

## **Disaster preparedness in Japan: the hybrid politics of '*kyojo* [mutual aid]'**

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## Abstract

This is an interdisciplinary study that looks at the intersection between preparedness for natural disasters, the current Japanese policy reforms and disaster politics. Preparing the population for disaster scenarios is progressively becoming an educational agenda for every government because of increasing and diversifying risks and threats worldwide. Conceptually, ‘preparedness’ is a ‘pedagogical’ strategy, which allows different interpretations. In Japan, one particular policy discourse which has widely been utilised in the area of disaster preparedness particularly since the Tohoku disaster of 2011 is what this article calls ‘the aid structure’ – ‘kojo [public aid]’, ‘jijo [self-help]’ and ‘gojo/kyojo [mutual aid]’. Diverging from existing studies on disaster politics which tend to focus on the association between disasters and neo-liberalism, this article sheds light on the ‘hybrid’ nature of the Japanese government’s approach which equally emphasises ‘moral conservative’ values. The article probes the role of the policy framework of the four forms of aid, particularly that of ‘kyojo’, as a pedagogical strategy in the current hybrid disaster preparedness. The article aims to make a contribution in the fields of disaster preparedness and disaster politics by offering an illustration of a variation of politics of disaster preparedness from one of the most disaster-prone countries.

## Keywords

Disaster preparedness, disaster politics, neo-liberalism, moral conservatism, Japan, the aid structure

## 1. Introduction

This is an interdisciplinary study that looks at the intersection between preparedness for natural disasters, the current Japanese policy reforms and disaster politics. Preparing the population for disaster scenarios – whether manmade or natural – is progressively becoming an educational agenda for every government because of increasing and diversifying risks and threats worldwide. Preparedness for disasters has been discussed within the field of disaster management through what is referred to as ‘the disaster cycle’. ‘Preparedness’ means a pre-disaster stage in which governments prepare their populations for emergency scenarios, although governments define the cycle slightly differently. For example, the Japanese version comprises three phases – ‘prevention/preparedness’, ‘emergency response’ and ‘recovery’ (Cabinet Office 2015); whereas in New Zealand (MCDEM 2015), ‘the 4Rs’ – ‘reduction’, ‘readiness’, ‘response’ and ‘recovery’ – have been applied suggesting there are two pre-disaster phases.

This article treats the term ‘preparedness’ broadly to encompass governments’ efforts to educate the populations in preventing and reducing disaster impacts, as well as raising their readiness for disasters. Thus, conceptually, as Preston (2008, 469) indicates, ‘preparedness’ is a ‘*pedagogical (or andragogical)*’ strategy – like other synonyms such as ‘civil defence’, ‘homeland security’ and ‘civil contingency’ – but ‘rarely pedagogical in a didactic sense’. Consequently, these terms have allowed various ‘behavioural’<sup>1</sup>, ‘emotional’<sup>2</sup> and ‘cognitive’<sup>3</sup> interpretations. Some examples of such interpretations are introduced in this article. Disaster preparedness programmes are undertaken in both formal and informal settings and include what is called ‘disaster prevention education [bosai kyoiku]’ in Japan.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Duck and Cover’ drills used in the US to instruct children to adopt the ‘atomic clutch position’ in the event of a nuclear attack and hide under their desks (Grossman 2001 cited in Preston 2008, 469).

<sup>2</sup> The 2005 DfES publication ‘Getting over 7/7’ deals with the emotional consequences of past and future terrorist attacks (DfES 2005 cited in Preston 2008, 469).

<sup>3</sup> The short ‘Protect and Survive’ films emphasised knowing what to do in the event of hearing an attack warning (Central Office of Information 1976 cited in Preston 2008, 469).

For Japan that has geographical and meteorological conditions prone to natural disasters, the major national threat has been natural disasters. Recovery is still in process in the Tohoku region after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011. The disaster has prompted public debates as to how the state could best prepare the population for future disasters. One particular policy discourse which has widely been utilised in the area of disaster management is what this article calls ‘the aid structure’ – ‘kojo [public aid]’, ‘jijo [self-help]’, ‘gojo [mutual aid in neighbourhood]’ and ‘kyojo [mutual aid between unfamiliar persons]’. The aid structure is referred to on a daily basis in the media, policy talks and academic research as the key strategy in preparing for future disasters. The purpose of this article is to consider the utilisation of the four forms of aid, particularly that of ‘kyojo’, by the Japanese government in the area of preparedness for natural disasters. By doing so, it is aimed to contribute to the advancement of the field of disaster preparedness.

This article also involves ‘disaster politics’. However, the article diverges from existing studies on disaster or crisis politics which tend to focus on the association between disasters and neo-liberalism. The article sheds light on the ‘hybrid’ nature of the Japanese government’s approach which equally emphasises ‘moral conservative’ (Rear and Jones 2013) principles. The current Abe Administration is exercising the hybrid approach that aims to rebuild ‘a strong nation’ based on neo-liberal principles and ‘beautiful Japan’ promoted through moral conservative values. Highlighting the contradictory nature of the hybrid approach, the article probes the role of the policy framework of four forms of aid as a pedagogical strategy in the current hybrid disaster preparedness. The study thus does not analyse the process of privatisation and marketisation of disaster preparedness policy in the ongoing neo-liberal reform. While rich literature highlighting neo-liberal ‘surveillance, rationality and governmentality’ (Slater 2015, 3) is available in disaster politics studies, they are largely contextualised in the US and the UK. The article also aims to make a contribution in the field of disaster politics by offering an illustration of a variation of politics of disaster preparedness – from one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

Methodologically, data collection and analysis were arranged to examine ‘the aid structure’ in the following way. First, existing academic literature and research in the fields of disaster/crisis politics, disaster management and preparedness, neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism and the aid structure were carefully interrogated to gain an understanding of the key issues and debates relevant to the focus of this article. The rich information available in official websites of the Japanese government was made use in investigating laws, policies and practice of disaster management and preparedness. To supplement the above data made available to the public, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three experts: a policy maker,<sup>4</sup> an academic<sup>5</sup> and a journalist<sup>6</sup>. Their identities are anonymised as ‘a policy maker’, ‘an academic’ and ‘a journalist’ in quoting them in this article. In addition, online resources such as newspaper articles were used to fill any gaps. The collected data were analysed to construct the core narratives of the four sections in the article.

