

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

DIJ Social Science Study Group

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**Democracy, Diversity, and Disaster Resilience:
Towards a Theory of 3-Dimensional (3D) Risk Governance**

Since my personal experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake with a 7-month old baby under my care, my feminist political theoretical work on the intersections of democracy, diversity and representative democratic institutions took a turn towards the literature on disaster resilience and disaster risk decision-making. While social capital, the risk society, and risk communication have been emerging topics, the impact of diverse populations on democracy and disaster resilience has been little explored in the field of political science. In this paper, I first outline the conceptual contributions of three relevant literatures: disaster studies, feminist intersectionality theory, and critical democratic theory to identify what each literature stands to both contribute and gain from engagement with the other two. Conceptual insights about vulnerability, diversity, and participatory democracy can enrich our critical democratic approach to diverse citizenship and practical politics such that we might better identify how and why participatory processes grounded in political commitments to social inclusion stand to generate more effective and holistic policies of risk governance. Placing these literatures and insights in critical multilogue (Tully 1995), I will tease out the seed elements of what I call “3-Dimensional (3D) Risk Governance,” a new theoretical framework for critical reflection on, and interdisciplinary comparative research on multi-level governance risk reduction processes. To illuminate some of these points, I will draw upon participatory action research on the law reform advocacy of the Japan Women’s Network for Disaster Risk Reduction.

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The DIJ Social Science Study Group is organized by Steffen Heinrich, Phoebe Holdgrün and Daniel Kremers.

All are welcome to attend, but registration (holdgruen@dijtokyo.org) is appreciated.

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