

## Introduction

### Why Lifelong Learning Now?

Lifelong learning has become a primary focus in Japan's education policy making. Its heightened importance became evident in December 2006, when the Japanese term *shōgai gakushū* (which directly translates into English as “lifelong learning”) was added to Japan's educational charter, the Fundamental Law of Education (*kyōiku kihon hō*). This was the first revision made since the charter's enactment in 1947. Yet, we must ask: Why is the focus now on lifelong learning? This is the primary research question that this book attempts to answer.

In general, lifelong learning encompasses all aspects of learning, which begin in infancy and continue into adulthood (cf. Jarvis 2009a). It includes the learning attained in families, schools, local communities, vocational training institutions, universities, and workplaces.<sup>1</sup> Lifelong learning has become critically important in the promotion of personal development, as well as social cohesion by the improvement of the quality of community life, in the development of active citizenship, and in the sustainment of a global knowledge economy. Policy endorsement of lifelong learning is almost universal (Field 2006), although the practices involved in lifelong learning are varied and contested. Traditionally, researchers have argued that lifelong learning activities in Japan are based on what I would call a cultural model (cf. Schuetze and Casey 2006) that considers lifelong learning intrinsic to individual cultural growth. Japan's lifelong learning is a process that operates in each individual's life. It is designed to promote learning for learning's sake. It is oriented toward the attainment of cultural ends during leisure time (Kawanobe

1994; Okamoto 2001; Wilson 2001; Rausch 2004) and the enjoyment of music (Watanabe 2005) and sports, primarily in the context of an aging society (Ogawa 2005; Ohsako and Sawano 2006). Furthermore, in its promotion of lifelong learning, Japanese society is now shifting from an academic diploma-oriented society (*gakureki shakai*) to a learning society (Fuwa 2001; Sawano 2007). It is also moving toward a knowledge-based economy (Ogawa 2009b; cf. Han 2007).

Japan's lifelong learning policies and practices have been uniquely developed. They flourished at the grassroots level during the post-World War II period. Lifelong learning is an active form of education in Japan. It includes various forms of learning activities that revolve around personal learning and center on hobbies, sports, and liberal arts. Vocational training and recurrent education, which aim to update individuals' knowledge and skills for survival in the labor market, are also parts of personal learning. Meanwhile, social education (*shakai kyōiku*), which includes nonformal learning activities, has been deeply rooted as collective learning in local communities. In 2008, the Japanese Education Ministry<sup>2</sup> announced that the total number of participants in social education courses offered by state-run facilities achieved a record of 34,172,338 people, an increase from 29,377,896 people who participated a decade ago (MEXT 2008a, 15).<sup>3</sup> This means that almost one-third of the Japanese population attended some kind of social education course across the country. What does this really mean?

Nowadays, a variety of learning opportunities related to liberal arts, sports, fine arts, foreign languages, and so on, are provided through government-funded programs at public lifelong learning facilities (see Appendix 1). These include citizens' public halls (*kōminkan*), libraries (*toshokan*), museums (*hakubutsukan*), gymnasiums (*taiikukan*), lifelong learning centers (*shōgai gakushū sentā*), women's education centers, the Open University of Japan (Hōsō daigaku), university extension departments, and private lifelong learning service providers (*karuchā sentā*) (i.e., culture centers, most of which are operated by newspaper publishers and department stores; they primarily target housewives). Further, many NPOs,<sup>4</sup> which were established under the so-called NPO Law enacted in 1998, chose social education as one of their activity areas when they registered. Actually, social education is the second most popular area of activity, after social welfare. The majority of social education NPOs are funded by local governments (Cabinet Office 2011a; cf. Ogawa 2009a). At the same time, some forms of correspondence courses (*tsūshin kyōiku*), including Internet-based courses, are also available.

In this book, my research focuses on state-funded lifelong learning. In fact, the state is one of the key sponsors of lifelong learning activities in Japanese society. For fiscal year 2011 (April 2011–March 2012), the Education Ministry spent a total of 19.8 billion yen (\$194 million) for the promotion of lifelong learning (MEXT 2011a). This enormous amount of money may be difficult to imagine. Meanwhile, at the grassroots level, one of my field sites, the city of Hirosaki, which is located in Aomori Prefecture, spent a total of 1.62 billion yen (\$16 million) for a population of some 170,000 in fiscal year 2010 (April 2010–March 2011) to support the development of learning activities at twenty-three local public lifelong learning facilities. These facilities included citizens' public halls, libraries, museums, and gymnasiums. This means that the city spent 8,553 yen (\$84) per citizen to support their lifelong learning activities. Further, this amount equals 12.7 percent of the total expenses related to education in the municipality (Hirosaki Municipal Board of Education 2010, 88). I believe that Japanese people maintain a variety of learning drives. Those who are eager to learn something new will look for service providers even if they must pay expensive tuition. However, this raises another research question: Why does the state fund these types of learning activities?

