Consensus-building for Reconstructing Disaster Resilient Societies: Diversity and Gender Perspectives from Japan and the World

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Presentation Outline

1. Keynote Speech on "Disaster Recovery, Diversity and Gender"

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Social scientific studies of disaster/resilience have recently been focusing on social capital. Political scientist Daniel Aldrich, for example, found the critical role of social capital in the ability of a community to withstand disaster and rebuild in terms of population recovery, in and after the four major disasters in three countries including the Great Kanto Earthquake, and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Social capital in the study is captured by indices such as number of voluntary organizations, the voting rate, frequency of political meeting or demonstration, and participation to ceremonial occasions (Aldrich 2011). According to younger media researchers in Japan, the death rates of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in coastal municipalities (not hosting nuclear power plants) had a clear negative correlation with their per capita income (including property income and entrepreneurial income) (Tanaka, Shiiba and Maruyama 2012).

Those insightful studies unfortunately lack a perspective of gender and diversity, even though death rates differ significantly by gender/age, disabilities, caring responsibilities and socio-economic status.

It should thus be noted that the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 calls for more dedicated action for tackling "underlying disaster risks drivers" such as the consequences of poverty and inequality, and "compounding factors" including demographic change. Against such a background, this paper examines recent situations of poverty, aspects of demographic change and social capital in Japan, as a basis to discuss reconstructing disaster resilient society.

2.Panel Discussion on "Consensus-building Process for Enhancing Disaster Resilience

1) Toshihisa NAKAMURA, Programme Analyst, UN Women Headquarters in NY
"Tackling the Gender Inequality of Risk"

Vulnerability and special role of women
Women are disproportionally affected by disasters and have different and uneven levels of resilience and capacity to recover. At the same time, women have unique roles in resilience building and recovery. They are often the first responders when crisis strikes, tending to the needs of their families and communities and coping with the adverse impact on their livelihood and possessions. Facilitating women's participation and leadership in recovery and building back better offers thus a huge opportunity to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness when reconstructing disaster resilient society.

International consensus not translated into action
There are international normative frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, SDGs and Paris agreement, as a result of the international consensus on critical needs of gender-sensitive DRR as well as recovery. However, those normative frameworks have not yet been translated into concrete actions. We need to build consensus on the ground in participatory manner so that these international frameworks will be implemented.

Key gaps for consensus building
The following gaps continue to impede the consensus-building on gender-responsive reconstruction of disaster resilient society;
(1) Lack of evidence- sex and age disaggregated data and gender analysis,
(2) Lack of institutional capacity for gender and recovery, and
(3) Lack of opportunities for women's participation and leadership.

Works of UN Women
Followings are some examples of works of UN Women to overcome those gaps and successfully build consensus on gender-sensitive reconstruction.

In Nepal, after two devastating earthquakes in 2015, UN Women partnered with the National Planning Commission and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, to engender the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) process. As a result, Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) principles, women's equal access to and participation in relief, recovery and reconstruction programmes, and equal ownership and tenureship rights was included in the PDNA report and the subsequent Post-Disaster Reconstruction Framework (PDRF), including specific financial requirements.
UN Women furthermore supported key women's groups in Nepal to advocate for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster recovery, reconstruction and preparedness efforts in Nepal. This resulted in a 15-point Kathmandu Declaration, endorsed by government authorities and development partners, setting out key demands for gender responsive recovery and reconstruction.

In Vietnam, through the training of women in disaster management, as well as national lobbying, the contribution of women has been recognized and a government
decree gives the Women's Union an official space in decision-making bodies.

Introduction of GIR
UN Women, IFRC and UNISDR joined forces under the Global Programme in Support of a Gender Responsive Sendai Framework Implementation: Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk and Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate (GIR)". This provides a mechanism to support countries to operationalize and achieve the commitments for gender sensitive implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Theory of Change for the GIR is as follows;

(1) The gender dimensions of risk are understood and assessed

(2) DRR policy and risk governance are gender responsive

(3) women's capacity to prevent, prepare for and recover from natural hazards in a changing climate is strengthened; and

(4) women's participation and leadership in DRR and resilience building are strengthened.

