

AN ABLED NATION:
DISABLED ATHLETES IN JAPAN AND HOW THEIR BODIES ARE GOVERNED

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the ways in which the Japanese state uses the disabled body and disability athletics as a tool of governance and how that affects the incorporation of disabled people into Japanese society. Throughout Japan's history the disability identity has been a subject of negotiation between social actors including the government, general public, those with disabilities, and powerful international collectives. After World War II, disabled former soldiers were celebrated for their national sacrifice while other disabled bodies were displaced. In later decades, disability athletics became a space where the symbol of the ideal disabled body has been promoted for public consumption. On the stage of athletics, various actors have shaped and influenced each other by advocating different visions of the disabled body in Japanese society. Disabled athletes negotiate depictions of disability as idealized (the 'super cripp') or stigmatized (the 'pitiable disabled person'), and these depictions in turn create public expectations for what the disabled body should be but at times glosses over the struggles of many disabled people. The purpose of this thesis is to consider how notions of the disabled body are used to negotiate nationalism, modern ideas of care and social responsibility, and expectations to become a body of inspiration for the disabled community and the general public. The core question is: What are the implications of the disabled body being used as a tool on the stage of disability athletics for governance in modern day Japan? The thesis will provide a basis for deeper understanding about the relevance of disability athletics as both a form of governance and a site of identity formation for the disabled.



Figure 8 *Wheelchair Tennis Serve*. Photo by the author

Preface

A Wheelchair Basketball Tournament

In the summer of 2016, in the Kansai area of Japan, a group of people in wheelchairs gather in front of a multi-purpose athletic center talking to each other. Passing through a set of automatic glass doors even more wheelchair athletes are huddled in small groups talking. An advertisement for Japan's upcoming Tokyo 2020 games, and a poster displaying the Japanese 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympics and Paralympics medal count is posted in the lobby on a bulletin board. Several gym goers are in and out, utilizing different features of the multipurpose sports center, and making note of this uncommon gathering of people in wheelchairs. On a nearby table there are event programs, and within the program there is a map indicating that spectator seating is on the second floor. A line has amassed in front of a tiny elevator- it can only accommodate one wheelchair at a time. Across the lobby is the only other access to the second floor, the stairs. The seating on the second floor is colosseum style, lifting the audience above the two basketball courts. To the right, a large group of volunteers are waiting in an organized manner, though their numbers seem too large for an event like this. The friends and families of the wheelchair athlete irregularly take up the other seats.

After a short wait, some volunteers on the right run out of the seating area and emerge a floor below; some are holding signs with team names on them. The teams gradually lineup and face two flags: the flag of Japan, and the flag of the National Japanese Wheelchair Federation, both of which hangs high above them. A major Japanese corporation branded itself onto the jersey of one of the teams, playing the role as a team sponsor. There is one all-female team, competing against the all-male opponents. After each team are lined up, the opening ceremonies commence. People in the stands pull out their portable cameras and begin filming. The player

representative, and the president of the tournament proceed to give speeches. Key points in the speeches indicate, for the community the upcoming 2016 Rio games are significant, and that the athletes at this event could well be Paralympians for the 2020 Tokyo games. Once the opening ceremonies conclude, the teams go their separate ways and start warm ups. Playing under the elated gaze of their families in the stands, before the flag of the sport they chose to represent, and under the flag of the nation they live in. All of which plays a part in who they are. The games have now begun.

Modern disability athletics in Japan

This scene touches on some of the major issues in disability athletics today in Japan. The negotiation of changes in the disability identity is undertaken by individuals and takes place in small communities, but it is informed by structures as large as the nation-state. In the example above, athletes, families, leaders, and high-ranking officials, functioning as macroscale actors, microscale actors, and the disabled athletes that directly experience disability enter into the world of disability identity with a variety of perspectives. Beyond those people at the event, the politics of disability identity transforms interactions that bear on government policy, corporate branding, families, and the Japanese consumer. In encounters such as this wheelchair basketball tournament, a diverse array of groups come into close contact that in turn builds the future of the disabled athletic identity in Japan.

Disabled individuals are forming new identities, and are developing closer bonds with each other in these encounters. They are reshaping ideas of the past, moving away from notions of the passive disabled body. Asserting themselves as active individuals via the world of athletics. Those with disabilities are a small but close-knit group. This group is lumped together

as one despite individual stories of success and struggle. In a setting like the basketball tournament, the disabled individuals are embracing their minority status. This is crucial, as Joseph Hankins (2014) shows, for there are stakes in appearing or not appearing as a body assimilated in a minority group. Events like these function as a stage for both solidarity building and assimilation, where disabled athletes are assimilated into the disability identity and learn to see themselves in relation to broader ideas of minority identity in Japan. In so doing, they composed their identity to grow stronger, and establish potential for tackling more areas in which this identity can be negotiated. The identity is in turn negotiated with the public, comprising of their family members, and the everyday Japanese consumer, and the state.

The importance of the disabled minority collective, and their ability to project a positive identity plays a particular importance on the microscale. While the public is not necessarily seeking out images of the disabled, these meeting points contribute to a narrative of the formation of ideas about disability. By projecting a certain identity (athletic, vigorous, dedicated) to the public, disabled people work themselves into these seemingly positive discourses of the disabled identity in Japan. As Karen Nakamura (2013) demonstrates, when negative actions are associated with disability, these actions are blamed on the disability thus, people wish to disassociate themselves with it. In turn, when positive actions and attributes are paired with disability, it reflects positively on the disability identity, thus pulling people into closer association (Nakamura 2013). The public sees this athletic identity as an identity with positive connotations attached to it, incentivizing them to interact with it.¹ This is because the type of disability identity people are exposed to changes the way it is sought out. These identities shape their reality. As seen with the volunteers, people might start to seek out this ‘positive’ disabled

¹ Positive connotations attached to disability identity does not mean it is free from prejudice, often even a seemly positive identity is based in prejudice and assumptions

identity because they have become invested in its narrative. As Lieba Faier (2009) argues, in an attempt to understand an identity, “people self-consciously negotiate the terms of...belonging” via “cultural (and) political-economic...shifts.” In this shift, positive disability identity is selected because it establishes a discourse in which people want to participate.