A practical or realistic answer may be that offering lifelong learning courses is a government's legal duty to its citizens. Shortly after World War II, in 1949, the Japanese government enacted the Social Education Law (*shakai kyōiku hō*) to support grassroots, nonformal learning activities. This law articulates the concept that lifelong learning is a legal right of the Japanese people. For instance, this law states that both the national and municipal governments are required to make every effort to develop and operate public facilities for lifelong learning so that all citizens can enhance their lives by self-cultivation. Further, it stipulates that state and local public bodies should endeavor to attain educational objectives by establishing institutions such as citizens' public halls, libraries, and museums. In 1990, the government also enacted the Lifelong Learning Promotion Law (*shōgai gakushū shinkō hō*)<sup>5</sup> to prepare the institutional environment for the promotion of lifelong learning. This law prescribes measures including (1) the establishment of lifelong learning councils at national and prefectural levels for the local promotion of lifelong learning; (2) a provision aimed at the development of lifelong learning in designated communities; and (3) surveys for the assessment of residents' learning needs and requirements. However, none of these observations help us understand why lifelong learning is currently garnering special attention.

My argument in this book extends beyond what I have mentioned as a cultural model and attempts to situate Japan's new interest in lifelong learning in international policy making. In fact, current developments in Japan's lifelong learning are generating new patterns of behaviors and outcomes; they are producing new types of disciplinary knowledge for surviving neoliberal Japan.

### Lifelong Learning as a Global Trend

The continuing march of globalization has heightened uncertainty in everyday life around the world. Japan is not exempt from this uncertainty. One way to cope with this rapidly evolving environment is to practice lifelong learning: In other words, individuals must engage in continual learning efforts that can help them improve and adapt to society. With the publication of the so-called *Faure Report—Learning to Be* (Faure et al. 1972) by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), lifelong learning became a worldwide topic of discussion. Since then, as globalization gathered momentum, lifelong learning came into greater focus (Jarvis 2007; cf. Mebrahtu et al. 2000; Stromquist 2002; Suárez-Orozco 2007; Fien et al. 2009; Spring 2009). Sutherland and Crowther (2006) termed the emerging trend of lifelong learning “lifelong learning imagination” in reference to C. Wright Mills’ *sociological imagination* (1959). They argued, “The promise of the “lifelong learning imagination” is of a process that enables people to understand their personal circumstances and the habits of mind, knowledge and skills they possess. For this to be useful, it has to be an ongoing process—a lifelong activity that people engage and re-engage in continually in order to improve their understanding and develop new knowledge and skills” (Sutherland and Crowther 2006, 4).

Globally, since the mid-1990s, lifelong learning has been a topic of intensive discussions. International organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO, have actively advocated for “lifelong learning imagination.” John Field describes the series of events when “lifelong learning emerged onto the policy scene with the suddenness of a new fashion” (2006, 3). For example, since the 1980s, the OECD has primarily encouraged macroeconomic stabilization, structural adjustment, and the globalization of production and distribution (Schuller 2009), while secondarily paying attention to the preservation of social cohesion (Miller 1997). During

the 1990s, new technologies, lifelong learning, and higher education were added to policy priorities. In particular, this addition defined the debates and policies on lifelong learning that occurred in the member states (Moutsios 2009). In this context, in 1996, the OECD held a meeting of education ministers entitled *Lifelong Learning for All*. These ministers advocated “the continuation of conscious learning throughout the lifespan.” They embraced learning undertaken “informally at work, by talking to others, by watching television and playing games, and through virtually every other form of human activity” (OECD 1996, 89). As Moutsios (2009, 474–75) claims, the development of human capital is the main ideology pursued by the OECD; this ideology is promulgated in its formal statements. In 2005, the OECD published a report entitled *Promoting Adult Learning* (OECD 2005) that proclaimed the economic paradigm—the importance of learning to enhance the human capital of individuals and nations. However, the report states that, despite the benefits, there has been insufficient participation in adult learning. As one policy lever, the OECD recommends the clarification of economic incentives and the introduction of co-financing mechanisms that can increase the efficiency of the provision of adult learning.

UNESCO developed its discourse on lifelong learning in a different manner (Ouane 2009). It avoided the rhetoric of human capital development. UNESCO’s approach has been more humanistic since its publication of the *Faure Report* in the early 1970s. It advocated “for the right and necessity of each individual to learn for his/her social, economic, political, and cultural development” (Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001, 2). The *Faure Report* claims: “Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. . . . The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts” (Faure et al. 1972, 181–82). In 1996, UNESCO published a report entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors 1996). This report was produced by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, which was chaired by Jacques Delors, former French minister of economics and finance and former president of the European Commission (1985–95). This report was more balanced than the OECD’s report. It recognized the significance of learning for work as well as the human potential for learning. As Jarvis (2007, 69) points out, the report views education as a dimension of all human living: The report began by calling UNESCO’s own foundation a hope “for a world that is a better place to live in” (Delors 1996, 14). It also criticized the emphasis placed on “all-out economic growth” (ibid., 15).