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<sup>4</sup> An official from the ministry of education, who has been involved in disaster education policy development. Interviewed in March 2013.

<sup>5</sup> A professor in disaster management and preparedness, who has extensively written and engaged in civic activities on the topic of the four forms of aid. Interviewed in February 2013.

<sup>6</sup> A journalist from a national broadsheet newspaper, who has covered the stories of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 2011. Interviewed in March 2013.

This article is structured in the following way. The first section reviews the main discussion of disaster politics studies including that of Japan. The next section looks at the recent development of the hybridity of neo-liberal and moral conservative principles in recent Japanese politics, drawing on the research undertaken by Rear and Jones (2013). The section highlights the significance of moral conservative perspectives in the case of Japan. This is followed by a discussion on the processes in which the aid structure has come to be applied in the area of disaster preparedness. Some of the examples of policies and initiatives based on *kojo*, *jijo*, *gojo* and *kyojo* strategies are examined as well. The conclusive section argues that ‘*kyojo*’ is a powerful legitimator, allowing the cohabitation of the two seemingly contradicting ideologies – neo-liberalism and moral conservatism.

## **2. Neo-liberal disaster politics and the case of Japan**

Disaster or crisis politics in relation to neo-liberal reform has been discussed by a number of authors, particularly in the context of the US (e.g. Slater 2015; Dumenil and Levy 2011; Saltman 2007a; Saltman 2007b; Buras 2007). As Slater (2015, 2) indicates, authors such as Lipman (2011) and Dumenil and Levy (2011) regard crises as ‘latent opportunities for social transformation’. However, the major thesis of neo-liberalism in crisis politics seems to be that neo-liberal reformers justify further privatisation as the primary mechanism to capitalise on a crisis – whether it is manmade or natural. According to Saltman (2007b, 1), ‘disaster is providing the means for business to accumulate profit’. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, for example, neo-liberal reformers turned evacuee education into ‘an opportunity for for-profit companies running schools’ (Saltman 2007a, 38). The scenario created in New Orleans spread across the country – the implementation of ‘business councils plan’ (Saltman 2007a, 38) developed between property developers and local governments forced tenants to leave the properties and the public schools that served the urban working class to be closed. Communities hardest hit by crises have come to serve corporate interest.

Focusing on the recovery phase of the disaster cycle, Slater (2015, 2) further develops a theory of ‘recovery’. He argues recovery is ‘an integral mechanism in the process of capital accumulation that bridges crisis to crisis’ so as to secure ‘precarious neoliberal futures’ (Means 2013 cited in Slater 2015, 2). ‘Recovery is crucial to the reproduction and entrenchment of neoliberalism because it exploits the exigency of recovery for those most affected by crises, while simultaneously enclosing possibilities grounded in alternative ethics (Slater 2015, 3).’ Whilst creating crises, neo-liberals legitimise neo-liberal reform as the only solution for recovery (Klein 2007 cited in Slater 2015, 3). Thus, for neo-liberals, education is the ideal mechanism of recovery, making communities, schools, teachers and students responsible for their own recovery, but ‘always under the purview of neoliberal surveillance, rationality, and governmentality’ (Slater 2015, 3). Disputing such ‘violent neoliberal exploitation of crisis’, Slater (2015, 3) aims to break the cycle of crisis and recovery, rejecting ‘the neoliberal terms of recovery’.

The perspective to link disasters and neo-liberal capital creation has been identified in Japan, particularly since the publication of *The Shock Doctrine* (Klein 2007). Although its thesis has had mixed reception worldwide, the book has familiarised the notion of ‘disaster capitalism’ to wide audience. In summary, the book describes how free market neo-liberal policies have come to dominate the world through the exploitation of disaster-shocked people and countries. Neo-liberal reformers have used the public’s disorientation following massive collective shocks – wars, terrorism or natural disasters – to achieve control by imposing economic shock therapy.

For example, in the case of the Tohoku disaster of 2011, the Japanese government has once again implemented what is termed ‘creative recovery [sozoteki fukko]’, which had been applied at the time of the Hanshin/Awaji Earthquake in 1995. Responding to the strong request from the economic communities such as the Japan Business Federation [*Keidanren*], the recovery programme has prioritised the rebuilding of the supply chains of global businesses, deregulation in ‘special zones’, privatisation of farming and fishery rights and development of a regional government system. Referring to Klein’s ‘disaster capitalism’, authors such as Yoshihara (2013) and Okada (2013) have argued that the recovery of Tohoku has been the most explicit example of the recovery operated under neo-liberal principles. Okada (2013) goes on to mourn that ‘history has been repeated’ indicating that 90 percent of the recovery markets had been taken by the capitals outside of the damaged area and that ‘creative recovery’ only benefits external large businesses neglecting the rebuilding of victims’ livelihood and the local economy. Thus, it could be argued that in Japan too, disaster capitalism has prevailed through neo-liberal reforms.