This positive account of disability is utilized by the government and those in high level social position such as corporations. Those with disabilities are being used as a symbol of success despite adversity. This symbol has amazing power, and it is being advertised in such a way so that it is consumable to the public and those with disabilities. The macroscale actors realize that there is a social benefit to the public becoming invested in the disability identity. The government and corporations, in turn, appear invested in making this desirable disabled image appealing, trying to play to a favored public narrative. Since those with disabilities are becoming a more public minority identity, the government is trying to build participatory welfare systems, which demonstrates an attempt at “fostering...equality and inclusion” (Nakamura 2006) (Chan 2006). For this reason, the Japanese government attach themselves to it in a very explicit manner. As seen with the tournament coordinator’s speech, these athletes are told they too can represent a nation, like the national sports heroes of the past. Corporations might see an opportunity within these groups to play up to a sentiment or tap into a group of people that have not been targeted previously. These macroscale actors are linking themselves to disability because there is opportunity in governing a body that has long been passed over.

Those with disabilities are moving into more public areas of society. For them this is a meeting point in which the disability identity is negotiated. Macroscale actors, and microscale actors see an importance in this identity. This is because all three of these groups are facing

Japan and this new identity. The Japanese future hangs high above them in tandem with the disabled athletic identity. To them the future of Japan is the future of disability.

Introduction

Focus

The focus of this thesis will be the Japanese government's use of disability sports on the stage of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics to show they are supporting those with disabilities. The Japanese government is showing signs of cultivating a progressive narrative around disability and projecting this to the world and their domestic population. I believe that disabled athletics are a symbol of progress that demonstrates that a nation is invested into taking care of its citizens. It symbolizes a world power status because it shows that Japan has the economic means to take care of all its populace. This has been seen previously with Japan's hosting of the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games. The upcoming 2020 Paralympics is possible stage for the Japanese government to lend exposure to those with disabilities. Those in macroscale positions are cultivating the disabled identity in a positive way. This helps demonstrate that Japan is a nation worth being emulated. Symbolizing Japan has come full circle, because Japan once had to mimic other nations for medical solutions. One example would be when Japanese doctor Nakamura Yutaka visited Stoke Mandeville hospital to learn more about their practices of rehabilitation (Frost 2012). The disabled athlete and the Paralympics are a showcase to demonstrate Japan's worth. The Japanese government is taking steps to construct a social reality in which the disabled athlete is becoming a functional stand-in for the general disability identity. These authorities are building positive notions about the disabled community in this way. Making it so the public becomes invested in this identity, and the disabled community becomes invested in the state.

When a minority group becomes invested in the state, it helps serve as a tool of political legitimization. The reason that those with disabilities care about the way the state projects their identity is summed up by the findings of Stefano Puntoni, Joelle Vanhmmme, and Ruban Visscher.

They found that minority groups show positive feelings to a brand, in this case the state, that depicts their livelihood in a positive manner (Puttoni, Vanhamme and Visscher 2011). On the world stage, by helping those with disabilities it demonstrates to the public an economically and socially advanced nation. This can be seen with surface level changes taking place in the Japanese disability ethos. There are stronger portrayals within the media, and verbal affirmation by the government to show the equality of disabled citizens; one avenue is disability athletics and athletic stars. Strong media portrayals help the public become invested in the narrative the government is presenting. The equality of those with disabilities must be addressed in a very open fashion in order for Japan to be considered one of the most modern nations. Disability sports is a vessel this equality is presented.

Minorities and the government: why this is important

As Japan moves more into the role of a world power, it is pulling new groups such as those with disabilities into their national discourse. For this reason, it is important to closely examine Japan's actions. Due to the minority status of those with disabilities the significance of this is intensified. Ever since the post-World War II period Japan has been going through social changes. It has adopted a reformed mindset composed of certain humanitarian values. For Japan, as it grows both socially and economically, more is expected of it on the world stage. One of these aspects that Japan must address is disability. The 2020 Paralympics is the next major venue in which disability and Japanese cultural values will collide. While literature on disability in Japan is thin, literature on disability athletics in Japan is even thinner. With the significance of the 2020 Summer Tokyo Paralympics, it is important to build a basis in which the understanding of this phenomenon can occur. The ultimate goal and the importance of this paper is to help

provide a gateway in which knowledge can be built with regard to the significance of disability sports to governance, power, and societal understanding.

It is obvious that those with disabilities are a disadvantaged group of people who hold the moniker of a minority. With minority status, they become subjects of stereotypes. They face hardship every day, discrimination, and assumptions about their being. Those with disabilities are assumed to be weak. Formulating the idea that they are subjects of pity and incapable of accomplishing things on their own. This minority group is thought to be the subject of other's generosity and service. They are also considered to be inspirational people who are brave enough to fight adversity. Despite the vast diversity between those with disabilities, from deaf to those who have down-syndrome, they are seen as a cohesive unit. As a result of these stereotypes, I think those with disabilities are an important group to investigate, and why many universities are starting to see Disability Studies as a legitimate field of research.

Disability is a topic to which I have always been exposed to. This exposure is what built up my interest in disability studies. My mother worked as a mobility instructor for the blind, a special education teacher, and teacher for emotionally disturbed students. On the other side of the coin, my father works as a doctor. Conversations on a vast array of disability issues, while not extremely common, took place often enough to leave an impact on me. Due to my parent's professions, I heard both sides of the story: the social side, and the medical side. As for myself, I am learning disabled and went to a special needs high school. Upon entering a university, I was prompted to select a minor to go along with my East Asian Studies major. I was unsure of what I should select. After being assigned to do a project about the Japanese education system, I sought to write about Japan's disability educational arrangement. I was impeded by the fact there was only one book in the library that mentioned the existence of a disability education system in

Japan. At this point, I decided to get my minor in Disability Studies, and I wanted to help end this literature shortage on disability in Japan. I want to be a base which future scholars can understand Japan's progression into a world power, and the way the disabled athlete played a role in it.