The Group of Eight (G8), which is comprised of seven of the world's leading industrialized nations and Russia, adopted the Cologne Charter: Aims and Ambitions for Lifelong Learning in June 1999.

The challenge every country faces is how to become a learning society and to ensure that its citizens are equipped with the knowledge, skills and qualifications they will need in the next century. Economies and societies are increasingly knowledge-based. Education and skills are indispensable to achieving economic success, civic responsibility, and social cohesion. The next century will be defined by flexibility and change; more than ever, there will be a demand for mobility. Today, a passport and a ticket allow people to travel anywhere in the world. In the future, the passport to mobility will be education and lifelong learning. This passport to mobility must be offered to everyone. (Group of Eight 1999)

The G8 economic summit brought the issue of education and lifelong learning to the forefront for the first time in twenty-five years. The summit argued for greater centrality of education and training in policy making among the member states. The Cologne Charter highlighted the importance of the creation of “lifelong learning,” by which people are encouraged to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for survival in the twenty-first century.

Based on these international developments, this book is a result of my comparative interest in the institutional development of lifelong learning policies and practices between Japan and Europe—two regions where lifelong learning is deeply rooted in the everyday lives of individuals. Yet, lifelong learning has developed in different ways in each culture. Further, my analysis is inspired by several ideas of European origin: risk, social inclusion, and social enterprises. The following questions stimulated my research curiosity: What are the impacts of global policy making on lifelong learning at regional and local levels? How were policy ideas transferred and translated to domestic, grassroots levels? In Europe, lifelong learning activities have been developed based on a philosophy that differs considerably from the Japanese philosophy. In the European policy context, the debate over lifelong learning is treated in a more utilitarian manner; meanwhile, Japanese traditional lifelong learning has been primarily understood as a cultural model. Europeans follow OECD policy and focus greater attention on knowledge production in the globalization

of social and economic life. It makes serious efforts to identify the types of knowledge required for economic and social developments. Peters and Besley (2006) described this activity as the creation of a “knowledge culture.” This might be considered the foundation for competition in the globally expanding knowledge economy. Lifelong learning is squarely connected to success and to individuals’ employment strategies in the knowledge economy because the current labor market demands ever-changing profiles of skills, qualifications, and experiences.

Since the 1990s, in tandem with international economic restructuring, the European Union (EU) has placed a high priority on the need to raise skill levels across Europe (Jarvis 2009b; Milana and Holford 2014). Indeed, the EU is nowadays a key player in making lifelong learning and adult education policies (Milana and Holford 2014). EU policy makers consider lifelong learning to be centered on vocational education and training a significant employment strategy. They wish to create a highly skilled workforce capable of adaptation to both European and global demands in an environment filled with intensified competition. The White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness, and Jobs issued by President Jacques Delors in 1993 was a milestone in the creation of EU policy for lifelong learning. This was crucial for the improvement of the significant unemployment situation in Europe. The follow-up was created during the Luxemburg Summit in 1997, which was held to determine the development of an employment strategy for the EU. Since that time, as Jones (2005, 248) points out, successive European summits have taken active measures on five key structural issues: (1) development of job-intensive growth, (2) reduction of nonwage labor costs, (3) introduction of more active labor market measures, (4) targeting of assistance for long-term unemployed individuals, and (5) investment in human resources. European citizens’ increased concerns contributed to the development of the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, which asked member states to commit to “the development of a skilled, trained, and adaptable workforce and labor markets responsive to economic change.”

As mentioned earlier, during the 1990s, lifelong learning was reconsidered for the first time since the early 1970s when UNESCO propounded the idea. At the time, although the OECD emphasized recurrent education as a strategy for the promotion of lifelong education (Tuijnman and Boström 2002, 99), it also actively promoted lifelong learning. Whereas UNESCO provided a broad use of the concept, the OECD narrowed the concept of lifelong learning to include human capital theory, which refers to the supply of productive skills and knowledge

in labor (cf. Schultz 1961; Mincer 1962; Becker 1964). In line with the OECD's policy making, the EU translated lifelong learning into the educational policies of the sovereign state and beyond. With respect to this policy move, Borg and Mayo (2005, 207–08) state the following: "Its re-emergence in this context, and in the context of the OECD, has to be seen against the backdrop of a world economic system characterized by the intensification of globalization and the emergence of the neo-liberal ideology."

