

Relationship Crisis and Social Welfare Challenges in Japanese Society

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Abstract: In recent days, the issue of solitude and isolation has emerged as a significant social issue in the Japanese society. On its background, it is attributable to the fact that it has become liberalized society with the change of bonding for people. The issues in contemporary society is analyzed as the decline of enlargement of affection space and friendship space, along with the expansion of the currency space^[1]. In general, the survey on the social relationship measures the relativity of people by the means of name generator. It is the question of “do you have someone to consult on important word or agony? In the use, the close friend that may talk about one’s agony has declined from an average of three to two for 20 years from 1985 to 2004 and the reply of having none has increased from 8% to 23%. In other word, there is every one person out of four persons has no close friend in the US^[2]. In the meantime, Japan has the rate of maintaining the close relationship for 21 persons or more for 5 years throughout 10 years declining from 15% to 8% since 2005 and the rate of having no close bonding with anyone increasing from 4% to 7%. In addition, according to the white book on high-aged people of Japan in 2021, the ratio of having no close friend other than family members of 60 years old or older is 31.3%, almost one for every 3 persons. This rate is higher than that of the US for 14.2%, Germany for 13.5% and Sweden for 9.9% that the Japanese society is a society with serious solitude and isolation^[3].

Keywords: Social welfare; Solitude and isolation; Loving space; Friendship space; Monetary space

1. Structure of human society

The human relationship may largely be classified into a three-tiered in affection space, friendship space and currency space. The affection space is an intimate relationship with parents, children, spouse and opposite gender friend, and the friendship space is the world with up to 150 acquaintances around the close friends. In addition, the currency space has expanded to its external side and it is the extensive world that are connected by the medium only by the monetary transaction. The affection space is the state of mixed affection and hatred while the friendship space is the political space of all kinds of tricks and wiles. In the factional struggle of the company, there are a number of power struggle up to the mounting of mother’s friend. The importance of close friend can be attributable to the fact that there is a need for a group that would not betray in order to broaden the ambiguous political space. In the meantime, the currency space is a relation like purchasing the product with the net that it would return the predetermined result if one follows the rule that has no affection, solidarity or betrayal. Consequently, the contemporary society has extension of such affection space and reduction of the friendship space, and expansion of ensuring currency space. The ground for such result would be attributable to the limitations of perceptive capability of human by expanding the network^[4].

In the old stone era when it had the history of human evolution, the society was composed by around 1,000 persons who shared the cultural customs, such as independently common language (or dialect), funeral practice and so forth. However, due to limitation to secure beverage, it was impossible to have everyone to live in the same place that they were ordinarily engaged in activities in a small group for 30~50 people (camping group), and the community with strong bonding as composed with about 150 persons was the focal point of such living.

This is the determining factor for requirements of the brain that the individual discretion of a person has the upper limit of 50 persons (small scale) and the consistency of face and name would only be around 150 persons. This is the basis to establish the upper limit of a class in the school to be 50 persons with the idol group to be 48 persons as well as the upper limit for a corporate entity to be approximately 150 persons. One that may understand this principle is the military. Up to 1500 personnel in a battalion (tribe/national group) is divided into a company of 60-250 personnel (mid-sized/camping group), and further divided into a squad of 8-12 personnel

(family/family) that the members in the squad that have the same fate of life and death would advance a strong bond like brethren. The military has such a strata structure due to in conformity of cognitive structure of the brain.