Methods

I will utilize a variety of anthropological techniques. These techniques will pertain to symbolic analyses, showing the power which the disabled person holds. Top-down analysis will show how the government and media powers are presenting a select narrative to the public to govern the disabled body. The use of a theoretical framework such as biopolitics shows how the Japanese government uses the disabled body for political purposes. Also, the 'super-crip' model, shows how the public gets invested into positive portrayals of disability. In addition to this, in the summer of 2016 I traveled to Japan to conduct field research. This research took me to a variety of different locations in Japan. I watched sporting events for the disabled and conducted both formal and informal interviews. Beyond this I have conducted a variety of literature examinations, which include scholarly books and articles. It also includes Japanese news sites, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and various other handouts. As English literature on Japanese disabled athletics is limited, it is necessary for me to pull these resources together to construct a narrative that shows in what ways the Japanese government is utilizing the disabled athletic identity.

Factors of disability governance in Japan

The disabled body is a governed body in Japan. This interaction between the state and those with disabilities is predicated on top-down interaction. Making those with disabilities in Japan subjects of the Japanese government, the Japanese economy, and the Japanese culture. Per Foucault, bodies are the driving force of the economy, they are political instruments that can be deployed in systems of power for economic production (Repo 2016). Those with disabilities are defined under systems of authority and are utilized for politically advantageous circumstances. These bodies are tools of political legitimization.

Different times and contexts will change how bodies are classified and deployed. Within this time/context framework, one will always “govern themselves in ways that will maximize the human capital” (Repo 2016). The government’s policy and future goals incentivize individuals to take part in selective social interactions in order to advance economically. This means individuals take part in self-governance. Thus people will be selective with whom they interact with because it will affect their economic production. It forces the public to psychologically adjust to change and the way their body is governed. I believe neo-liberal economic means of production function in a way to maximize power obtainment. This in a sense is the politicization of life and death via the economic logics of the time (Bussolini 2009). This system of biopolities functions within the context of modernity.

Modernity

Within modernity new systems of socialization start to take place. Under the umbrella of modernity new groups of people and new bodies will be brought into the national discourse. The way these different bodies start to associate with the public and state will change with the context

of the state's history, social situation, and economy. Within Japan systems of modernity seemed to take shape in different ways than within Europe. Japanese modernity was more government centric. The Japanese notion of liberalism encouraged people to express themselves as a collective via the state. In addition, Japan has had an unbroken lineage of control of their land, where power only changed hands through revolution not colonialization. This allowed for capitalism to become very Japanese centric, where Japanese capital was heavily distinguished between foreign capital.

Beyond this there is also the notions of disability modernity. Disability modernity is when those with disabilities are brought into systems of charity to solve the 'disabled problem.' Only the most powerful nations have the economic and social resources to do this. These systems of charity, and the way these disabled bodies are governed will change with the economic and social logic prevalent at that time. Examples of this can be seen with the different interpretation of disability modernity between Europe and Japan. The European take was that those with disabilities could only be saved by medical institutions, but the ideal disabled person would not be reliant on these systems of charity. Ideally disabled individuals should be able to save themselves, and push through their struggles. The Japanese take on modernity can be divided into two different periods, the wartime period, and the postwar period. Within the wartime period the hero soldiers were propped up and supported, and in the postwar period those with disabilities became entangled in a charity for all system.

While these ideas are separate, there was an exchange between these two systems. This was seen with German ideas flowing into Japan. Within German hospitals the mentally ill were moved out in favor of disabled soldiers, who were status symbols in Germany. This allowed for systems of German eugenics to develop, and those with disabilities who were incapable of being

part of a community were put to death, or sterilized. Japanese hospitals were similar in the sense that those bodies who could provide service to the emperor were given preferential treatment in hospitals. This happened while the everyday disabled person was hidden away. Japanese eugenics started to take place. In this system in order to improve 'greater society,' those with disabilities were sterilized or put to death. There is a clear strand of logic that comes from these systems of modernity. Those with disabilities who benefit society get charity, those who burden it do not get this charity. These notions of modernity build stages of social interaction that people use to understand disability.

Stages

Within Japan social interaction exists on different levels, and takes place between different societal actors. These different social interactions build different understandings of the disabled body and allow people to be invested in this body in different ways. An example of this was the 1964 Tokyo Stoke Mandeville games. The disabled athletes taking part in this event used to have the label of the 'disabled soldier,' but now were given the label of 'disabled athlete.' This allowed them to be associated with national imagery and a space for the public to become reinvested in the disabled body. This provides a means for the public and those with disabilities to become invested in the discourse of the state.

Interaction also takes place on the everyday level, where people with disabilities and non-disabled people interact with physical and social spaces. Both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are formed within these spaces, and people come to understand those with disabilities through these interactions. For example, the social customs of certain spaces can build an environment where negative social interactions take place, which can build negative

understandings of disability. There is also a governmental exchange level to disability. The Japanese government has been including those with disabilities into their national discourse. Those with disabilities are also appearing in the discourse between Japan and outside nations. Within this system, Japan is cultivating Japanese solutions to disability problems in less economically advanced nations. This exchange would in turn help display a standing on the world stage, and is a system to legitimize Japanese power on this level.

Lastly, due to the fact there are several sites which constructs narratives of the disabled identity within Japan, it offers a space that the disabled identity can come together and be negotiated. This allows for a domain where disability advocacy can happen. This advocacy takes place on three different levels: internally, governmentally, and internationally. Within all of these forms of social advocacy they are able to sway the logic of the people in power, construct pitiable selves, and leverage themselves on different stages. One of these sites where those with disabilities have been inserting themselves is in the world of sports.