In more recent policy developments, lifelong learning has been consciously embodied as policy integral to the Lisbon Strategy on the global knowledge economy. When they met in Lisbon, Portugal, in March 2000, the European Council set a new and ambitious goal for the EU: to become, by 2010, "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council 2000). In particular, the strategy emphasized the need for the EU to adapt to changes in the information society and to boost research and development. Consequently, the European Council published a key policy document, *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, which was based on conclusions reached during the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning. This policy document provided a key conceptual framework for current education policy discourse in Europe. On the very first page of the memorandum, the Council adopts the following definition of lifelong learning: "[A]ll purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competence." Further, it mentions the following:

Lifelong learning is no longer just one aspect of education and training; it must become the guiding principle for provision and participation across the full continuum of learning contexts. The coming decade must see the implementation of this vision. All those living in Europe, without exception, should have equal opportunities to adjust to the demands of social and economic change and to participate actively in the shaping of Europe's future. (European Commission 2000, 3)

Lifelong learning is positively and clearly defined as an activity that all citizens should engage in to enrich the quality of their lives. The Commission refers to four broad objectives of learning: personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employability/adaptability (Euro-



pean Commission 2001, 9; cf. Mulder and Sloane 2009). Nevertheless, in a very practical way, it proposes one crucial aim: the promotion of employability. In fact, a convergence has occurred in economic, industrial, and productive policies aimed at the achievement of the Lisbon objective.

The policy report highlights the enhancement of human capital, which directly leads to employability, by engagement in lifelong learning in the knowledge economy. The memorandum justifies the reason for making the practice of lifelong learning a top priority for Europe: “More than ever before, access to up-to-date information and knowledge, together with the motivation and skills to use these resources intelligently on behalf of oneself and the community as a whole, are becoming the key to strengthening Europe’s competitiveness and improving the employability and adaptability of the workforce” (European Commission 2000, 5). The report emphasizes that a comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategy for Europe should aim to “guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society” (European Commission 2000, 10). Economic and social change continues to modify and upgrade the profile of basic skills that everyone should possess as a minimum entitlement. The report mentions five skills as the “new basic skills” (European Commission 2000, 10–11): (1) IT skills, (2) foreign languages, (3) technological culture, (4) entrepreneurship, and (5) social skills. IT skills suggest digital literacy, which is genuinely new. Foreign languages are now becoming important for a larger number of people than they were in the past. Further, social skills—including self-confidence, self-direction, and risk taking—are becoming important because people are expected to behave much more autonomously than they did in the past. The follow-up report entitled *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (published in November 2001) makes a political commitment to this purpose. It states that the foundations for lifelong learning must be provided by governments through compulsory schooling. Adults who had dropped out of school with ongoing literacy, numeracy, and other basic skills needs should also be encouraged to participate in compensatory learning (European Commission 2001, 22).

Lifelong learning encourages individuals to participate in all spheres of social and economic life. Hence, by extension, it includes opportunities and risks they might face when they attempt to participate. Thus, it affects the extent to which they feel they belong to the society in which they have a fair say. According to a report prepared for the EU spring

council in 2007, during the previous decade, most new jobs developed in European countries were generated by the expansion of the knowledge economy (Work Foundation 2007, 9). In fact, between 1995 and 2005, employment across knowledge-based industries rose by 24 percent and significantly erased income inequality in Europe. According to the report, there was no evidence that the considerable growth in knowledge-based industries over the past decade widened income inequality in the EU (as measured by the Gini-coefficient) or in most national economies (Work Foundation 2007, 25). Furthermore, European efforts accelerated after the announcement of the midterm review of the Lisbon Strategy in the so-called Kok Report (European Commission 2004), which calls for more effective investment in human capital. In the report, the following statement is made in the section entitled “Building an inclusive labor market for stronger social cohesion”: “If Europe is to compete in the global knowledge society, it must also invest more in its most precious asset—its people. . . . Yet, at present, far from enough is being done in Europe to equip people with the tools they need to adapt to an evolving labor market, and this applies to high- and low-skilled positions and to both manufacturing and services” (European Commission 2004, 33). To produce a “highly educated, creative and mobile workforce,” the report asks member states to make lifelong learning schemes available to all—everyone must be encouraged to take part in them (European Commission 2004, 33). A report (European Commission 2005) following the midterm review further states: “The modernization and reform of Europe’s education and training systems is mainly the responsibility of Member States. However, there are certain key actions that must be taken at European level to facilitate and contribute to this process. . . . The Community will contribute to the objective of more and better jobs by mobilizing its expenditure policies” (European Commission 2005, 29). In 2005, the Mutual Learning Program was launched for increasing the adaptability of workers and enterprises and investing in an increasingly effective manner in human capital (European Commission Employment and Social Affairs 2008). The program was implemented in 2008 as a priority, given the increasing labor supply, by focusing on the people who are at the periphery of the labor market (Mutual Learning Program 2008). Meanwhile, the European Investment Bank is to mobilize a sum of EUR 50 billion (\$74 billion)<sup>6</sup> over the debate (European Investment Bank 2008). The bank focuses on the following three objectives paving the way for technological modernization and the tailoring of human capital to the European economy: (1) improving access to quality education and training; (2) supporting excellence in research, development, and innova-

tion; and (3) promoting the diffusion of information and communications technology networks, including audiovisual activities. Such funding obviously targets masses of unemployed youth, increased migration rates, and an aging population; all these issues are currently echoed in Japan as well.