It is the argument of this article, however, that such view portrays only half of the reality of the disaster politics in Japan. In parallel with economic capital creation through the application of the Shock Doctrine, the Japanese government has also utilised the notions such as ‘coproduction [kyodo]’ and ‘network [kizuna]’ promoting civic participation and the development of social capital. The next section explores the hybrid approach taken by the Japanese government.

### **3. Hybridity of neo-liberalism and moral conservatism**

For the purpose of this section’s discussion, how the relationship between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism can be understood is briefly looked at. Neo-conservatism is a political philosophy, while neo-liberalism is an economic policy. In other words, neo-liberal policies come under overarching neo-conservative politics. According to a historian of political philosophies Mori (2008 cited in Yukawa 2013), ‘healthy’ neo-conservatism should encompass both the cultural conservative and the neo-liberal dimensions: the former functions as a stabiliser of a society by reinforcing traditional values of family, religion and community, while the latter pursues economic growth promoting ‘a small government’, deregulation and privatisation. A common approach has been that education plays a central part in inculcating neo-conservative values in the population. One of the clear examples is the implementation of compulsory citizenship education in the US and Europe, which aims to develop civic responsibilities and mutual respect in order to enhance social cohesion and national identity. The cultural conservative and the neo-liberal principles are thus supposed to compromise each other in the ‘healthy’ model of neo-conservatism (Yukawa 2013).

In the case of Japan where the Liberal Democratic Party has implemented neo-liberal reforms since the late 1980s promoting deregulation and privatisation (Kingston 2011), neo-conservative ideas have been strongly associated with morality, ethics and spirituality (Okamoto 2001) rather than the citizenship notion.<sup>7</sup> This article therefore refers to the Japanese version of neo-conservatism, ‘moral conservatism’, borrowing Rear and Jones’ (2013) term. It emphasises not only traditional conservative values, but also ‘*kokoro* [heart]’ – which is described as ‘an example par excellence of the Japanese ethos’ (Befu 2001 cited in Rear and Jones 2013, 384). ‘Kokoro’ is an abstract notion which appears often in education policy referring to ‘the spirit of Japanese’ that stresses morality and ethics. It has been widely debated

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the introduction of citizenship education is being discussed amongst the government, academic experts and education professionals.

in Japan that unlike in the US and Europe, neo-liberal policy and moral conservative values have not been fused together (Yukawa 2013; Rear and Jones 2013; Takeshima 2011). In highlighting the contradictory combination of neo-liberalism and moral conservatism, Rear and Jones (2013) identify the language of ‘individual-centered neoliberalism’ and that of ‘group-centered moral conservatism’, examining major policy documents from the MEXT, speeches given by prime ministers and major reports issued by the Japan Business Federation [*Keidanren*] – a representative organisation of large businesses. ‘Individual-centered neoliberalism’ is represented by individuality [*kosei*], creativity and self-reliance, whereas ‘group-centered moral conservatism’ emphasises collectivism, tradition and self-sacrifice. This hybrid approach which combines the two antagonistic philosophies coexists in recent education policies, causing confusion in both educational aims and pedagogies, and possibly in the identities of the Japanese population (Rear and Jones 2013, 388-390).

Neo-liberal language has been apparent in the materials throughout the past two decades, while moral conservative language has increasingly been visible since the second half of the 2000s. The following is an extract from the 2002 education white paper, which includes a number of neo-liberal terminologies:

*One of the main pillars of the educational reforms is the ‘principle of respect for individuality’ (kosei jushi) and, in school education, reforms to promote individualization and diversification are being implemented. However, since Japanese society is strongly oriented to homogeneity, lock-step mentality, school education was apt to place too much emphasis on conformity. It is necessary to provide well-tailored education so that each and every child can develop his or her individuality and ability, while flexibly and proactively responding to social changes (MEXT 2002 cited in Rear and Jones 2013, 382).*

‘Individuality’ and ‘ability [*noryoku*]

 were central to the neo-liberal conception, with a strong pressure from *Keidanren*, which has been influential in educational policy making.<sup>8</sup> ‘Individuality’ intends to foster self-governing and self-directed individuals who are able to take their own responsibilities. ‘Ability’, on the other hand, has a ‘skill connotation’ (Rear and Jones 2013, 383), which is often associated with the term ‘creativity [*sozosei*]’. This can be identified in for example, one of the Prime Minister’s (PM) speeches: ‘As we look to the 21st century, we will continue to pursue a policy stressing individuality and creativity (Hashimoto 1996, 3 cited in Rear and Jones 2013, 383).’ Under PM Koizumi (2001-6), increased risks and disparities prevailed in society producing ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. Although inequalities did not start in Koizumi’s period, they became more recognisable in people’s livelihood being addressed by the media and opposition parties (Kingston 2011).

