it is the applicant herself who achieves the state of not having an opportunity in the education system. The benefits of winning and the cost of loss in social competitions are internalized and endured by individuals themselves, projected on the basis of their own amount of talent⁴⁸ or effort⁴⁹. In this sense, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence has become ever more relevant.

Conclusion

From 2001 onwards, the academic environment in Japan for the application of Bourdieu's theory has, slowly but steadily, improved. Today, more major works by Bourdieu are available in the Japanese language, and the number of articles related to the work of Bourdieu has also increased.

However, the modernist paradigm constructed in the field of the sociology of education, places considerable limits on the comprehensive development of Bourdieu studies in Japan. The post-modern characteristic of Japanese academia has made it possible for scholars to establish their own fields of specialization and to cooperate with one another without conflict. What is more striking in the development of the reception of Bourdieu is that the theories of cultural reproduction and symbolic violence have been adopted separately as analytic tools, without any reflexivity between them and without any hermeneutical consideration to the overarching theory of habitus. The vicious circle formed by the existence of strong political interests in measuring the impact of educational policy and the myth of the egalitarian society, has contributed to attracting scholars' attention to cultural reproduction, and to the construction of a research paradigm. This research paradigm, I argue, has effectively prevented the theory of symbolic violence from attracting interest. Consequently, despite a long-term interest in social stratification, the field of the sociology of education has shelved the analysis of 'the situation of social stratification in a society as a whole'. As my contribution to furthering the field of social inequality study in Japan, I introduced two new developments in sociology using Bourdieu's approach. One is a methodological development regarding the reconstruction of social space; the other is a conceptual development to overcome the criticism toward the structural determinism in Bourdieu's theories. My conclusion is that the application of Bourdieu's approaches, i.e. symbolic violence, dialectics, reflexive sociology, and a practical grasp of social class, as such, remains regrettably limited in Japan. I argue that the study of Bourdieu in Japan should open up to new developments in the field with the resulting possibility of producing a relevant tool for understanding the nature of social inequality in today's Japan.

Notes

¹See Bourdieu et al. (1991) and Bourdieu (1998)

²See Bourdieu (1998: 13)

³Here I must note that it may be premature to maintain that the practices of meritocratic elite selection in these two countries share similarities, especially because the Japanese field of sociology has not sufficiently verified the mechanism of how education contributes to justifying and perpetuating existing structures of social inequality. In fact, Kondo (2012) provides us with the only study, which actually focused on the construction of symbolic spaces in Japan in order to check the 'different relative weights' of various capitals. The field of the sociology of education in Japan still puts its main focus on measuring how strong the embedded bias is.

⁴Ishii published a very similar but less detailed version of the article in Japanese as an introduction of '*Power of Culture: Reflexive Bourdieu*' (2003)

⁵These eighteen books are *Les Héritiers* (1964), *Rapport Pédagogique Et Communication* (1965), *Un Art Moyen* (1965), *L'Amour de l'Art* (1966), *Le Métier de Sociologue* (1968), *Algérie 60* (1977), *La Reproduction* (1970), *L'Ontologie Politique de Martin Heidegger* (1976), *La Distinction* (1979), *Le Sens Pratique* (1980), *Questions de Sociologie* (1980), *Ce que parler veut dire* (1982), *Homo Academicus* (1984), *Choses Dites* (1987), *Les Règles de l'Art* (1992), *Lonre-Echange* (1994), *Sur la Télévision* (1996), and *Contre-feux* (1998).

⁶Kato Haruhisa translated and published *Propos sur le Champ Politique* together with Fujimoto Kazuisa in 2003, *Raisons Pratiques* in 2007 with Ishii, Miura and Yasuda, *Méditations Pascaliennes* in 2009, *Science de la Science et Réflexivité in 2010*, *Esquisse pour une Auto-Analyse* in 2011; Mizushima Kazunori translated and published *Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* in 2007, *The Mystery of Ministry* in 2009; *La Noblesse d'État* was translated by Tachibana Hidehiro in 2012.

⁷Yomiuri Shimbun database: *Yomidasu rekishikan* (Accessed on June 5th 2014)

⁸CiNii database includes the holdings of National Diet Libraries, National Institute of Informatics, and Universities and other research institutes. It holds the data of 16 million academic articles and 120 million books. See http://ci.nii.ac.jp/info/files/ja/CiNii_pamphlet.pdf

⁹See Nori (2001: 53)

¹⁰Ogino (2013: 101)

¹¹Maruyama (1983: 12: cited in Ogino 2013: 101) See also Maruyama (2013: 6) and Morris-Suzuki (2005, p. 44-45)

¹²Also (1964) and Yamanouchi (1994)

¹³Maruyama (2013) criticized the tradition of 'timelessness coexistence' because it lacks the effort to assess and create a logical coherency in the enormous amount of ideas and thoughts that have been accumulated throughout history. Ogino (2013: 101) wrote 'The lack of a historical unifier that enables the sequencing of philosophy inevitably creates a situation where philosophy can only exist as a variance without unity'.