Learning is a continuous process spanning a lifetime and is intended to improve and adjust oneself to society. I would like to point out that lifelong learning is a central part of European educational policy discourse. In fact, the flagship “Lifelong Learning Program 2007–2013” was introduced in order to integrate all of the existing programs in the education field into one overall framework program. On March 10, 2008, an EU-wide conference titled “University and Lifelong Learning” was held, with the welcome address given by Mojca Kucler Dolinar, the Slovenian Minister for Higher Education, Science, and Technology. It confirmed the above point:

When we speak about lifelong learning as a twenty-first century educational approach, we often forget that lifelong learning is not a separate process conducted in parallel to formal education; lifelong learning must be acknowledged and incorporated into formal education. In this present-day age of rapidly changing technologies and organizations, the individual’s capacity to learn and to adapt to the needs of the environment in terms of new skills and knowledge is increasingly appreciated. The simple ability to learn is no longer enough. (European Union 2008)

Learning can occur across the full range of our lives and at any stage. Europeans believe that this comprehensive education strategy allows for social equity and ultimately helps in attaining the goal of a knowledge economy. In March 2010, the Lisbon Strategy was succeeded by the new Europe 2020 strategy which aimed to make the EU “a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy” (European Commission 2010).

Meanwhile, what about Japan? Obviously, the European lifelong learning policy, which focuses on human capital development, can provide a lesson for Japan, where the economy and society have remained persistently sluggish over the past two decades. Almost simultaneously with European development, lifelong learning has risen to become a top priority in Japan’s education policy agenda based on apparent stimulation provided by international policy making on lifelong learning. However, Japan’s lifelong learning in the 2000s is emerging quite uniquely. It is actually producing a specific kind of knowledge and skills. In the

remainder of this book, I present a detailed analysis of the development of Japan's new lifelong learning, which employs the concept of *risk*. I argue that one's choice of engagement in lifelong learning is intimately associated with the perception of risk.

### Risk: An Analytical Tool

Risk is an important analytical tool in this book. Risk is defined as the probability of harm and injury (Garland 2003, 50). This probability cannot be determined with absolute confidence. Thus, I discuss risk in the context of uncertainty. Risk, which is recognized as an emergent modality of governance, has captured the sociological imagination in recent years. Over the past few decades, scholars across disciplines have documented a modality of risk governance that is emerging globally. This modality of risk governance entails the production of new forms of knowledge, new subjectivity, and new regulatory space. Three major approaches to defining risk in sociocultural research that have been developed are the following: (1) the cultural-symbolic approach, primarily advocated by Mary Douglas;<sup>7</sup> (2) risk society by Ulrich Beck;<sup>8</sup> and (3) governmentality by Michel Foucault.<sup>9</sup>

<b>Constructionist</b>		
	<b>Risk Society</b> (Beck) Critical structuralism - What is the relationship of risks to the structure?  <b>Cultural /Symbolic</b> (Douglas) Functional structuralism - Why are some dangers selected as risks and others not selected?	<b>Governmentality</b> (Foucault) / Poststructuralism - How do the discourses around risks operate in the construction of subjectivity and social life?
<b>Individual</b>		<b>Social</b>
<b>Subjective</b>		<b>Collective</b>
<b>Techno-scientific</b> - What risks exist? - How should we manage them?	<b>Realist</b>	

1.1. Risk—a conceptual map. Created based on Lupton (1999a, 35) and Taylor-Gooby and Zinn (2006, 47).

In the first approach, risk is viewed largely as a matter of perception related to specific or cultural issues. Works of symbolic anthropology by Mary Douglas (1992) highlight the ways that risk cannot be isolated from culture. In other words, individuals' risk perceptions are culturally biased. They are never fully objective or knowable outside of belief systems. As Douglas and Wildavsky (1982, 6–7) explain, individuals' responses to, and perceptions of, risk can only be understood against the background of their embeddedness in sociocultural backgrounds, rather than by individual cognition. Furthermore, the meaning of risk is not static. It is constantly constructed and negotiated. Mary Douglas, a functional structuralist, primarily analyzes risk by attempting to identify the ways that underlying cultural structures, hierarchies, and categories serve to define risk knowledge and practices (Lupton 1999a).

Proponents of the second approach define risk as a strategy related to instrumental rationality. This approach essentially adheres to the realist view of risk. It is viewed as a product of reflexive modernization or second (late) modernity, to distinguish it from industrial modernity or first modernity. This approach is inspired by Ulrich Beck's groundbreaking work in *Risk Society* (1992). Beck defines risk as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (21). This view assumes that a fundamental social transition is occurring. Society is changing from an industrialized society to a risk society. Simultaneously, uncertainty is simply replacing conventional trust and belief in progress by science and technology. In late modernity, risk refers to that which cannot be known—it refers to unquantifiable uncertainties. Beck employed the notion of reflexivity to describe a modern society that "is confronted with problems that are (unintentionally) self-inflicted" (Arnoldi 2009, 50). "All around the world, contemporary society is undergoing radical change that poses a challenge to Enlightenment-based modernity and opens a field where people *choose* new and unexpected forms of the social and the political" (Beck 1999b, 1, emphasis in original). Reflexivity is a response to conditions that arouse fear or anxiety. It is active, rather than passive. Reflexive modernity is termed "reflective" because it represents an era in which society begins to confront itself rather than external others. The term "reflexivity" is also used by Anthony Giddens, who pays greater attention to the operation of reflexive modernization at the individual level. He claims it is a defining characteristic of all human action; it involves the continual monitoring of action and its contexts (Giddens 1990, 36–37; cf. Giddens 1991, 1998b, 1999). The macrosocial process is characterized by uncertainty related primarily to constant changes and