When Abe became PM for the first time in 2005, he succeeded Koizumi’s neoliberal reforms, but with a stronger emphasis on moral conservative principles to tackle the societal imbalance developed during the time of Koizumi. The solution to the problem for Abe was a reemphasis on traditional values and national identity, merging them with neo-liberal ideas. Abe was proactive in campaigning for his vision through, for examples publications such as *Towards a Beautiful Nation [utsukushii kuni e]* (Abe 2006). He also undertook a controversial revision of

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<sup>8</sup> Keidanren’s (2015) mission includes summarising the requests and proposals of businesses on the wide-ranging priority agendas faced by the economic community and to have dialogues with the administration, trade unions and citizens. Education and training is one of the priority agendas of Keidanren.

the 1947 Fundamental Law of Education asserting that Japan would require a shift from ‘the post-war regime’ and return to patriotic and traditional values (Rear and Jones 2013, 384). In the revised version of the law (MEXT 2006), both neo-liberal notions such as ‘ability’, ‘creativity’, ‘voluntary participation in civic activities [kokyo no seishin]<sup>9</sup>’ and ‘self-discipline [jiritsu]’, and moral conservative phrases including ‘moral standards [dotokushin]’, ‘respect towards tradition and culture [dento to bunka o soncho]’ and ‘affection towards our nation and land [wagakuni to kyodo o aisuru]’ were inserted. As identified by Rear and Jones (2013) and also other authors such as Yukawa (2013), the two principles often being in one sentence or one paragraph has been inviting confusion.

When PM Abe returned to office in 2012 after the three-year rule by the Democratic Party of Japan, he had clearer hybrid reform plans to revive ‘strong’ and ‘beautiful’ Japan, positioning education reform entitled ‘Education Rebuilding [kyoiku saisei]’ as one of the prioritised agendas. One of the first subjects discussed in the reform council was the implementation of moral education which PM Abe originally referred to as ‘patriotic education’. Along with such moral conservative measures, PM Abe has promoted neo-liberal initiatives including a national academic ability test, merger and abolition of schools, school evaluation and parental choice. As Yukawa (2013) argues, such neo-liberal movement stratifies educational provision and decreases societal unity.

Thus, the hybrid approach is particularly associated with PM Abe who has put a significant emphasis on moral conservative values in parallel with the execution of neo-liberal reform. One of the leading political scientists Watanabe (2013) disputes there is no ‘healthy’ element in PM Abe’s ‘convenient cherry-picking’ approach to neo-conservatism. Kimata (2012) uses the term ‘recycled fascism’ in describing the Abe Administration’s hybrid approach, criticising its manipulative state control that comprises neo-liberal market competition and self-help with moral conservative educational initiatives such as the enforcement of the national anthem in schools and the introduction of moral education.

Let us now examine the aid structure utilised in disaster preparedness. Some key examples of each form of aid are illustrated to indicate how they are politically utilised as pedagogical strategies in disaster contexts to promote individual responsibility, voluntary participation and proactive collaboration.

#### **4. The aid structure as a pedagogical strategy in preparing for disaster**

The common word ‘jo’ at the end of the four forms of aid – ‘kojo’, ‘jijo’, ‘gojo’ and ‘kyojo’ – means ‘aid’. ‘Kojo’ is the public aid provided by the central, prefectural and municipal governments. ‘Jijo’ is self-help, which is closely connected with the notion of individual responsibility. Both ‘gojo’ and ‘kyojo’ refer to mutual help, often being understood as synonyms. However, there is an important difference between ‘gojo’ and ‘kyojo’: the former is help between people you know, within the community you live in and amongst friends, family and relatives; whereas the latter is ‘philanthropic’ or ‘humanistic’ aid towards someone whom you do not necessarily know, which can be in a form of volunteering and charitable activities (An academic 2013). It should be noted that the government and also a number of other stakeholders refer to the framework of ‘kojo’, ‘jijo’ and ‘kyojo’ rather than the one which differentiate ‘gojo’ and ‘kyojo’. The significance of the difference between the two is discussed later in the section.

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Rear and Jones’ original translation is ‘public service spirit’, but what ‘kokyo no seishin’ actually means is ‘voluntary participation in civic activities’.

The aid structure is not necessarily new. It was originally applied in the field of health and welfare policy, and its connection with disaster management developed after the Hanshin/Awaji Earthquake of 1995. The government and academics have made the connection based on the following two major drivers. The first is environmental. After the Hanshin/Awaji Earthquake of 1995, a shared understanding developed in Japan that the damage by a natural disaster can be reduced, even if the disaster itself cannot be stopped. The goal was set by the Cabinet Office in 2003 (2011) to reduce damage by 50 percent in case of a large-scale earthquake. Nevertheless, the preparedness schemes put in place were not sufficient enough to protect the population in the Tohoku region in 2011, particularly from the tsunami. The majority of the 18,800 deaths and missing people were caused by the tsunami rather than the Magnitude 9 earthquake itself (National Police Agency 2015). As evidenced in 2011, the country has entered into a quake-active period, and similar-scale earthquakes are predicted to strike different parts of Japan in the coming 30 years. The largest possible damage was predicted to be 18,000 fatalities, 360,000 totally collapsed buildings and 370 billion pounds [57 trillion yen] economic damage (Aota et al 2008, 177-178). Not only earthquakes, but other natural hazards such as volcano eruptions and torrential rains have also been a serious concern in Japan (Kitagawa forthcoming). According to Japan Meteorological Agency (2015), 47 out of the 110 active volcanos require particular attention for a large-scale eruption. Thus, there is urgency and necessity across Japan to improve preparedness for mega disasters which are predicted (Preston et al 2014). The existing preparedness schemes – both formal and informal disaster education – were challenged by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami (Kitagawa 2015), and policy-makers and experts started to search for a more powerful paradigm. The reinforcement of the aid structure is perceived to increase preparedness for future disasters.

The second driver is financial. Shrinking *kojo* [public aid] has had an impact on approaches to disaster management. Since the Bubble Economy burst of 1991, the role of the government has changed, and spending cuts have become a norm in public services (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies n.d.). Both the central and local governments began emphasising civic participation, as well as devolved governance. An understanding that the way to maintain the same quality and quantity of the administration is by coproduction [*kyodo*] between the government and the community has developed (Hashimoto year unknown). By the end of the 2000s, every municipality came to include ‘community building through coproduction’ in its policy goal. The field of disaster management was no exception, joined-up working amongst various stakeholders being promoted.

