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1 Question: Changing Sociology

1.1 Quantitative Approach to Changing Sociology

- Description of changing sociology had been a task for historians of sociology.

- But, it depends on arbitrary choice of some “important” texts, while several thousands of sociological papers are published every year only in Japan*1.

*1 CINII tells us 2925, 2589, 2386, and 2186 papers referring the character string, “社會学” (sociology) were published from 2015 to 2018 (I searched them on 21/September/2019).
• Nowadays, nobody can read the whole body of sociological papers and choose important/representative papers.

• Therefore, sampling and/or text-mining approach is helpful to grasp the whole body of sociology.

• We sampled papers from two leading journals of Japanese sociology and conducted conventional content analysis.
1.2 Focus on Research Methods of Sociology

- Research methods are a part of paradigm (Kuhn 1970=1971).

- They were employed as a standard to classify schools or quasi-paradigms of sociology (Alise & Teddlie 2010; Ritzer 1980; Wells & Picou 1981).

- Which methods are prevalent? How did they change in Japan?
1.3 Previous Research in US and UK

- Quantitative methods started to increase in US sociology before WW II (Camic & Xie 1994), it was prevailed in 1970’s on a leading US journal (Wells & Picou 1981), still increasing in 2000’s (Schwemmer & Wieczorek 2019 online first).

- However, UK witnessed the decline of quantitative methods from 1970 to 2000 compared to the qualitative (Platt 2012), although they might revive in 2000’s (Schwemmer & Wieczorek 2019 online first).
1.4 Japanese Contexts

- Japanese sociology is more similar to UK than to US (Yamamoto & Tarohmaru 2015)
- Annual meetings of Japan Sociological Society witnessed increasing qualitative and decreasing theoretical papers from 1960’s to 1990’s (Tarohmaru et al. 2002).

1.5 Aim

- To Describe the trends of methods employed by Japanese sociologists controlling for several variables such as author’s sex and status
1.6 Hypotheses

- The turning point would be 1980's; the new left generation became professors; the Cultural Turn arrived at Japan; sociological associations preferring quantitative methods were established.

- since then theoretical methods decreased,

- and qualitative methods increased.
2 Data


- We classified the methods they employed into four types: theoretical, historical, ethnographic, and quantitative methods.

- We recorded the sex and status of the first author, number of authors, and whether it was on a special issue.
2.1 Classification of Research Methods

**theoretical**  Analyzing no empirical data

**historical**  Analyzing texts such as documents or texts written by others

**ethnographic**  Analyzing or writing ethnography based on what authors heard, watched, or experienced.

**quantitative**  Analyzing quantitative data or mathematical models

We call historical and ethnographic methods “qualitative.”
3 Results

- There are descriptive statistics and the details of results on the handout.
- There is the results of multinomial logit model predicting methods at Table h.2 in the handout.
Fig. 1  Numbers of papers employing four methods
Fig. 2  Ratio of Papers
Fig. 3  Trends of Methods by Journal (moving average of three time points)
Fig. 4  Trends of special and general papers (moving average of three time points)
Fig. 5  Trends of methods by sex (moving average of three time points)
Fig. 6  Trends of methods by status (moving average of three time points)
Fig. 7 Trends of methods predicted by the logit model, assuming paper is general, written by a single male tenured author on Sosioroji16
4  Discussion

4.1  Summary of Results

• Theoretical methods decreased after 1980’s and empirical methods increased, only qualitative methods. They are a majority group after 2010.

• Although the ratio of quantitative methods were constant, they were excluded from special issues after 1980’s.
4.2 Comparison with US and UK

- Although quantitative methods increased in 2000’s in US and UK, it didn’t in Japan.

- Is the pressure for a peer reviewed paper weaker in Japanese sociology?

- Is the appeal to policymakers not very important?
References


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