cultural fragmentation—the breakdown of norms and traditions. The concept of predictability or certainty, which was a major characteristic during the first modernity, has currently collapsed. Entry into the second modernity has left our everyday lives more susceptible and fragile to unpredictable risks. This forces us to survive the new logic of the organizing society.

Another important part of Beck's theory on risk society concerns individualization. This can be defined as "the disintegration of the certainties of industrial society as well as the compulsion to find and invent new certainties for oneself and others without them" (Beck 1994, 14; cf. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Individuals must produce their own biographies in the absence of fixed and obligatory traditions. They remain conscious of their social context and their own roles as actors within it. Mass education, improvements in living standards, new social movements, and changes in the labor markets contribute to the process of individualization. One reality of the contemporary life we face is expressed as follows: "We live with an increasingly large quota of uncertainty and we are often overwhelmed. What are we to do in a *different* context? How can we tackle a *new* problem? Or, more simply and generally, *what* are we to do, which choice should we make? Many of our tasks become exercises in problem solving, compelling us to acquire information, study the instructions, and, in the end, make a choice" (Melucci 1996, 45, emphases in original). Reflexive individuals retain a level of "liquidity" similar to the sense defined in Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* (2000). This flexibility allows them to manage and respond to risk and uncertainty. Although uncertainties continue to expand, the best preparation is to remain flexible. Flexibility allows individuals to make adjustments as they acquire and interpret new knowledge and skills (cf. Ekberg 2007, 354). Both Beck and Giddens, so-called critical structuralists, develop their theories based on Marxist critical legacy with a focus on social conflict, as well as inequalities, dissent, and the need for social change in relation to risk (Lupton 1999a). They critique the ways that social institutions—including families, states, work, science, economic systems, and legal systems—wield power over individuals and reduce their capacity for agency and autonomy.

The third approach relies on the concept of governmentality, which was developed by Michel Foucault. This approach primarily refers to questions of how institutions organize power and govern populations and how risk is used in various technologies of government. The governmentality approach is characterized by "the ensemble formed by the

institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercises of this very specific albeit complex form of power” (Foucault 1991, 102). The domain of government covers a variety of human dramas:

The things with which in this sense government is to be concerned are in fact men [sic], but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility, etc: men in their relation to that other kind of things, customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking, etc; lastly, men in their relation to that other kind of things, accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death, etc. (Foucault 1991, 93)

Risk is understood—under the Foucauldian perspective, which is generally framed as poststructuralism—as one of the heterogeneous governmental strategies of disciplinary power by which populations and individuals are monitored and managed, so the goals of democratic humanism can be met (Lupton 1999b, 4). One of its central preoccupations concerns the relationship between power and knowledge. Power relations are always implied, along with knowledge. Individuals are believed not to possess social identities. Rather, their identities are constantly shifting. They are products of dynamic interactions that occur between power and knowledge. Thus, this governmentality perspective offers the most relativist or socially constructionist position on risk (Lupton 1999b, 6). In fact, what we understand to be risk is a product of historically, socially, and politically contingent ways of seeing. As Ewald (1991, 199, emphasis in original) stated, “Nothing is a risk in itself; there is no risk in reality. But on the other hand, anything *can* be a risk; it all depends on how one analyzes the danger, considers the event.”

### Risk: A Japanese Context

On November 20, 2009, Ulrich Beck gave a keynote speech at the annual conference of the German Association for Social Scientific Research on Japan held in Berlin. To describe the speech, which was entitled “World Risk Society: The ‘Cosmopolitan Turn,’” Beck contributed a brief paragraph to the conference abstract book:

Basic concepts of the theory of reflexive modernization cannot be simply applied in different contexts of the world. . . . This “cosmopolitan turn” criticized the universalistic assumptions and expectations of the early theory of risk society. The point is that the theory itself has to be cosmopolitanized. . . . This means that basic concepts like “risk” and “individualization” have to be adapted and transformed to a multi-path outlook of modernity. These concepts have to be re-interpreted in order to be “usable” in different societies and contexts. More than that: In order to understand the “post-universalistic” European path we have to relate it to and compare it with different South-East-Asian paths (for example). This is a basic challenge to social theory to develop an epistemology/methodology for path dependencies and their comparison. (Beck 2009b)

Indeed, most scholarship on risk is based on experiences that occurred in Germany and the United Kingdom (UK) at the end of the twentieth century. These have been described as “post-traditional” (Giddens 1994, 56) because old traditions were called into question.