Sport

Different sites and different actors allow for the disabled identity to be understood in different ways. Sport is a relevant site of social interaction where the disabled body comes to be understood. The construction of this identity is possible because of the power that sport has in society. Simon Gwyn Roberts (2015) proposes “sport (is) acting as a vehicle for the promotion and celebration of regional and sub-national identities.” It functions under systems of soft power, that sway the hearts and the minds of the public. People look up towards sport as a way to convey and understand their regional and personal identity. Within Japan, sport can serve as a mechanism that displays what it means to be Japanese to both those inside of Japan, and outside

of Japan. For example, sports stars like sumo wrestler Hitachiyama Taniemon and Ichiro Suzuki convey what it means to be Japanese to the Japanese public, but also what it means to be Japanese to those outside Japan. Those outside Japan will absorb this understanding, negotiate it internally, then project this understanding back onto Japan. This projection plays a role in how the Japanese identity is understood via the vessel of sport.

In Japan, the disabled identity is also constructed via sport. The public and those with disabilities develop an understanding of disability via relevant athletes. Since disability is not exclusive to Japan and is an international phenomenon, both domestic disability sports stars and international sports stars will come to represent what it means to be disabled in Japan. These sports stars will be representations of ideal disabled bodies. Those with disabilities will be expected to emulate these bodies by building bridges from the disabled experience to the abled bodied experience.

With these ideal bodies set, the ‘super-crip’ model can take shape. The ‘super-crip’ model uses the ideal notion of the disabled experience to establish bodies that are objects of public inspiration. This idealness of the ‘super-crip’ extends to all parts of society, from the top level disabled athletes to everyday disabled people. This is because this positive image of disabled individuals is much more consumable to the public than pitiable disabled individuals. The ‘super-crip’ identity is only reality because how it is compared and contrasted to the pitiable ‘victim’ of their disability. This shows that disability exists in a bifurcated reality in Japan. This is the power of sports in the context of disability, it builds upon the Japanese identity, it negotiates the disabled identity, and suggests what the ideal disabled body is.

Elite Approach

With this ideal disabled body established, this allows for the elite approach to take place. The elite approach is the deliberate funding of top level disabled athletes, which will in turn demonstrate ideological superiority and economic prosperity. This functions within the logic of how the Paralympics is compared to the Olympics. The Paralympics is naturally subordinate to the Olympics, meaning that the Paralympian is naturally subordinate to the Olympian. Within this elite approach system, the Paralympian is pulled out of this less than status, thus showing a system of multiculturalism. All of this happens while the everyday non-elite athlete still faces daily struggle.

This is a trend with advertisers, they put a focus on depicting a minority identity, for example the disabled identity, in a positive way because it builds positive sentiments with that minority group. When a brand's advertisement projects positive narratives about those with disabilities, it allows for the general public and those with disabilities to rally around and support the brand. Disability sport is one of the vessels for conveying this. The government is also within this system of artificially pulling up the disabled athlete. By doing this the government also receives similar benefits to advertisers. The government is displaying multiculturalism, the public wants this multiculturalism, and the Paralympics is the stage where this is being conveyed.

Disability Understanding

Disability athletics creates a space to that lends exposure to those with disabilities. This provides a space in which people can interact with disabled individuals and a space where they can come to understand the disabled person's ability. Positive exposure will allow people to understand the

difference between assisting those with disabilities over serving those with disabilities. This means when people are exposed to and interact with disabled individuals they will function in the context of the disabled person's ability not the disability. Those people who have longer histories of interacting with those with disabilities have a more positive interaction with disabled individuals.

The 2020 Tokyo Paralympics is the next major meeting point in Japan where disability will be negotiated on several different levels. This is a spot where the Japanese government can permit a disability controlled narrative what disability is. It is a spot where Japan and the world can come together to support this narrative, but the way that the Japanese disabled body is governed will be the basis of this understanding. This will be the stage in which the government can represent the multicultural progress that has been made. Lastly, sport will be the vessel that demonstrates that the Japanese disabled public, the Japanese government, and Japanese general public are all invested in the Japan the hangs above them.

Literature Review

When looking at the power of disability athletics in Japan there are three key factors: how the understanding of disability are built, how minorities are pulled into systems of governance, and how sport and athletics can be used as a system of power.

Disability: Medical model vs Social model

How do you describe disability? Do you describe in the context of a series of medical diagnoses and differences? Following the logic that since it is the product of the body it is the goal to be healed and saved from these differences. Could you also describe disability as a set of society

imposed restrictions and expectations on the body? That disability only arises due to the physical and social barriers society creates, i.e. inaccessible buildings and social norms. Disability studies scholar Ronald Berger (2013) suggests that these are the two different models that can be used to form understandings about disability. Tobin Siebers states that, “the medical model defines disability as a property of the individual body” (Berger 2013, 26). On the other hand, the “social model... posits that it is not an individual’s impairment or adjustment, but socially imposed barriers... construct(s) disability” (Berger 2013, 27). These models have deep relevance when it comes to the governance of the disabled body. Governmental policy that sides with the medical model will show a support for making those with disabilities adapt to society. This is done by focusing on things like medical healing and the prevention of hereditary disease. The social model of disability will call upon society to adapt to the needs of those with disabilities. This system will support the building of wheelchair ramps, and the inclusion of people with bodily differences into everyday society. As places, like Japan, choose to adopt legal frameworks that address disability, the chosen model they choose to associate with will have a deep impact on how those with disabilities are integrated into society.

Governance of minorities

How does the government control bodies? Why do minorities exist? How do minority groups leverage power against the government? These are questions that are addressed in the social theory of biopolitics. Biopolitics is not an easy topic to describe in a single sentence. Under Michel Foucault’s understanding of biopolitics, in very simplistic terms, it can be described as, “the anatomico-political preoccupations of a disciplinary society, with its focus on the disciplining of bodies...(via the) regulation of life as part of programs of government that take the population

as their object and a factor in their political economy (Rentea 2016). This says that there is a political/economic logic behind the construction of minorities. For example, the *burakumin*, a group of outcasts that were at the bottom of the Japanese social hierarchy, historically were the victim of severe societal discrimination and ostracism. The *burakumin* are a group of people that are “identified by an occupational, a spatial, or genealogical relationship to historically stigmatized labor such as meat and leather production,” a group of people whose occupation worked directly with the dead (Hankins 2014). This discrimination extends to the children of anyone who held this occupation, and it continues down from generation to generation. For this reason, someone might not even know they are *burakumin*, and they might find out for the first time when they are denied a marriage or denied a job. This minority group lived under a system of social governance.