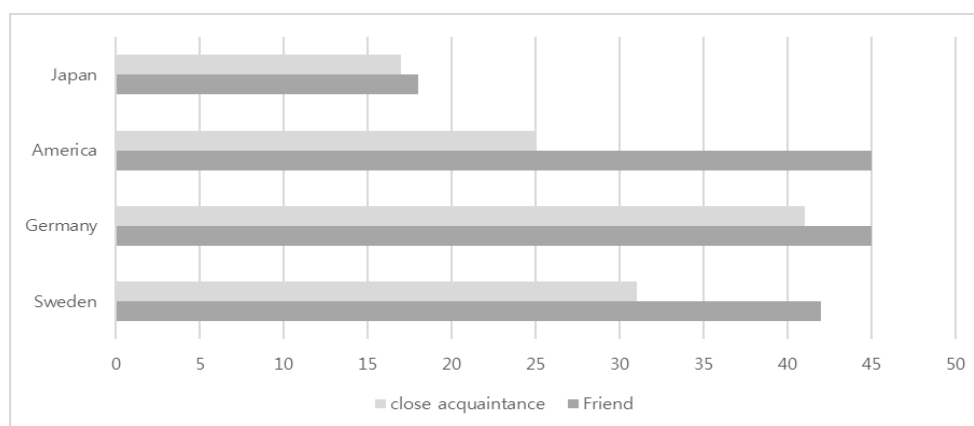
With the technology advancement, humans are isolated socially, but this is different from the reality. In fact, humans enter into relationships with even more people to have overflowing human relationships. That makes feeling of solitude to be attributable to converge into the expanded network to feel the rarity [5].

2. Collapse of traditional bonding

On the basis of the above contents, it is intended to take a look at the solitude and isolation of the contemporary society through the Japanese society. After 1950s, Japan has weakened its traditional blood ties, regional ties and occupational ties. Accordingly, there has been an increasing number of people who are drifted away from the society to sense the solitude, and there is an increase of solitary deaths due to having no people to depend on with the expansion of no relative or family. Such a cause could be summarized as the implication of liberalization and taking away of the Japanese society. The liberty from the traditional bonding, such as, blood ties, regional tire, occupational ties and so forth has been the goal of the post-WWII Japanese society . By deviating from the traditional bonding relationship, they have striven for the society as an individual human being. The freedom from the blood ties would liberate women who had been forced to undertake the role to take care under the paternal space. The freedom from the regional ties have caused to break away from the closed space of agricultural setting into the urban area. The freedom from the occupational ties came at a time that people worked very hard for the companies during the economic growth era. The flow of liberty from the traditional bonding has been the process of shifting the type of human relationship. An example would be romance and friendship.

2.1 Crisis of optimistic era

However, after the collapse of bubble economy, the optimistic atmosphere has vanished. Due to the increase of irregular employment, the wage gap has been expanded. The class that strived for non-marriage has increased as well. The rate of non-marriage for men and women (ratio of people not married at all at the time of 50 years old) has topped 5% for the first time. The solitary death that finished the life alone has increased as well. In particular, the solitary death is related to the economic growth model of Japan after the war . During the industrialization process, the factory zone has been established in cities and the apartment complex for employees and their families have prospered to see the population increased. Nonetheless, the young generation has moved on to cities. It is because of inconvenience to commute to and from college or workplace. Consequently, the apartments only have the older generation to encounter the solitary deaths. The conclusion of the city established only by the economic reasonableness is symbolically displayed in the complex. The cause for sense of solitude is frequently cause the conflict of opinion and departure from families. <Graph 1>



<Graph 1> Percentage that you can ask for other than your family

Source: Cabinet Office International Comparison of the 9th Survey on the Life and Consciousness of the Elderly

The solitude is triggered in cases where there is no presence to depend on other than the family when there is a conflict of opinion. Looking into the international comparison for 60 years or older, Japan has the least for people to depend on other than the family members. From the 4 major countries, Japan has the least in the ratio that answered a friend or neighbor as the person to lean on other than co-habiting family member. With the new generation increasing, the society difficult to depend on other than the family would be susceptible to fall into solitude or isolation. Finding who undertakes the role of dependable family has become an important task.