Currently, risk is a major research topic for Japanese social science scholars (e.g., Tachibanaki 2004; Hook and Takeda 2007; Okuma-Nyström 2007; Hook 2010; Kingston 2010; Chan et al. 2010; Suzuki et al. 2010; Bradley 2012; Ito and Suzuki 2013; Ogawa 2013; Azuma et al. 2014; Williamson 2014) who are contributing an East Asian perspective to the global discourse on risk (cf. Calhoun 2010). For example, among the most current accounts, Glenn Hook edited a special issue of *Japan Forum* devoted to risk and security in Japan (Hook 2010). Highlighting the lacunae in the literature on risk in Japan, the articles examined Japan’s security policy in relation to China and North Korea and discussed the intersection of risk at international and societal levels by focusing on U.S. bases in Okinawa and on terrorism/counterterrorism. Further, Chan and colleagues (2010) provide an account of risk from the perspective of social policies related to families and the labor market. Meanwhile, Kingston (2010) points out increases in risks since the early 1990s as one of the key concepts required to understand contemporary Japan. These risks are analyzed based on vivid descriptions of negative net equity in housing, an expanding precariat, child abuse, suicide, and growing socioeconomic divides. All of these Japanese accounts relate to the “logic of risk distribution” that is growing in importance as a political issue (Beck 1992, 19–22).



In the emergence of active policy development on lifelong learning in Japan over the past decade, I have observed that the promotion of lifelong learning as a state policy reduces risks for both the state and the individual. Risk management poses a new challenge to the state and to international organizations. It also poses a challenge to ordinary citizens at grassroots levels. It has generated demands for new sets of laws, regulations, and instruments to manage various kinds of risks. It has also introduced new modes of interaction between the state and the individual. Meanwhile, little research has been conducted to examine these types of interactions between institutions and to observe the impact of individual participation. Further, there has been some criticism of the existing risk scholarship. In his book, Jakob Arnoldi, a Danish scholar who studies risk, points out that many social theorists, including risk scholars, have difficulty understanding the major changes occurring on an institutional scale that highlight the transition from one epoch to another (Arnoldi 2009, 5). With respect to the contemporary situation, this applies to the transition that is occurring from welfare statehood to neoliberal politics. Further, as Mythen (2007, 802) notes, the risk society thesis is a macrotheoretical endeavor that is not sufficiently attentive to empirical evidence.

I address these issues in my qualitative ethnography, which showcases Japan's lifelong learning through the lens of two types of risks: (1) governmental risk, as inspired by Foucault's notion of governmentality, and (2) socioeconomic risk, hinted at by Beck's notion of individualization that occurs in risk society. What kinds of knowledge does the Japanese state deploy in its lifelong learning policies to counteract these risks? How do ordinary people create, circulate, mediate, react, and absorb these risks in their everyday lives? I explore how the "large processes" (Tilly 1984) of institutional change—from the welfare state to neoliberal politics—shift the responsibility of risk management in economic, social, and political institutions from states to markets; from public to private, as well as third-sector/civil society bodies; and from collectives to individuals. Neoliberalism is commonly viewed as an economic doctrine that endorses individual freedoms and rights. It seeks to limit excessive state intervention by the actions of decentralized authority. Human action has become characterized by economic rationality. This ideology has gained dominance in advanced industrial countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Japan, since the 1980s.

My first topic of investigation will focus on governmental risk. Specifically, I will focus on how risk is employed in various technologies

by the government and on the power that risk may hold over people. In particular, I will explore forms of neoliberal government and its innovative distribution of responsibility between the state and the individual. I believe that the strength of the governmentality approach lies in (1) its capacity to analyze specific forms of risk rationality and technology; (2) the different types of agency and identity involved in practices of risk; and (3) the political and social imaginations linked to these practices (cf. Dean 1999a). Furthermore, Ong (2006, 12) stresses the importance of the study of neoliberalism as a specific type of governmentality. For example, current neoliberal regimes rely increasingly on self-governance that allows individuals to accept additional responsibility for themselves. In fact, Dean (1999b) regards governmentality as a study of the conduct of conduct: modern power conducts the subjects into conducting themselves in certain ways. I would argue that this activity appears to develop because of education. Rose (1999, 234) claims, "One is always in continuous training, lifelong learning, perpetual assessment, continual incitement to buy, to improve oneself, constant monitoring of health and never-ending risk management." Under the learning initiative, individuals are expected to be autonomous, self-responsible, prudent subjects who rationally weigh the pros and cons of choices.