With this background, the aid structure is now stressed as the principle approach to disaster management in the Basic Disaster Management Plan which is the paramount plan issued by the Central Disaster Management Council:

*A natural disaster can happen whenever and wherever. In order to reduce human and economic damage caused by one and to ensure security and safety of the population, *kojo* provided by the public administration, *jijo* based on self-awareness and *kyojo* of local communities are all equally necessary. This is a long-term national campaign for everyday disaster reduction, which is participated and invested by various stakeholders in the society, including individuals, families, communities, businesses and government bodies (Central Disaster Council 2015, 7).*

It is the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act originally enacted in 1961 that established the system for disaster management. The act stipulates the Central Disaster Management Council



situated within the Cabinet Office to be responsible for overall disaster management at the national level. The Basic Plan then lays out policies and measures for different disasters and for each disaster cycle, and also clarifies the responsibilities of the central, prefectural and municipal governments, and the general population. The basic system and policy framework for disaster management has remained unchanged during the post-war period (Kitagawa 2015), but recent revisions have addressed the aid structure, particularly kyojo, in promoting ‘coproduction’, ‘collaboration’, ‘co-operation’ and ‘network’.

The other documentation enforced by the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act was the White Paper on Disaster Management [bosai hakusho]. The White Paper issued annually by the Cabinet Office serves two purposes: it records the government measures undertaken against the disasters occurred during the fiscal year, and it identifies foreseeable challenges in the area of disaster administration in the following year. The White Paper is presented to the Diet and also made available to the public. Similarly in recent White Papers, an emphasis on kyojo can be identified. For example, the 2014 version focused on the theme of ‘how to strengthen local preparedness through kyojo [kyojo ni yoru chiikibosairyoku no kyoka]’. Reflecting on the experience of the Tohoku disaster, the White Paper concluded that:

*‘the limitation of kojo’ has become clear because it is impossible for the public administration to offer immediate help to all victims, and also because the administration itself can be dysfunctional being hit by a disaster. It is necessary to effectively utilise ‘soft power’ of local communities through jijo and kyojo in order to reduce the damage predicted by forthcoming large-scale disasters (Cabinet Office 2014, 11).*

The White Paper goes on to indicate three strategies in developing such ‘soft power’. The first is to integrate disaster preparedness activities into general community activities. This approach has been increasingly emphasised in Japan. Another strategy is joined-up working between community members and the municipal government. The role of local businesses is emphasised as well in building networks and collaboration between the business sector and community members.

Self-help and mutual aid in supplementing shrinking public aid has thus become a new coping mechanism for disaster scenarios. A clear division has been built: kojo serves critical mass, and kyojo responds to specific needs (Murosaki 2013). So far, this section has discussed the processes in which the aid structure has developed. The following four sections interrogate in concrete terms what each form of aid refers to.

### ***1) Kojo [public aid]***

Kojo refers to the measures undertaken by the central, prefectural and municipal governments within the legal policy framework discussed earlier. Following the Basic Disaster Management Plan, prefectural and municipal councils are required to design their Regional Disaster Management Plans taking their specific risks and needs into consideration. The Basic Plan also designates 24 government<sup>10</sup> organisations and 56 public corporations<sup>11</sup> to design their own

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<sup>10</sup> They include Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Defense.

<sup>11</sup> They include the Bank of Japan, Japanese Red Cross Society, NHK (national broadcasting company) and electric and gas companies.

Disaster Management Operation Plans for emergency situations (Cabinet Office 2011, 8). Those regional and organisational plans set out protocols and arrangements as well as areas of responsibilities within the institution in case of an emergency. In each plan, preparedness activities have to be defined and planned, responding to the needs of the region and/or the organisation. As an example, this section briefly looks at the Operation Plan of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

The role of MEXT in disaster management is mainly in the realm of school and school education. Their Disaster Management Operation Plan details that MEXT (2012) offers information, advice and guidance (IAG) to individual schools for them to develop a manual for arrangements and preparations in case of a disaster, including operation of schools as evacuation centres. MEXT also provides IAG on curricula of disaster education undertaken at school, which aims to foster in pupils self-protection skills, the ethos of respect towards human life and voluntary spirit. Disaster education is for school staff as well for them to gain scientific knowledge on disasters, and the skills for First Aid and counselling. The IAG on disaster drills are offered so that schools develop their preparedness for diverse disaster scenarios.

In terms of school curricula, the Course of Study (national curriculum) regulates ‘Safety Education [anzen kyoiku]’, which is the multi-hazard approach that addresses school preparedness for traffic accidents, intruders and kidnapping as well as natural disasters (Kitagawa 2015; a policy-maker 2013). In the 2011 New Course of Study, ‘enrichment of Safety Education’ (MEXT 2013a) was for the first time included as one of the foci. In addition to disaster drills which have already been in place in schools, individual schools are now obliged to implement suitable safety initiatives. MEXT has produced a guideline to help schools develop their own programmes. The latest edition of the guideline was issued in 2013, reflecting the lessons learned from the experiences of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami (MEXT 2013b). Since then, Safety Education in schools has been reinforced, aiming to foster in pupils the ability to protect themselves – *jijo* – and to support each other to reduce damage – *kyojo* (MEXT 2012). In this way, individual schools are supposed to increase awareness and expertise in preparing for disaster situations.

