Social Stratification In Contemporary Japan

Kenji Kosaka

Social Class in Contemporary Japan is the first single volume that traces the dynamics of social structure, institutional socialization and class culture through this turbulent period, all the way into the contemporary neoliberal moment. In an innovative multi-disciplinary approach that include top scholars working on quantitative class structure, policy development, and ethnographic analysis, this volume highlights the centrality of class formation to our understanding of the many levels of Japanese society. Written by a team of contributors from Japan, the US and Europe this book will be invaluable to students and scholars of Japanese society and culture, as well as those interested in cultural anthropology and social class alike. Excerpt. Hiroshi Ishida and David H. Slater. Social Stratification in Contemporary Japan. Link to document: ProQuest Abstract: "Social Stratification in Contemporary Japan" edited by Kenji Kosaka is reviewed. Teks lengkap: Social Stratification in Contemporary Japan. Edited by KENJI KOSAKA. In the introduction, Kenji Kosaka reviews the historical background of social stratification in Japan, emphasizing a modern "tendency toward a leveling among people and classes" (p. 10). Studies of class and stratification in Japan date from at least the 1920s. The SSM surveys, repeated every ten years since 1955, have examined class structure, stratification and consciousness, social mobility, and in the 1985 survey, women's status and consciousness.
Conceptualisations of social stratification or inequality are inseparable from measurement issues, regardless of whether these constructs are conceptualised as subjective perceptions or scarce, yet desirable resources, or whether they focus on descriptive, comparative, or mobility questions. Before we can look at the form and function of status or at resource diffusion and its change over time and context, we have to consider, first, what is stratified, and second, how to measure it. Only if we are rigorous in the consideration of these fundamental aspects of the phenomenon can we begin to look at the dynamics of social structure, institutional socialization and class culture through this turbulent period, all the way into the contemporary neoliberal moment. In an innovative multi-disciplinary approach that include top scholars working on quantitative class structure, policy development, and ethnographic analysis, this volume highlights the centrality of class formation to our understanding of the many levels of Japanese society.

Within the academic literature, Japanese scholars have produced one of the most sustained bodies of work by Marxist and stratification theorists anywhere in the world, and certainly outside the West. This presentation shows how two seemingly contradictory concepts about social stratification in contemporary Japan - "fluidization" and "stabilization" - can be understood and explained in a coherent way. A classic example of "fluidization" is an increase in non-regular workers, while that of "stabilization" is an increase in the rigidity of intergenerational social mobility of a particular stratum. We hypothesize that the fluidization has not necessarily occurred at all strata; some strata have still been under the umbrella of protective institutions, w