I locate the current discussion on *atarashii kōkyō*, or the New Public Commons, within Japanese education policy making and in relation to discussions on governmental risk. The concept of the New Public Commons was first presented in the early 2000s during discussions on possible revisions to be made to the Fundamental Law of Education. Since the term *shōgai gakushū*, (lifelong learning), was added to the Fundamental Law of Education in December 2006, discussions in both policy and academic circles have centered on the kinds of lifelong learning policy that Japan should specifically formulate. In my fieldwork, I have observed that the major theme of these discussions revolves around how lifelong learning might support the New Public Commons. The New Public Commons may serve as a foundation for solidarity, which can, in turn, enable good citizens to improve society. It can also function as a sphere in which citizens in general, or those interested in a particular cause, can voluntarily participate (New Public Commons Roundtable 2010a). I argue that Japan's new lifelong learning, primarily developed in the 2000s, contributes to the actual formation of this public sphere. It is expected to produce a new type of disciplinary knowledge referred to as "comprehensive knowledge" (a literal translation of *sōgōteki na chi* in Japanese) that, in turn, is expected to support the creation of the New

Public Commons. A reframing process is also involved with respect to the relationship between the state and the individual.

This very governmental risk should be interpreted as a new metanarrative that is strongly linked to the government's neoliberal projects. Japan's new lifelong learning policies in the 2000s were introduced specifically as a method of risk management in contemporary Japanese society, which was once described as general middle-class society. However, at present, its population is socioeconomically polarized. It is popularly referred to as *kakusa*. In other words, it is a negative revelation of neoliberal economic measures implemented in the early 2000s. In fact, the current political discourse on neoliberalism represents more than a policy shift aimed at deregulation and liberalization. It reasserts the interests of economic elites and restores a more direct expression of class power. Against the backdrop of the deepening socioeconomic nationwide divide, in imagining the realization of the New Public Commons, the Japanese neoliberal state has attempted to manage the risk of governing society by the introduction of a strong lifelong learning initiative. "Comprehensive knowledge" generated by state-sponsored lifelong learning activities is disciplinary in nature. This knowledge aims to undertake problem-solving activities exclusively in local communities or *chiiki*—the daily centers of people's lives, thoughts, and behaviors. In fact, local communities, which serve as key actors in Japanese civil society, were reinstitutionalized as places for the practice of lifelong learning activities so that people might enhance social solidarity and collective consciousness by engaging in problem-solving activities as members of the community. In this context, local community can be understood as an entity in which people cooperate to govern aspects of their own lives (cf. Bowles and Gintis 2002).

My second topic of investigation will focus on socioeconomic risk. I will primarily employ Beck's notion of individualization to demonstrate how the process of individualization involves shifts from public to private social security and includes the privatization of economic risk in ways that affect individuals. This process is also associated with the creation and actualization of new boundaries for individual responsibilities. Individualization means that one must choose among risks, conform to one's internalized standards, and be responsible for one's self while simultaneously remaining dependent on conditions outside one's control (Lupton 1999a, 70). Individuals must turn inward to cope with anxiety and insecurity. These self-choices require intense and continuous negotiation with others that involve risk-taking. Thus, individualization itself carries and creates new socioeconomic risks.

We are facing a qualitative shift in the experience of contemporary capitalism expressed through labor market change and the new relations of employment it generates. The traditional lifetime employment practice in Japan has not functioned well because many of the businesses with the practice can no longer maintain it due to their increasing exposure to global competition. This deterioration of the practice has naturally led to the increase in risk in the livelihoods of workers. As Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) argue, these new risks appear in the form of growing wage discrepancies, benefit (or social insurance coverage) inequalities, and family instability. They generate a novel set of contingencies associated with the neoliberal labor market. In other words, Japan's labor market is becoming fluid: workers who used to enjoy high job security under the lifetime employment system now face lower salaries or even risk losing their jobs. The labor market indeed serves as "a signifier" (Doogan 2009, 143), par excellence, of societal transformation. It embodies the outcomes of technological change, industrial and occupational restructuring, deregulation, flexibilization, and individualization. This scenario was definitely echoed in contemporary Japanese society (cf. Genda 2001; Kaneko 2007; Iwata and Nishizawa 2008; Shibuya 2010).

In the early 2010s, Japan experienced a sharp rise in labor market dualism. The share of nonregular workers represented more than one-third of the total number of employed people (MHLW 2011). Nonregular workers included part-time workers, short-term contract employees, and dispatch workers employed by temporary work agencies. Socioeconomic risks were disproportionately experienced by social groups, including the less educated, those with limited or outdated skills, and young people. Because ordinary people face socioeconomic risks, the Japanese state aims to develop competency-based skills and experiences in the form of new knowledge to be transmitted by vocational training, an important component of lifelong learning. This type of training includes competencies (1) in building relations with others, (2) in self-understanding and self-management, and (3) in problem solving and career planning. These competencies form the foundation of *ikiru chikara* (zest for living), an educational mission Japanese schools currently attempt to instill in their students.

At a later point in this book, based on a theory that Stephen Lyng termed "voluntary risk taking" (Lyng 2004), I describe a type of vocational training course developed by the Japanese government in the late 2000s. This vocational training course was primarily intended to nurture people who would support the New Public Commons. These participants were expected to serve as social entrepreneurs who would establish NPOs