The construction of the *burakumin* was built out of the marrying of Shinto ideas of purity and impurity, and the Tokugawa government’s construction of a caste system. Shinto’s focus on social discipline, and the Tokugawa government’s attempt to implement a reformed economic system pushed the *buraku* people to the margins of society thus making them a minority (Hankins 2014). Joseph Hankins (2014) proposes that groups like the *burakumin* can use this minority status to leverage for equality in two ways. They can create sympathetic selves or play into positive public notions regarding multiculturalism. The importance of this is that minority groups can establish a system of economic, political, and/or disciplinary disruption to leverage this biopolitical system to challenge their discriminated identity. Doing this would establish logic against the stigma attached to them. To do this they must form a united and organized identity, and find stages in which they can deploy their identity.

Sport

In what ways does athletics shape us as members in a society? How do we come to understand ourselves as an identity via sports? What do large sporting events like the World Cup, the Olympics, and the Paralympics represent to a place hosting them? Athletics is a stage in which a community can come together either as a fan or as an athlete. Sport is a place in which people with like values and beliefs come together to form an identity. Simon Gwyn Roberts agrees with this notion. As he writes, “sport (is) acting as a vehicle for the promotion and celebration of... identities (Roberts 2015). On the stage of sport, we form new cohorts and establish bonds. This is where the power of sport comes from. Local sport teams, international sport teams, and sport stars win over our hearts and minds. Carol Atkinson (2014) would consider this to be a system of power. Once these ideas are brought together a system of logic is seen. The sport team becomes a symbolic representation of an identity. For example, I go to the University of Arizona and I am proud of that. Due to this pride, I am a fan of our collegiate sport programs. This is because sport is a symbol of the strength of my regional identity. Since I hold this identity as something that is intrinsically important, the University of Arizona will have power over me. This system is intensified with large scale mega sporting events. On stages like the Olympics/Paralympics victory symbolizes, “ideological superiority and economic prosperity” (Guan 2015). To lend further importance to this, these mega-events are markers of temporal distance. It means this projection of success will last throughout history. This is what allows sporting events to become a system of governmental legitimization.

Structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis will be divided into five different chapters plus a conclusion.

Chapter one 'Background' will cover key background information that will give context for the information presented in the thesis. These topics will include: biopolitics and Japanese minorities, history of disability in Japan, and the history of the Paralympics. Chapter two is entitled 'Modernity.' Within this chapter unique concepts of Japanese modernity will be explored, coupled with the consideration of disability within the context of European and Japanese modernity. These three different types of modernity will be taken and placed within a system of negotiation via the context of a German and Japanese medical exchange. Chapter three, called, "Postwar 'Social' Disability and Organized Advocacy," will explore four different stages in which disability has penetrated Japanese society. This includes the stage of the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games, a subtle cultural based social interaction, the stage of different international exchanges, and on different levels of social advocacy. Chapter four, "Sport, and disability in Japan," will cover sport and athletics within the Japanese culture. First is the way people come to understand themselves as Japanese via sport will be explored, second the way people come to understand themselves as disabled via sports will be investigated, lastly the way that society comes to understand the disabled athlete as what an ideal disabled person will be established. Chapter five, "The Elite Approach," will explore the way the elite approach is being established within the Japanese culture. Initially the natural less than athletic state of the disabled athlete will be conveyed which will explain how the government is artificially pulling the disabled athlete's status up to be equal to the Olympian. Lastly I will explain how doing this is covering up true disparity in Japan. The conclusion addresses the true importance of disability sport. This importance is the exposure to disability and the establishing of systems of equality.

Chapter 1: Background

Before delving straight into the governance of the disabled athletic body, and its relevancy in Japan, it is important to provide a background to several related issues regarding the question of biopolitics, disability in Japan and the Paralympics. The initial step is to look at biopolitics in the context of disability minorities in Japan. This demonstrates intersection points between systems of governmental and societal governance and the Japanese minority identity. That section will employ the use Foucault's ideas of biopolitics and the *buraku* minority identity to demonstrate how minorities in Japan are governed in different contexts. Then I will turn to a very brief history of disability in Japan to show the different ways the disabled body has been understood within different social contexts. It will examine in what situations the Japanese people first came to understand what it means to be disabled, shows the spaces where public could interact with disability, and propose reasons why the government developed an interest in these bodies. Lastly, I will provide a quick history of the Paralympics. This history will show the context that the Paralympics were built, and how this was significant to the systems of governance. The Paralympics became an event where governments could address relevant issues regarding the disabled body and a location that could demonstrate an internationally focused state. Doing all of this provides a context within which other sections in this thesis can be built from.

Biopolitics and Japanese minorities

Foucault's understanding of biopolitics is not only focused on deployed governmental policies, but also it is how "art, perception, and aesthetic experience" shape bodies (Siisiäinen 2017). Siisiäinen (2017), states Foucault's view of biopolitics incorporates the invisible hand which spontaneously builds mechanisms for guiding events and placing people into the

governance of the state. One last notion of Foucault's biopolitical framework is that the government works towards maximizing the well-being and production of their population, via systems of "expedient government in the logic of economic liberalism" (Siisiäinen 2017). Within Japan, one minority group that falls under the biopolitical frame work is the *burakumin*. Looking at how *buraku* people interact with this biopolitical frame work provides a template of the minority experience within a Japanese context. This involves three points of the *buraku* identity within Japan: 1) How not only the government's policies the lead to the *burakumin* minority status, but also the aesthetics of their occupational class. 2), How the *burakumin* minority status brought them together with international advocacy organizations in order to serve their self-interest and 3) How the Japanese government is showing signs of integrating the *burakumin* into the well-being of the state via economic and governmental policy.