Outside of the school curriculum, more broadly, a range of IAG, including the texts of disaster-related laws and policies, educational materials and events information are made available to the public via government websites. In memory of the 1923 Kanto Earthquake which killed more than 100,000 in Tokyo, 1 September is officially established as ‘Disaster Prevention Day [bosai no hi]’, and the week commencing 30 August as ‘Disaster Prevention Week [bosai shukan]’ (Statistics Bureau 2015), during which awareness-raising events and practical training drills are implemented at the national, prefectural and municipal levels.

Pedagogically, thus, the Japanese approach to disaster preparedness has been overt (Preston et al 2014). Such public pedagogies are applied in advocating the population to prepare themselves in case of a disaster. Neo-liberal governments’ austerity measures have exacerbated ‘the limitation of *kojo*’, which has led to an increasing stress on self-help and mutual help.

## **2) *Jijo* [self-help]**

Self-taught coping strategies have been passed down from generation to generation in Japan that has severe natural environments. A number of old sayings such as ‘if you are prepared, you don’t have to worry [sonae areba urei nashi]’ and ‘a natural disaster strikes you when you have forgotten about it [saigai wa wasureta koro ni yattokuru]’ are taught at home and school to remind you of the importance of being prepared. Certain regions have developed their own

lessons in response to the specific disaster they are prone to. ‘Tsunami tendenko’ in the Tohoku region is one of them, which has become familiar across Japan after the 3.11 tsunami. The dialect is a practical survival strategy for tsunami meaning, ‘if you see a tsunami approaching, run towards a higher ground on your own, do not rely on anyone else, do not care about others including your family and friends’. A tsunami expert, Yamashita, originally spread the phrase to advocate self-protection (Yamori 2012a; Murashima 2011; Saito 2011). In fact, ‘the miracle of Kamaishi’ proved the effectiveness of ‘tsunami tendenko’ after the tsunami of 2011. All pupils from Kamaishi Elementary School, who had been taught ‘tsunami tendenko’ and trained to protect themselves in case of a tsunami, survived. Kamaishi has been compared with other schools in the region that lost many pupils after the tsunami because they did not make their own decision to escape (Yamori 2012). ‘The miracle of Kamaishi [Kamaishi no kiseki]’ was reported widely through media and discussed amongst policy-makers and academics, and the effectiveness of self-help has been re-evaluated and re-emphasised (a journalist 2013).

The notion of ‘self’ is often extended to mean individual families and institutions, as well as individual citizens. The population are highly aware that each household or workplace should have First Aid, ‘an emergency bag’ and a stock of water and food, and also that stabilising the furniture and preventing glasses from scattering can save family and colleagues. Organisations are increasingly addressing disaster preparedness agendas in their Business Continuity Plans (Aota et al 2009). The culture of preparation – ‘sonae’ in Japanese – is very much embedded in everyday life, although whether individuals actually implement them or not is another matter.

### **3) Gojo [*mutual aid in neighbourhood*]**

In tandem with jijo, the importance of helping each other in the local neighbourhood in times of difficulty has been emphasised in Japan, as has been expressed in sayings such as ‘(have good relationships with) your neighbours up to three doors away [muko sangen ryodonari]’. The nature of the neighbourhood has changed during the post-war period, particularly in urban cities, due to the declining birth rate, an ageing population and diversifying life styles. Despite such change, there has been a shared understanding in the country that neighbourhood plays an integral part in disaster preparedness (FDMA 2013, 3).

Voluntary Disaster Prevention Organisations (VDPOs) [jishu bosai soshiki] which promote voluntary cooperation in the local neighbourhood in emergency situations is one of the typical examples of gojo. Some question the voluntarism of VDPOs (Disaster Prevention System Institute 2013) as they are stipulated in the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act (e-Gov 2013a), and the guidance is given in the Disaster Management Basic Plan (Central Disaster Management Council 2012) and further elaborated in Regional Disaster Management Plans to meet regional needs. However, organisations and activities of VDPOs should be considered as gojo as they are left to be decided by community members. Most of the wards in Japanese cities and towns have a VDPO, which tends to be led by retired firemen living in the area (Sugiura 2010, 74-76).<sup>12</sup> When a disaster occurs, it is the local fire brigade that carries out initial measures. VDPO members will be there to assist fire fighters. If the disaster is large-scale, or it happens in a small town, the role of the VDPO becomes critical in saving the local community. VDPOs which are from the areas that have experienced large-scale disasters tend to be more developed in terms of the structure, communication and motivation, and to have an established stake in the community (Saïdo et al 2004).

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<sup>12</sup> A VDPO normally comprises of an administration/communication team, a fire extinguishing team, an evacuation instruction team and a first-aid team.

Other forms of gojo groups include Neighbourhood Associations [chonaikai] (Paton et al 2013) and Fire Control Clubs [bosai kurabu]. The latter stemmed from the fact that most of the fire incidents occurred at home, and FDMA called for forming citizens' groups for fire control in 1975. Most municipalities have such clubs, which in some cases, have developed into multi-purpose community groups promoting neighbourhood disaster preparedness (Fire Protection Association 2005).

The practice of the traditional form of neighbourhood support, gojo, is diverse, depending on urban or suburban and the frequency and scale of natural disasters experienced in the community. Neighbourhood disaster management tends to be stronger in suburbs that still preserve a community spirit or the cities that have been damaged by disasters. Supported by well-established organisations such as VDPOs and fire clubs, communities in Japan have been encouraged to enhance neighbourhood bonds, which have been believed to make difference in the case of emergencies.