2) Sunhee LEE, Researcher, Center for Northeast Asian Studies, Tohoku University
"Resilience and Reconstruction Gaps of Migrant Women in the Great East Japan Earthquake"

The percentages of foreign nationals in these prefectures were 0.69% in Miyagi, 0.56% in Fukushima and 0.47% in Iwate (Ministry of Justice 2011), which is, compared to the national average, significantly low. What is also significant is that these foreign residents in Tohoku are concentrated in the city of Sendai and are widely scattered in the rural fishing and farming villages. In other words, Tohoku has a relatively small foreign population, and also has been dispersed.

Many settled foreign residents in coastal areas of the Tohoku region are trainees and marriage immigrant women. In rural areas of Japan, in order to solve the problems of shortages of brides and successors to households, international matchmaking marriage became common from the mid-1980s onward. For this same reason, marriage immigrant women increased in this area

Many marriage migrant women in Japan are expected to be 'yoki yome' (a traditional good wife in Japanese), following specific but often-unwritten household and community norms in traditional rural communities. In Tohoku rural communities, there is a strong gender expectation of being a dutiful housewife. They have to deal with strong pressures to assimilate. In this situation, instead of claiming their cultural identities and human rights, many marriage migrant women, especially from China and Korea who look like Japanese, often "strategically invisibilize themselves" for better prospects (Lee, 2012). Their invisibilizing strategies include: 1) using (or sometimes being forced to use) their Japanese names, 2) isolating themselves from their ethnic networks, 3) not leaving the house/community.

Before the disaster, they seemed to assimilate well into the area well due to invisibilizing. But, their invisibility led to vulnerabilities that could not receive proper support as foreigners at the time of the disaster. It is unsurprising that their strategic invisibilization made them more dependent on their Japanese family (or their children's friends' mothers) because they try isolating themselves (or are geographically isolated) from their ethnic communities for better prospects. In fact, supporting the point here, it was extremely difficult for researchers and practitioners including ourselves to find foreigner victims, particularly Chinese and Korean marriage migrant women such was their invisibility in Tohoku's rural communities.

However, the migrant women who were assimilated as wives and largely been invisible in this position, began to express their own needs and embraced the disaster as an opportunity to appeal as citizens of their local communities. In our Foreigner victim investigations after the earthquake, they began to their voice. And our investigation made it clear that many marriage migrant women who had limited language ability and social network were in the affected areas.   And then, 'Vulnerable foreigners' in disasters caught media/academic attention. Consequently, foreigner supporting groups and ethnic networks searched for foreigners including marriage migrant women and brought them specific financial, material and emotional support. While some remained invisible and hard-to-reach, others became visible and well-connected to the externals such as authorities, disaster relief organizations and other communities, which made them 'visible' and resourceful. The process is similar to the one through which the Vietnamese community became 'visible' in Hurricane Katrina as a model resilient community through media and as such obtained various forms of public empathy and support (Leong et al. 2007).

There was significant change for many migrant women in the disaster area following the 3.11 earthquake. Thus resulting in an increase of migrant women playing an active role in society. Among these women, we also find cases of women who established an NPO in order to actively participate in regional reconstruction efforts after 3.11. In disaster area migrant communities were established within which some migrant women embraced the role of community leader. In some cases, these marriage migrant women became points of contact for external supporting organizations, church networks and volunteers to receive relief goods, thereby

developing their social network(s). It is unsurprising that, in some rural Tohoku villages where local Japanese residents, particularly elderly, were also socially isolated and invisible, marriage migrant women's (international) networks became quite important for entire villages.

By the way, positive disaster experiences are often reported more by the key-informants and emphasized more by researchers and practitioners, yet we cannot ignore their negative experiences. Actually, in many cases migrant women still struggle with expressing their needs. Some migrant women suffer from depression after marriage, some from economic or verbal forms of domestic violence from their husbands or his family, and some women suffer from poverty after divorce from or death of their husbands.