For the *burakumin*, their absence from the caste system, and being on the wrong end of the Shinto belief system certainly contributed to their stigmatized status, but this is not the only factor. There is an aesthetic aspect to their discrimination: pollution. Hankins (2014) explains that one segment of pollution is the leather tannery. From the tanneries toxins are "released into rivers, this effluent, as a whole has been shown to have toxic effects on microorganisms: it inhibits the germination of plant life and decreases the fertilization rate of aquatic life" (Hankins 2014). These unnatural substances being dumped into the river incites the ire of environmental protection agencies. They cite the aesthetics of dying natural life as a call for action. These groups show signs of seeing the *buraku* as "the primary cause of environmental degradation (Hankins 2014). This becomes a factor in their discrimination. The spaces that the *buraku* create are seen as aesthetically unappealing. Poor aesthetics helps to build the discrimination on a

societal level. It is where the identity of the *buraku* is projected and negotiated based on the aesthetics they build.

As a result of this minority status and in order to serve their self-interest the *burakumin* have drifted together with international advocacy groups. For example, the *buraku* people caught the eye of the UN in their attempt to stamp out “discrimination based on work and descent.” When these UN organizations examined the Japanese state, the UN took note of the lack of legal protection the *buraku* people had (Hankins 2014). These outside groups can exert pressure on the Japanese government by attempting to persuade the Japanese government to include the *burakumin* in their national discourse in a more inclusive manner. On stages like this, “sympathetic selves” of the *buraku* people are projected onto the world stage (Hankins 2014). The mutual self-interest of these groups and their interaction with the state establishes an economic logic in the background of this identity negotiation. If Japan wants to be part of this international community, it would be beneficial to accept the standards promoted by these international advocacy groups and portray itself as a socially progressive nation.

The Japanese government demonstrates actions that show it has become invested in bringing the *buraku* people into the well-being of the state. Laws were passed that promoted multiculturalism, and proposed regulations that manage social differences. An example was in 2002 when the government directed funds to *buraku* owned businesses. Another example was the prefectural government’s and the national government’s initiatives to hinder the investigation of *buraku* origins in 2006 was another example. Harkins (2014) explains that this is one of the government’s efforts to institute *tabunka kyōsei* (multicultural coexistence) policies. It is in this context that the *buraku* demand equality on the basis of their minority status. It is also a forum for the government to bring the *burakumin* into the state. When the *buraku* are brought into the

well-being of the state, “Japan...appear(s) multicultural on an international stage,” thus dismantling the narrative of “wounded through discrimination” (Hankins 2014).

There are several ways in which Japanese minorities become subjects of biopolitics in Japan. Settings that create an a sense of aesthetics help form an understanding about a minority group. In the case of the *buraku* people stigmatized status was compounded by playing a role in creating an aesthetic associated with environmental pollution. Being a stigmatized group caused the *buraku* people to move towards seeking support from international advocacy organizations. This demonstrated that the *buraku* people made moves in their best economic interest by aligning themselves with worldwide advocacy groups. These international advocacy organization pressured Japan, by using the backdrop of economic forces to their advantage. Lastly, under the pretenses of these pressure the Japanese government has passed laws that brought the *buraku* people into the well-being of the state. This projects a multicultural society and an international recognized nation-state. Other minority groups in Japan will follow narratives like this in their quest for equality.

History of disability in Japan

Those with disabilities are members of nation-states, and are minority subjects of biopolitics. Eras like feudal Japan saw disability as a product of negative karma. Infanticide was practiced as a solution to disability (Stevens 2013). On the other hand, those with disabilities in modern day Japan have the benefits of the *shōgaisha techō* (governmental disability ID), which enables disabled individuals to receive benefits such as discounted rail travel, discounted medical equipment, and a comprehensive pension (Nakamura 2006). This history of disability in Japan is a long and has had many actors participate in it. I wish to quickly chart this history from negative

karma and infanticide up to today's international social advocacy and equality. I will do this to create a backdrop of the context for disability in modern day Japan. This covers folkloric beliefs, early integration into society, and governmental support of those with disabilities.

To establish a historical understanding of disability within Japan, first folkloric beliefs should be reviewed. These beliefs function as a basis for the Japanese to understand disability. This can be seen in the story of the Japanese deities of Japan, Izanagi and Izanami, and their son 'Hiruko.' One of Izanagi and Izanami's first children was disabled, and he was dubbed the 'leech child.' This name "alluded to the useless (or absent) limbs that prevented the child from standing upright" (Stevens 2013). This child was considered to be born disabled because of negative karma. Due to this disabled status he was abandoned. This folkloric belief meant disabled children became a reflection of parental morality. Stevens (2013) argues that this can be seen as both a blessing and a product of shame. While a disabled child had a body that represented a family's impurity it was also a body that represented that all of a family line's past transgressions were being wiped away. With this there was a mix of anxiety and reverence for those with disabilities. Regardless this negative karma resulted in the in-home confinement of those with disabilities. Those who could actually work and build capital, did so for their families at home.

In the Asuka period of Japan (538-710), legal entities understood disability from the context of a person's ability to work. The people who were the most disabled were those individuals that could not provide labor. Within this context, people who we would consider to be disabled today could provide unique services because of their disability in the context of early Japan. People with psychiatric disabilities could fulfill the role of mediums to the spiritual world while those who were blind were encouraged to fulfill the role of a masseur or a musician. The government within these periods created systems to push these individuals into these

occupations. Doing this allowed for a collective blind identity to form during this period. In the pre-Meiji period many people with disabilities struggled to get an education. Buddhist temples arrived and fulfilled this role for educating the disabled. It became a spot where the disabled identity developed. While these opportunities were limited to those in close proximity to a temple and those disabled individuals who were allowed to leave their house, these disabled individuals were socializing and receiving an education. At these temple schools students were taught things like calligraphy. It was in these locations that the Japanese people began to be exposed to disability and where they formed understandings about this body's place in society.