An academic (2013) indicates that mutual help used to be in the form of gojo – cooperation between the people who know each other well in the neighbourhood. 'A sense of belonging' matters in Japanese society, and Japanese people feel comfortable helping each other within own community. Gojo therefore could be regarded as a support mechanism developed amongst 'insiders'. On the other hand, kyojo is a cooperation in a wider context amongst 'outsiders' who do not necessarily know each other.

#### **4) Kyojo [mutual aid between unfamiliar persons]**

According to an academic (2013), kyojo refers to 'philanthropic and humanistic aid', which differs from gojo. This article further suggests that 'kyojo' is a much more complex concept, which has not necessarily been addressed by policy-makers and disaster experts. Kyojo on the one hand, has a meaning of coproduction, cooperation or joined-up working between unfamiliar persons and/or institutions. This type of kyojo is not necessarily associated with the philanthropic or humanistic nature of the aid. One of the most noticeable examples of this type of kyojo is in the field of research and development. There are a number of research centres based on collaborative partnerships that specialise in natural disasters – whether as a quango or a not-for-profit organisation, or within a university. One example is the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (NIED) (2011), set up after the Isewan Typhoon of 1959 and which became independent in 2001. The NIED (Year unknown) have worked together with the Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, the Building Research Institute, FDMA, public and private universities, for-profit firms and not-for-profit organisations, and also the general population. Universities, including Kyoto, Tohoku, Tokyo and Meiji and many others, also have an established centre for research and innovation for natural disasters, positioning 'coproduction' or 'collaboration' as their important mission. Joint research teams undertake educational projects, aiming to help foster preparedness in a target group of the population. 'Scenario simulators' are one of the tools developed by various research groups. For instance, Katada's research team (2004) from Gunma University and the Owase municipal government in Mie Prefecture developed together a tsunami scenario simulator, which became a comprehensive scheme for tsunami preparedness in the city. Focusing on teamwork and partnerships, this type of kyojo emphasises collective and group-centred principles.

On the other hand, kyojo implicitly promotes individuals' participation in volunteering activities. This type of kyojo tends to be linked with the philanthropic or humanistic nature of

the aid. This dimension has been advocated by academic experts such as Murosaki. Historically, philanthropic aid at time of a disaster was provided by institutions such as the Red Cross, religious groups and trade unions, and neighbourhood support was provided by aforementioned VDPOs and Neighbourhood Associations. The trigger was the Hanshin/Awaji Earthquake of 1995 when the population's interest in philanthropic and humanistic activities in disaster contexts emerged (Murosaki 2013; Okumoto 2010). For this, 1995 has been referred to as 'the start year of volunteering' in Japan. As the number participating in volunteering grew in subsequent disasters, a not-for-profit independent organisation called the Council of Social Welfare [Shakai fukushi kyogikai] (2008) came to organise training, develop guidelines to professionalise the role and promote a culture of volunteering at national, prefectural and municipal levels. 'Disaster volunteer [saigai borantia]' and more recently, 'disaster reduction volunteer [bosai borantia]' became the titles to refer to volunteer workers who offer their time, skills and expertise at all phases of the disaster cycle. As a new pedagogy widely promoted for disaster preparedness, volunteering contributed to the development of 'lifelong learning' in Japan (Okumoto 2010).

Then, the 2011 experience challenged such positive perception on the effectiveness of volunteering completely. First, the scale of the damage – 450,000 evacuees, 2,500 evacuation centres, 100,000 evacuated outside of the region – meant a far larger number of volunteers was required compared with previous disasters. Second, longer-term aid was required because many people lost houses, lands, jobs, literally everything. Third, volunteers with diverse expertise were needed because a number of government offices and public facilities were destroyed. Moreover, the quality of activities was questioned – some of them focused too much on what the volunteers wish to achieve, neglecting victims' needs, and others ran out of capacity quickly not being prepared for long-term operations (Murosaki 2013). A challenge was identified on the recipient side as well. Some victims refused to receive help and support because of a sense of a shame (an academic 2013; a journalist 2013). Such issues and challenges revealed that the culture of philanthropy had not yet fully developed in Japan, even though the number of participants in voluntary activities had dramatically increased. Leading academic experts such as Murosaki (2013) have since advocated that the next step forward is to further the development of a civil society through building a culture of philanthropy that enhances disaster preparedness. This preparedness is described as *kyojo*. This type of *kyojo* is the notion based on individual responsibilities and civic participation.

'*Kyojo*' as part of the aid structure has been emphasised in the field of disaster management and preparedness without the duality embedded in the concept being clarified. Including both individual and collective connotations, the concept has allowed multiple applications – this is a unique role that '*kyojo*' has played – this argument is to be elaborated in the following section.

### **5. Building a civil society based on *kyojo***

Besides the environmental and socio-economic driving forces which have been discussed in the previous sections, this article proposes that the current Abe Administration has a political motivation to embrace the aid structure with an accentuation on *kyojo*, positioning it as the underpinning in building a civil society. In one of his speeches, Prime Minister Abe has stressed 'participation by all' as a pillar to his 'revitalisation strategy' (Prime Minister's Office and His Cabinet 2013). A working group issued a report in which the application of the aid structure was justified:

*it is vital to develop policy which has a balance between jijo, kojo and kyojo. Jijo should be taken for granted. Kojo is limited due to financial restriction.... In order to develop a vibrant society, citizens are required to proactively engage in civic activities with the spirit of kyojo* (Cabinet Office 2013, 1).

Disaster preparedness is considered as one of the key areas of civic activities, which is a means and an end of kyojo – that is, preparedness requires mutual help, and at the same time, participation and collaboration can be enhanced through preparedness activities. The report emphasises the importance of maximising the potentials of ‘diverse actors’ – local governments, non-governmental organisations, charities, businesses and citizens. The government thus applies kyojo to promote both collective collaboration and individual voluntary participation.