3. Polarization of Contemporary Society

The Japanese society has entered into the no family and relative society already that the solitude and isolation issue has become a serious issue. The is resulted from the social isolation and the polarization issue of the society is generated. It is because of contact via

online without making personal linkage of family or relative due to recent infection. Namely, people may connect would be the strong one to make even deeper relationship with communication, but the weaker on opposite side is isolated even more. recent infection was a turning point to clearly demonstrate the socially isolated issue that Japan embraces. Also, another would means the time of impossibility for caring from his surroundings due to the self-neglect incident. It is also referred to as loose self-inflicted death, such as, refusal for medical service, neglect of wastes, excessive number of animal breeding and the like. The feeling from the background is the solitude.

The class under the serious condition due to recent infection is the middle class. At least, they have the assets of deposit, real estate or the like. These people are under the self-neglect as a result of disconnection from the relative or close people. As a result, there are prevalent cases of unable to discover the corpse for a long period of time. In addition, there is a growing number of people finishing the life due to the lack of care for health by isolated from the society due to bereavement, not divorce, and unemployment. The cause is the collapse of place to depend on after the disconnection to the society where it had the protection role through occupation work or couple.

4. Deepening of Social Isolation

While the community functions of the Japanese society, such as, regional ties, blood ties, occupational ties and so forth, fading away, the social isolation has become an issue even before the break out of recent infection. With recent infection, the isolation has deepened, but the fundamental issue of the society has not changed. The social isolation means the objective state with rare relativity with other people. If one asks which side is to place importance on isolation and solitude as a social issue, this writer would answer for isolation. This is attributable to the fact that people cannot live alone. The relativity is important including the support for these people. In the meantime, since the isolation is subjective, the individual difference is significant and the government response is difficult as well. Therefore, an observation of factors that provokes isolation or solitude is important.

The measurement index of the isolation is not predetermined but, looking into the earlier studies, 1) lack of dialogue, 2) lack of people to depend on, and, 3) lack of relationship to render assistance. What pays attention is that the lack of people who would render assistance becomes the indication of the isolation. Decreasing the isolation is important to contemplate what and for whom. Looking for each generation type for the isolation status based on the “Survey on 2017 Living and Mutual Cooperation” of the National Social Security Population Research Institute, the ratio of people not communicating for once or less for every 2 weeks regarding the lack of communication was 2.2% and the single high-aged men reached 14.8%. Also, the single non-high aged men is high with 1%. A single man in the current era workplace may think the communication with others as a rare event. <Table 1> Next is the lack of people to depend on is the ratio of people who answered as having no person to depending on for all 9 categories, such as, “caring or nursing“, “counseling of important matters“, ”rendering momentary help during the day“ and so forth. The total number is 1.7% with a significantly high number of single high-aged men and single non-high aged men. Furthermore, the lack of helping relationship would be the ratio of answer in not helping by all people upon having the request for help regarding 7 categories from the above 9 categories in respective family, relative, friend, acquaintance, nearly people, and colleague at the workplace. The total number is 3.2% and the high-aged single man is 2%, and the single high-aged woman and single non-high aged men are approximately 1%, respectively.

<Table 1>Types of Solitude

			lack of dialogue	lack of people to turn to	lack of supportive relationships
short generation	elderly person 65 years of age or older	Man	14.8	11.1	17.4
		Woman	5.4	4.2	9.7
	non-aged person 65 years of age or older	Man	8.3	6.9	9.4
		Woman	4.4	1.7	2.2
generation of married couples	elderly with a married couple		2.4	1.7	3.4
	married couple who are non-aged		1.1	1.5	1.3
3 generations (with children)			0.5	0.5	2.5
2nd Generation (with children)			0.6	0.5	0.9
Single parent generation (2nd generation)			1.8	0.4	0.5
Total (average)			2.2	1.7	3.2

Source: National Social Security, Population Research Institute: A 2017 Survey on Life and Helping Each Other

