

論文の英文要旨

論文題目	<p style="text-align: center;">NEOLIBERALISM AND THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN: THE “REPRODUCTIVE ENTREPRENEUR” IN THE “ACTIVE PURSUIT OF PREGNANCY” (<i>NINKATSU</i>)</p>
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According to a popular discourse marketed as *ninkatsu* (“active pursuit of pregnancy”) circulating in magazines, newspapers, TV, but also in the countermeasures against the low birthrate, (female) individuals are incited to survey and improve every aspect of themselves in order to achieve the goal of reproduction. In this dissertation, the correlation of neoliberal ideology and the “politics of reproduction” was analyzed and discussed through the lens of this popular discourse in contemporary Japanese society. Within the broad topic of the politics of reproduction, this research is specifically interested in how the “pregnant-to-become” body (and its male counterpart) is being governed amidst the neoliberal ideology of self-governance and what actors are involved.

The original concept of “reproductive entrepreneurship” was developed during the research for this dissertation and provided the theoretical framework in the presentation of the analysis. This concept is based on the idea of the “entrepreneurial self”, which has been identified in previous research as an expression for the central mode of subjectification and the leading principle of self-government of one’s life, mind, and body in neoliberalism. Additionally, the gendered aspect of this specific form of governmentality, in previous research often discussed in the context of postfeminism, and the role of biomedicalization in the contemporary politics of

reproduction, are central cornerstones of the “reproductive entrepreneur”. While this theoretical approach provides a general framework to understand neoliberal government and subjectification strategies translated to the realm of the politics of reproduction, the analysis in this dissertation also focuses on the specific conditions in contemporary Japanese society in which the politics of reproduction are embedded.

While previous research on this discursive moment has been focused on the nation-state as the central actor in the government of reproduction, this dissertation takes an approach that includes the role of other involved stakeholders. Reproductive choice is not just of political concern; it is also a growing business in the context of reproductive technologies. Therefore, the biomedical industry and its representatives, such as health professionals involved in fertility treatments or pharmaceutical companies, cannot be ignored as stakeholders in the contemporary Japanese politics of reproduction. Moreover, mass media plays a central role in the formation and promotion of discourses. This triangle of 1) policymakers, 2) media, and 3) biomedical business represents the constellation of main actors in the shaping of the politics of reproduction and its discourses in contemporary Japan.

The chapters in this dissertation are divided into Part One, with two chapters on the historical background and theoretical framework, and Part Two, with three chapters of analysis on *ninkatsu*-related narratives in media-representations, local and central government policies, as well as in popular science.

Chapter 1, the first chapter of Part 1, briefly outlines the developments in the context of the politics of reproduction in Japan since WW2, in order to position the object of analysis within a historical framework. In this section, the author mainly draws from a rich corpus of previous research; on pronatalist policies during WW2, politics of contraception and abortion, assisted reproductive technology and its social implications, and the politics of reproduction in a contemporary Japan in which the low birth rate has come to be perceived and fought as a significant crisis.

Chapter 2, the second chapter of Part 1, presents and organizes the theoretical tools in this analysis and introduces the “reproductive entrepreneur” as an original theoretical concept to analyze strategies of government and power relations in the neoliberal politics of reproduction.

In Chapter 3, the first chapter of Part 2, the politics and power relations between involved stakeholders in the context of the *ninkatsu* discourse, as well as its actual contents, are drawn from the qualitative discourse analysis of media content in newspaper articles, books, magazines, and a TV series. The analysis of distinct aspects of the discourse of the “active pursuit of pregnancy” such as “postfeminist healthism,” the embeddedness of the discourse in biomedical market rationales, as well as social, cultural and economic agendas, brings the theoretical concept of the “reproductive entrepreneur” to life. It does so by concretely describing the strategies, narratives, and convergences of actors involved in the neoliberal politics of reproduction, as well as connecting them with the actual situation in contemporary Japan.

Chapter 4 explores how the *ninkatsu* discourse has penetrated pronatalist policies in the context of the low birth rate through the assessment of life planning/knowledge provision strategies in a detailed analysis of material provided by the government and municipalities. This chapter elaborates on how the government, together with experts from the biomedical realm, attempts to “nudge” individuals into making “better choices” on reproduction.

Chapter 5 takes a closer look at the narrative of aging reproductive cells within the discourse of the “active pursuit of pregnancy” in order to investigate the politics of science and technology in the realm of pre-reproductive risk-management. The analysis centers around a gender-focused comparison between a 2012 program on aging egg cells and a 2018 program on aging/bad quality sperm cells. By also including examples of similar narratives in how-to-books, this chapter examines how the norm of “happiness” and the “fear of regret” in the provision of ostensibly neutral and purely scientific representations exercises pressure on the individual to align itself with market rationales of the biomedical business and the national pronatalist agenda. Furthermore, the technology of sperm self-check is examined by applying the concept of the “microscopic gaze.” The goal is to shed light on what role technology plays in self-observation and self-management in the context of reproduction, and to consider if gender roles in reproduction experience a shift through technology.

In the conclusion, the combined findings of the analysis are presented as follows:

(1) Entanglement of overlapping interests of mass media, policymakers and the biomedical business in the formation and promotion of the “active pursuit of pregnancy”

(2) “Choice” and “autonomy” as government strategy

(3) Imperative of self-government of body and soul (to avoid “regret” and obtain “happiness”)

(4) Biomedicalization of reproduction and the normalization of ARTs

(5) Brought about by and reproducing the culture of “uncertainty” in current Japanese society

(6) Reproduction of gender and family norms

The analysis shows how the biomedical business, media, and policymakers’ interests meet in the discourse of the “active pursuit of pregnancy.” It exhibits how it is not only a representative discourse for neoliberal politics of reproduction in general, but also how it is embedded explicitly in unequal gender relations and the “culture of uncertainty” of Japan’s lost decades.

The dissertation problematizes the idea that the “active pursuit of pregnancy” narrative promotes autonomy and self-determination in reproductive decision-making. It shows how instead, it actually restricts the individual’s range of choices in the reproductive realm through its embeddedness in market rationales, the crisis of the low birth rate, and ideas of the “good citizen”, which include gender and family norms. Moreover, by concealing the framework of unequal power relations in society, the narrative of choice and autonomy reproduces and revalidates this very framework.

The theorization of the politics of reproduction in a framework of neoliberal governmentality in the context of contemporary Japanese society is an original approach and constitutes this dissertation’s significance and importance. This research will hopefully contribute to discussions and theorizations on neoliberal politics of reproduction beyond borders, as well as to further research that includes the role of technology and business interests along with low birth rate counter-policies embedded in the ideology of self-management in contemporary politics of reproduction in contemporary Japan.