What explains the gap between those migrant women receiving social recognition in the wake of the 3.11 disaster and those women who continue to struggle with their social invisibility? This gap is in large parts the result of Japanese language proficiency and the relationship with other Japanese which is a critical resources for being active in Japanese society. The Tohoku region lacks a process of regional globalization. Within the region's fishing villages Japanese (and here mostly in local dialects) is the only means of communication. Many married migrant women study Japanese in the course of their daily lives. Hence, their Japanese language skills correlate with the length of their stay since coming to Japan.

Another resource is the strength of relationships with other Japanese. Important in this regard is the relationship within the host society. The degree by which relationships have been built between the women and their families and relatives as well as residents of the host societies represents an important instrument in this context. Here, we must not forget that relationships with Japanese people are the precondition for assimilation into Japanese society.

The problem then is that it is left to individual efforts by the women to obtain these two resources. Official support and social backup is almost non-existing in this regard. As Japan lacks an official migration system foreign migrants are not granted citizenship. For these women to contribute to Japanese society, they do not only require citizenship as an obligation but citizenship as a right. That is, to improve their Japanese language skills through their right to study Japanese; to facilitate an equal relationship within the family through the right to abolish unjust treatment by their spouses; to establish a trust relationship with the community through the right of abolishing discrimination. For this to be realized it is necessary to clearly define the rights and duties of citizens to migrant residents in the community. In addition, using the diverse resources (in addition to their language skills and social relationships) which are provided by migrants in for the community will also contribute to improvement of their status in society. Rethinking citizenship in Japan may not only contribute to migrants but to those Japanese at the periphery who seek social recognition.

The Great East Japan Earthquake has made it necessary to rethink why a gender perspective and diversity might be important.

Lee, S. 2012. Gender and multiculturalism: Issues of the marriage migrant women in rural Tohoku. *Tohoku University COE, GEMC Journal*, 7: 88-103.

Leong, K.J., Airriess, C., Chen, A.Chia-Chen., Keith, V., Li, W., Wang, Y. & Adams, K. 2007. From invisibility to hypervisibility: The complexity of race, survival, and resiliency for the Vietnamese-American community in Eastern New Orleans. In Bates, K.A. & Swan, R.S. (eds.) *Through the eyes of Katrina: Social justice in the United States,* 171-188. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

**3) Jackie Steele, Associate Professor, Institute of Social Science, The University of Tokyo
"Diversifying DRR Decision-making towards Inclusive and Empowering Consensus-building"**

In this presentation, I will introduce 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. As a critical theoretical framework, "3D Risk Governance" is committed to (D1) **Disaster Resilience:** the political *deconstruction* of disaster-related risks, whether 'natural,' or 'manmade,' whether the effects immediate and short-term or chronic and long-term, so as to minimize their impact and devastation upon the collectivity, and its constituent communities, families and individuals; (D2) **Diversity:** the *diversification* of DRR leaders and implementers, and the development of risk reduction policies and strategies that are inclusive and responsive to diverse groups; (D3) **Democracy:** the *democratization* of risk reduction decision-making processes towards participatory deliberation, transparency and public awareness of collective risks. As the cornerstones of socio-political cooperation and collective wellbeing, "democracy," "disaster resilience," and "respect for diversity" are all foundational risk-reducing measures and institutions at the heart of the human condition.

   To advance disaster risk reduction and the field of critical disaster studies, the conceptual framework of "three-dimensional (3D) risk governance" would suggest that the challenge for contemporary democracies is twofold: 1) to reconceive of contemporary political identity and collective resilience in relation to the full social diversity (weaknesses and strengths) of the population, and 2) to find ways of democratically empowering that social diversity to enrich the deliberative policy debates in favour of responsive, effective, and accountable strategies of risk governance aimed at collective disaster resilience. To that end, I will propose three important indicators of deliberative consensus-building about risk distribution and risk resilience: a) descriptive representation of diverse vulnerabilities, b) effective procedural chairing guidelines to ensure relations of non-domination throughout the discussion, and c) substantive representation of diverse perspectives and vulnerabilities in the outcome decisions of the participatory process. These three key indicators of success allow us to ensure, from the perspectives of those in a marginalized position, that consensus-building deliberations are indeed effective in empowering diversity, fostering inclusion, and nurturing a lasting feeling of belonging and solidarity amongst the diverse participants who have joined together to find solutions to their collective challenges.