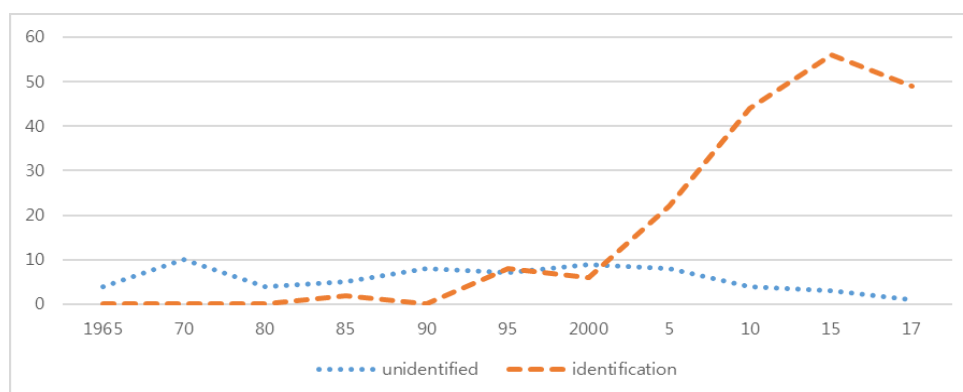
In comprehensive terms, the ratio of the isolation is higher for lack of dialogue for single male in high-aged person and non-high aged person, lack of person to depend on, lack of relation for assistance, and the like. In particular, a single high aged man has a high 3 indices of the above. However, the social isolation would, first, be difficult to obtain the necessary support during the ordinary life or in

times of emergency. In particular, from the socially isolated persons, it is frequently a case of having no family or a case of having rare family relationship. For people who do not have relative, it is an issue as to who engages in the post affairs, such as, living support for hospital, shopping or the like, personal identification required when taking tenancy to apartment or hospitalized, and funeral or disposition of properties after the decease of the applicable person. In many cases, the family would encounter, but any high-aged person without a relative has no family to depend on. Second is that the deficiency of relativity with other persons may cause the decline of will of life or sense of self-positivism. In fact, there is a tendency to think that one who does not have much of dialogue would think of himself as valueless. This is attributable to the fact that there are many things to earn through the relativity with other people for the desire of life or sense of self-positivism. Third is the economic hardship that the living hardship would be much more serious once the social isolation is piled up. There are a number of case for rebuilding the life situation early when the support is continued before living hardship gets serious. It is easy to fall into a serious condition if there is no one to signal for its trouble while in isolation.

5. Change in the Connection Society

5.1 Regression of the connection society

Up to the 1980s, any remains without any surviving family member in the Japanese society was the unidentified remains in most cases. There was a clear reason for having no surviving member since there was no identification. However, the situation has changes in the 1990s. The cases of having no receivers even though the identification has been determined have increased and the cases of having unclear identification was decreased. In 2000s, the personal identification is overwhelmingly increased. The identified remains has the integrated cause for over ninety percent of times. <(Graph 2)>, First is the decrease in the number of households. Due to the shift into nucleus family environment, the Japanese cities had an average number of 2.5 persons per household in 1993. It is easy to have far psychological distance with other family members or relatives if they do not live together. Furthermore, it is an impactful to have increase in letter exchanges without talking to relatives over the phone. When the fixed phone terminal was the main stream, it was relatively easier to find the contact of family with the information service of phone company with the name and address of family or relative under the resident indication of family registrar of the deceased. However, it is different at a time when the mobile phone is the mainstream. Even if an inquiry for contact of relative to the deceased is made to the mobile phone company, it would not be responded on the ground of personal privacy. It is possible only for a case where the writ of the court is presented. The administrative agency is impossible for such practice that there is a need of legal supplementation to enable the personal identification for an exceptional case.



<Graph 2>changes in the identification of remains

Source: Yokosuka City Area

5.2 Weakening of relative relationship

With the popular use of mobile phone after the mid-1990s, the identity could be confirmed but yet to have the people receiving remains showing up. This type of phenomenon would be attributable to have the barrier between men for having no contact between relatives, rather than thinking that humans have become more insensitive to each other.