¹⁴The idea of linear time and its assumption of history as a development toward a better model of society or science are only one of the assumptions deeply rooted in the modernist theories that developed during the European enlightenment. See Rehbein and Souza (2014)

¹⁵Maruyama (2013: 14) pointed out that the only thought that such characteristics of Japanese philosophy rejects are ideas that require the fundamental revision of the timelessness and coexistence of ideas, e.g. Christianity in the Meiji era and Marxism in the Taisho era.

¹⁶Rehbein and Souza (2014)

¹⁷For example, see Bourdieu (1996), Bok (2010), Hart (2014)

¹⁸Criticism of equality of opportunity on its timing, see McKerlie (1989) and Sachs (2012)

¹⁹This is suggested in the work of Bourdieu (1996), Sachs (2012), Rehbein and Souza (2014) among other works.

²⁰Lebaron and Le Roux (2015) agree on this point.

²¹Swartz (1997: 190)

²²For instance, in the Forms of Capital (1986), in the State Nobility (1996) and Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (2000)

²³Swartz (1997: 103)

²⁴See McDonough (1997). Readjustment is based on, for example, their grade, etc.

²⁵In Higley (2012)'s term. He uses the term milieu for this 'social reality of possibility'.

²⁶Rehbein (2011a) elaborates this point. To live a socially valued life, people need access to resources and options. The values of life-style and required resources and options for its realization are differently constructed in different social spaces.

²⁷Such as in the government, the large cooperation and Takeuchi (1995) and Hara and Seiyama (2005)

²⁸See Ohashi (1972), Takeuchi (1995) and Hara and Seiyama (2005)

²⁹See Howland (2002)

³⁰See its trend since 1960 at: <http://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/gaiyo/yusikisha/20141120/2-03-01.pdf> (Accessed on 4th December 2015)

³¹Even though the social function of education seems similar, it is necessary to study its mechanism empirically. This is because the socio-cultural setting is historically constructed, therefore, necessarily heterogeneous. That is to say, the mechanism of social function, under which education fulfill its social function must be different from the one in France. See Rehbein and Souza (2014).

³²Ogino (2013: 104) agrees on this point. He writes; 'Bourdieu studies the way symbolic power struggles are played out through culture in modern society. In Japan, however, the power struggle part is removed from his theory. Thus, the viewpoint that a linking for a certain culture is a differentiation strategy is removed, and all that remains is an emphasis on the fact that cultural capital is only valid in certain fields.'

³³Bourdieu: *State Nobility* (1996)

³⁴See Vester (2003: 30).

³⁵It is called Occupational Prestige Score. For detailed explanation, see: http://srdq.hus.osaka-u.ac.jp/PDF/SMM1995_r5_3.pdf. The questionnaire used in the survey is available at: http://srdq.hus.osaka-u.ac.jp/metadata.cgi?lang=en&page=s_view&sid=9

³⁶As Flyvbjerg (1998) convincingly argues with his empirical studies, the results of rational thinking are individually different.

³⁷Takeuchi (1995)'s work helps us to see this point clearly.

³⁸Nori (2001: 54) criticized this point

³⁹Ushioji (1984)

⁴⁰Ogino (2013: 104-106) pointed out the similar tendency in the reception of Baudrillard's theory.

⁴¹Kariya (2004: quoted in Kondo, 2012)

⁴²Without any critical tone, Yasuda (1998) introduced the concept to Japanese readers. Symbolic violence was explained separately from other theories and concepts, such as cultural reproduction and habitus.

⁴³Recently, criticizing the modernist assumptions, Rehbein and Souza (2014: 25) argue that such a technocratic approach makes the mechanism of production and perpetuation of social inequality naturalized and, therefore, invisible.

⁴⁴This was intentional, because of his emphasis on reflexivity in sociology. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (2004), Bourdieu argues that the concept of habitus is more a method than a theory and he wished his readers to read his *Distinction* and *State Nobility* as exercise books.

⁴⁵For examples of such works, see Vester (2003), Kondo (2011), Rehbein (2011b), Lamont (2012) and most recently Savage et al. (2013).

⁴⁶The milieu approach has been developed in Germany under the influence of Bourdieu's works and British cultural studies, and supported by the Volkswagen Foundation since 1987. The development of the approach aims

at making it possible to apply Bourdieu's thoughts to other national contexts than the French. See Vester (2003: 25-26). The Sinus Institute has applied the *milieux approach* to 28 countries over the last 30 years, and its methods and data have been continuously updated. See Sinus Institute (2014): <http://www.sinus-institut.de/en/solutions/sinus-meta-milieux.html>

⁴⁷As an example, I suggest to considering the caste system in India. The social hierarchy of the past transforms itself into economic disparity among individuals in contemporary society; see Baviskar and Ray (2011)

⁴⁸For instance, such an argument is found in France, see Bourdieu (1996)

⁴⁹In the case of Japan, see Takeuchi (1995)

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