It was systems like this that made Japan realize how far behind they were from their European counterparts. Nakamura (2006) argues since Japanese officials feared European cultural imperialism, moves were made that pulled those with disabilities closer into the discourse of the Japanese state. In 1863 politicians like Yamao Yozo, argued Japan will be pitted against western powers. To be competitive with the west, Japan needed to take steps towards modernity, and include all citizen, like those with disabilities, into the state. For this reason, Yozo pushed for the establishment of a school for the blind and deaf. He believed within this governmental supported school system those with disabilities “could learn a profession skill that would allow them to live a life of their own” (Nakamura 2006). This push resulted in the establishment of the “Kyoto Blind-Mute Institute, in 1878,” with the Meiji government's full support (Nakamura 2006). This became a location where those with disabilities are supported by the government and brought into their discourse.

There is a historic evolution of the disabled identity in Japan. As history progressed, the way that those with disabilities were understood and the spaces they filled changed. There are several factors that went into constructing the disabled identity on these stages. Folkloric beliefs

influenced the spaces that those with disabilities filled. They were seen as bodies of negative karma and were hidden away because of this. Work and temple schools, in the pre-Meiji period, were a location in which those with disabilities were introduced into society. This established a relevancy for the disabled body. This is why the Japanese government started to compare the infrastructure for those with disabilities in Japan to that of Europe. The comparison of these two infrastructures pushed the Meiji era government to establish educational institutions for the disabled which brought those with disabilities directly into the discourse of the state.

History of the Paralympics

The Paralympic Games gets its name from the word *parallel*². Meaning they are separate, but equal to the Olympic games. It was a goal of the Paralympics to pull those with disabilities out of forgotten status, and use them as symbols of a nation's power and pride, while at the same time functioning as a modern tool of social and physical rehabilitation. The stage of the Paralympics brought together those with disabilities under the pretense of disability athletics. It became a reflection of the contemporary issues surrounding disability, and a space in which the disability identity is negotiated.

The Paralympics started postwar Britain, under the backdrop of the upcoming 1948 London Olympics. The British government was not satisfied with “traditional methods of rehabilitation” (Brittain 2010). For this reason, in the mid 1940s at Stoke Mandeville hospital, Ludwig Guttmann was encouraged to implement his experimental sports rehabilitation program. He founded this program out of concern for the wellbeing of the hospital's inpatients. His agenda

² The Paralympics went through many name changes until the name Paralympics became official for the 1984 Soul Paralympics. For simplicity sake, I will call all ‘Paralympic games’ pre-1984 The Stoke Mandeville Games

was using sports to rehabilitate those with spinal cord injuries, physically and mentally. This is the result of a large upsurge of those with disabilities due to the war. There are two key reasons why nations needed to address the growth in the disabled population:

1. It would be disadvantageous for the public good to have this population living on the streets or withering away in publicly funded hospitals.
2. These soldiers are an important nationalistic symbol.

For this reason, high-ranking officials would not tarnish this national symbol by accepting the old medical practices. Additionally, since these men were ex-military they could be used for political purposes. In order to preserve this former militaristic symbol the government started exploring new medical practices. The British government needed a solution that both honored and healed these wounded veterans. Dr. Guttmann's solution of constructing a setting in which these ex-military men could tap into their masculinity proved to be a pragmatic solution.

After his program proved to be successful, Dr. Guttmann was ready to take the Stoke Mandeville Games to the next level. Guttmann launched the first Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948. He made it part of his mission to include high level politicians in the discussion of the games because it would help bring these games to wider and grander audiences (Brittain 2010). Thanks to this collaborative effort with politicians the first ever Stoke Mandeville Games were held outside Britain. It took place in Rome, Italy during the summer of 1960. This allowed even more disabled veterans to take part in this dual rehabilitation model. From then on, the Paralympics functioned under the supervision of governments and disability rights organizations around the world. It was the goal of these groups to host the Stoke Mandeville games in the same location as the Olympics, thus allowing those with disabilities to come together in new environments. The Stoke Mandeville games would be eventually hosted alongside the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In these 1964 games the Japanese government saw an opportunity to reinvent

itself in the post-war environment. This act of rebranding used the disabled athlete to display a nation that was concerned with the wellbeing of their citizens. It also provided a setting of mental and physical healing in the post war environment.

The Paralympics, or the Stoke Mandeville games, are the Olympics for the disabled. The games were established in the post-World War II environment as a setting for physical and social healing of disabled soldiers. In Britain both governmental officials and Ludwig Guttmann saw this as a contemporary disability issue. Other nations also chose to invest in this new disability narrative. These nations used disabled athletics as a setting to refocus the nation on these former national symbols. Disability sport became a location in which the disabled soldier came together as a united identity, and a space where the public developed an investment into this identity. This became true for Japan under the banner of the 1964 Stoke Mandeville games.

Conclusion

For disabled athletics in Japan there are several factors that help determine their history. The way their minority status is governed, their historical representation in Japan, and the meaning behind the sports in which they participate. In the context of minority identity in Japan, there are three main ways it intersected with biopolitics: the ways they aesthetically represented their body in the setting with which they are associated with, how they used economic logics to ally themselves with powerful groups, and the way these groups started to be pulled into the good graces of the state. The history of the disabled individual in Japan showed the folklore beliefs that set a precedent for how they were understood. It also demonstrated how those with disabilities began to enter society via educational systems, and systems of employment. Lastly, the Japanese government noticed that their current system of disability governance was lacking,

and instituted formal governmental support of academic institutions for the disabled. The final is the history of the Paralympics and how it emerged in the context of the postwar environment. Disabled veterans were encouraged to take part in sports, as participants in a system of physical and social healing. Sport for the disabled became an international standard of disabled governance, allowing it to become an environment of disability understanding. These points are indicative of, and addressed within modernity. By having an understanding of modernity, it provides new notions in how the disabled body is understood.

Chapter 2: Modernity

Modernity brings minority groups into systems of socialization. Per Maurice Roche (2000),

“People in all societies and periods, but particularly in the modern world, can be said to have basic needs for a lifelong and substantial experience of individual identity. Personal identity, in turn, is dependent...on socialization into...competent communication with others.”