What the above quote illustrates is that the three forms of aid – not four – are applied to legitimise first, the significance of jijo and kyojo to cover shrinking kojo, and second, neo-liberal principles of individual choice and self-responsibilities through an emphasis on jijo – self-help, and moral conservative values of collaboration and joined-up working through kyojo – mutual aid. This article argues that the aid structure suits the Abe Administration’s ideological stance which is the combination of neo-liberalism and moral conservatism. It is also argued that the government use of ‘kyojo’ which does not differentiate between whether the mutual aid is between ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ – neighbourhood aid or philanthropic aid – is problematic. As analysed earlier, in Japanese society where a culture of philanthropy has not fully developed, the Abe Administration should be promoting the learning of how to help and be helped by ‘outsiders’ particularly for preparing for large-scale disasters.

Shedding light on the specific role that ‘kyojo’ plays, this article further argues that kyojo legitimises the coexistence of neo-liberalism and moral conservatism within the Abe Administration’s politics because the concept’s duality signifies the two ideologies respectively. The dimension which stresses ‘voluntary participation in philanthropic activities’ is associated with neo-liberal principles of individualism and responsibilities, and the dimension which emphasises ‘joined-up working amongst unfamiliar persons’ is linked with moral conservative group-ism and collaborative values. In short, both neo-liberalism and moral conservatism are encompassed within one concept, ‘kyojo’. Because of this duality, requirements such as *‘to proactively engage in civic activities with the spirit of kyojo’* is not necessarily perceived as contradictory. As demonstrated and argued by Rear and Jones (2013), the hybridity of neo-liberal and moral conservative principles has brought contradiction and confusion in recent educational reform policies. Kyojo is perceived to be the solution to this problem. Kyojo is such a powerful legitimator that the current government has extended and expanded the application of the concept in justifying the urgency and necessity to build an effective civil society.

## **6. Conclusion**

This article has discussed preparedness for natural disasters in Japan with a focus on the role of the four forms of aid referred to as ‘the aid structure’. As a pedagogic strategy, each form of aid has been shaped through a number of lessons learnt from catastrophic experiences of earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and volcano eruptions that brought serious damage to communities. For the country which is expecting more similar-scale disasters as the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, establishing preparedness to reduce damage by 50% has been a prioritised national agenda. The dominant policy and academic discourse in disaster management in recent years has been that the development of a balanced aid structure is

necessary in preparing for forthcoming disasters, and that amongst the four forms of aid, kyojo plays the most integral part. The article has argued that kyojo is highly valued because its duality embraces both neo-liberal individualism and moral conservative group-focus, and that the current administration perceives kyojo as the solution to the dilemma between their two ideological stances which are often criticised as contradictory.

The above analysis leads to three further observations. As a legitimator, the utilisation of 'kyojo', and that of 'the aid structure' to a lesser extent, is increasingly being politicised. There is a danger that the promotion of 'a civil society based on kyojo' will become political rhetoric. The principles of kyojo – whether coproduction, collaboration, volunteering or philanthropy – are all core values for the country in building a civil society in which disaster preparedness is embedded. 'Everyday preparedness [seikatsu bosai]', as advocated by academic experts such as Yamori (2012b) and Shiroshita (2010), is the most realistic and effective approach in building prepared and resilient communities. Embedding preparedness strategies and activities in everyday life is necessary in 'living *with* disasters [kyozon]' (Kitagawa forthcoming) in a country where disasters are usual (Preston et al 2014). This article calls for in-depth research on the actualisation of everyday preparedness through kyojo.

Following on from the point about the powerful political role of 'kyojo', it can be suggested that the hybrid preparedness legitimised by kyojo is a much more sophisticated and persuasive machinery than the neo-liberal version in the politics of disasters. It is difficult to be against the former because of kyojo's multi-dimensional connotations, while the latter invites criticisms due to its focus on manipulative capital creation which has been identified by a number of authors in disaster politics studies as examined in this article. This could mean that the governments of disaster-prone countries, or the countries which are exposed to other specific threats such as terrorism, might start employing the politics of kyojo – although in their own versions – to elevate neo-liberal reform. Or, an equivalent preparedness strategy to kyojo might already exist in certain countries. These comparative questions could potentially contribute to the field of disaster politics studies.

Lastly, returning to Preston's definition of 'preparedness' looked at in the introduction, the article suggests that the examples of the policies and practices of kojo, jijo, gojo and kyojo discussed earlier can be considered as pedagogical – including andragogical – strategies. They include behavioural strategies – disaster drills and a tsunami simulator, emotional strategies – the old sayings such as 'if you are prepared, you don't have to worry' and cognitive strategies – the IAG websites and 'Disaster Prevention Day'. The division of the three categories may not be as clear-cut as Preston (2008) indicates, but the main point here is that disaster preparedness involves a range of pedagogical strategies. Based on the examination of 'kyojo', the article proposes adding another category in 'preparedness' besides 'behavioural', 'emotional' and 'cognitive' – preliminary 'structural' to indicate the structure of aid. Researching preparedness as pedagogical strategies is challenging because they are 'rarely pedagogical in a didactic sense'. However, educationists' involvement in the discussion of the development of effective preparedness systems and initiatives from the perspective of teaching and learning is significant in fostering resilient communities and populations against diverse risks and threats in the contemporary world. The conceptualisation of disaster preparedness with the four categories – behavioural, emotional, cognitive and structural – can be a good starting point.

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