Any remains without the acquiring person will be transported to the enshrine hall for those without family or relative by the authorized government agency. There is no religious ceremony. Therefore, under the point of view that the deceased is unknown, the government agency have implemented the final care business since 2015. This is the project to realize the funeral ceremony desired by the applicable high-aged person by restricting the subject without asset or savings. If the applicable person pays during its life time to the funeral service provider for 260,000 Yen, the government agency and funeral service provider will check for well-being, including contacting or personal visit or so forth, for the person until the time of death, and after the death, the funeral service provider

and personnel of the government agency would be in the process until the last moment. From 2018, as for the second business of “Terminal Business”, the “My Terminal Registration” business has begun. When the location of the tomb, place of placing the will, or contact for emergency are registered when the applicable person is still in good health, the government agency will take care of hospital or police response on behalf of the applicable person.

5.3 Crisis of family relationship

The new popular composite words of 2012 was the end of the “terminal” life with the spot light to the high-aged person with the activities of care giver or funeral standardization. The flow of the terminal business sector for the 10 years thereof has been shifted. It was the business commenced for the high-aged person of terminal but there are more counseling provided to their sons now. Such counseling is on “not wanting to take care of parents” or “not wanting to take on care-taking”. When providing the service to act on behalf of the high-aged person’s family, the general foundation of LMN was founded for the purpose of having the high-aged person requesting for the support of terminal or living subsidies, and this is attributable to the fact that about 90 per cent of the role for counseling was rendered to children . It may be deemed to have many children who request for such support to their parents due to their living far distance away from their parents, but it was actually not the case.

There is over 60% of inquiry that the parents are within a near vicinity but do not want to take care of the parents. Moder of counselor are the ones that they would not care for their parent in mental aspect rather than unable to take care of their parents. For a number of causes, they have a distance from their parents.

The administrative agency carries out the agency affairs for administrative affairs on behalf of its family, hospital procedure, hospital nursing facilities and so forth or receives contacts in times of emergency as a personal guarantor. For example, there are cases when the patient of recognized symptom who lost its house is protected by the police. When the recognized symptom patient passed away, it works on the funeral service to checking out the remains to clearing the residence. And, as the applicable person is at a high age and under the solitude or isolation situation, it is more susceptible to fraudulent practice. In the meeting of isolation measure office for the administrative agency, it is imperative to establish a social policy to make a space to connect the natural support for human to human.

6. Conclusion

A social isolation implicates the objective state with rare relativity with other persons. This is a different concept from displaying the subjective aspects, such as, loneliness, alone or the like. If it is inquired which of isolation and solitude would be placed for importance as a social issue, this writer would answer for isolation. This is attributable to the fact a human cannot live alone. The relativity is important including the support for these people.

According to the earlier studies, it could be attributable to 1) lack of dialogue, 2) lack of person to depend on, and, 3) lack of relationship to render assistance, and so forth. One that pays attention to is that the lack of persons to render assistance becomes the indication of isolation. It is also important to consider that would decrease the isolation and for whom it is intended. In particular, the ratio of the isolation is higher for lack of dialogue for single male in high-aged person and non-high aged person, lack of person to depend on, lack of relation for assistance, and the like. A single man of high-aged person has a high 3 indices of the above. However, the society isolation would be difficult to obtain the required support during the ordinary life or in times of emergency. In particular, from the socially isolated persons, it is frequently a case of having no family or a case of having rare family relationship. For people who do not have relative, it is an issue as to who engages in the post affairs, such as, living support for hospital, shopping or the like, personal identification required when taking tenancy to apartment or hospitalized, and funeral or disposition of properties after the decease of the applicable person. Second is that the deficiency of relativity with other persons may cause the decline of will of life or sense of self-positivism. In fact, there is a tendency to think that one who does not have much of dialogue would think of himself as valueless. This is attributable to the fact that there are many things to earn through the relativity with other people for the desire of life or sense of self-positivism. Third is the economic difficulty that the living hardship would be much more serious once the social isolation is piled up. There are a number of case for rebuilding the life situation early when the support is continued before living hardship gets serious. It is easy to fall into a serious condition if there is no person to send out the crisis signal when one is in isolation state. Therefore, it requires systematic support for them to communicate.

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