During the *Meiji* period, Japan started to modernize. Japan’s system of modernity was unique.

The values that were present in Japanese society differentiated themselves from the classic understandings of modernity. This was seen in Japan’s understanding of liberalism, the historical control the government has had, and the Japanese centric systems of capitalism. Also during this period notions of disability modernity began to emerge. Since Japan’s move into modernity was government centric, this meant the way that those with disabilities were pulled into the state was a reflection of this. European systems of disability modernity established a narrative surrounding the ideal disabled body, one that was self-supporting. In wartime Japan, the self-sacrificing disabled soldier became the idealized disabled body. As Japan moved into the postwar environment this system of pro-military socialization was dismantled. Japan was forced to adopt a European system of charity, based on disability modernity. After this is explained, I will then return to wartime Japan and Europe and demonstrate how these notions of modernity came together to shape a medicalist exchange between Germany and Japan. I will point out how modernity shaped these systems of dealing with the disabled population by using medical institutions and eugenics. To show how this system developed I will look at: Japan’s take on modernity, modernity within the context of disability, and how these two ideas interacted within medical institutions.

Japanese modernity

McVeigh (2014) places the start of Japanese modernity in the 1800s, during the *Meiji* period.

This push into modernity, called the *Meiji* restoration, played a key part in Japan's future economic success. Modernity allowed new social, governmental, and economic systems to arise. It permits new bodies to function on the national stage, as long as they are willing to function in the context of the nation. Japan's particular take on modernity is a system of governmental and collective centrality. There are three key ideas that come into play with modernity in Japan: liberalism, historical control, and capitalism. These three systems connect themselves to the Japanese government. It legitimized the state's power and that it is a system that is meant to build Pro-Japanese sentiment with the public. This is shaped by the ideas presented above. In this system people came to understand their role in society, and how the government incorporates them into its discourse.

Modernity and liberalism

Within modernity there is a difference between the self-managed individual, and the state-managed individual. Niklas Luhmann explains that liberalism can take shape as,

“liberal individuality, defined in opposition to the modern state, but they can also result in demands for an expansion of the welfare system as long as it delivers ‘individual’ as opposed to ‘mass’ treatment” (Föllmer 2013).

Identity and citizenship develop through modernity. It creates a context in which individuals can understand themselves in relation to the state in new ways. In traditional Western scholarship, liberalism is the idea that individuals can exist separate from the state. Paul Starr (2007) describes this as a system that,

Limit(s) the scope of the state power increases the likelihood of its effective use as well as the ability of society to generate wealth, knowledge, and other resources that a state

may draw upon in an hour of need. That, at least, has been the theory of power...implicit in constitutional liberalism.

This is a system that recognizes “that liberty is most likely to be preserved when citizens themselves have the power to preserve it” (Starr 2007). In Japan, liberalism is different from what is found in the aforementioned scholarship, and more in line with Luhmann’s second definition of individuality. McVeigh (2006) writes that “liberalism (in Japan) has often been a method to attain power, rather than emphasizing each individual’s freedom from power.” A scheme was built up in Japan where identity was predicated on positive feelings towards the imperial family, in which individuals express their individuality through the collective. In this system, the individual is managed by the state. Within that system, people recognize it as part of their civic duty, to join the collective of the state. I believe, that this different notion of liberalism is credited to the way the emperor cultivated the Japanese cultural identity. For this reason, the citizens’ power preservation was yielded, and state power was not limited.

Modernity and historical control

Japan is one of the few nations that can lay a claim on not being colonized by any outside nation. This means that the European influence over Japan would be minimal in comparison to those who were colonized. The control helped with the formation of top-down interactionism, and let a different type of modernity take hold in Japan. While leadership did change hands via revolution and war, this lack of outside colonization meant the power change would not be as culturally disruptive. For this reason, many people in Japan claim certain cultural ideas have existed uninterrupted since the mythical forming of the Japanese islands. The historical presence gives the Japanese government a legitimate claim to rule over the people. Yoshimi and

Calichman (2005) notes the thing that makes Japan unique is that the Japanese government faced “less resistance than did the Industrial Revolution in Europe.” The reason for this was the public’s acceptance of the Japanese ruling class. This allowed for the government’s management of society to encompass systems that further united the public under notions of the Japanese state. An example of this is the family registry. In this registry an individual family’s structure was recorded. It was a system of “officialdom (that) could control individual behavior” by implementing “Confucian-inspired” structure into the family (McVeigh 2014). Examples of these values were male head of households, social hierarchical reverence, and the suppression of women’s rights. It built clear and defined societal roles, which discouraged acting out of the norm. Constructing a narrative that if a person is willing to act in line with these norms, they can be incorporated into the national discourse. This would be done by the means of positive Japanese characteristics. These social values allowed for a Japanese cultural identity that was governmentally focused, and built Japanese notions of economic modernity.

Modernity and capitalism

The institution of capitalist economic policies is another key concept of modernity, but Japan has a particular take on capitalism. At first, capitalism proved to be problematic, because “the emperor (was seen to be a) hostage to capitalism” (Doak 1997). Meaning that the emperor was falling victim to its influence. For this reason, as Japan moved into modernity, it made a distinction “between Japanese and non-Japanese capital, and identifie(d) with the former” (Anderson 2009). This helped give rise to the governmental centered, authoritarian practices described in the previous section. As Anderson (2009) states, this helped moralize capitalism with deeply pro-Japanese sentiment. Thus, making a capitalist system that breeds nationalism,

which established a nation-state to which the Japanese people could dedicate themselves to. With this, the government was free to manage society, via nationalism. Nationalism defined what it meant to be a good Japanese citizen. A label that is available to anyone, as long as they have the capital to support the state.

The three systems of modernity

These steps are what made Japan into the modern nation it is today. Japan's move into modernity was centered around legitimizing the government's power through policy that managed the populous. It built good Japanese citizens that wanted to be part of the discourse of the state. This allows the state to have "economic institutions, social structures" and a world reputation (McVeigh 2014). It is a system that permitted the state to make their society 'endless.' It established a space to achieve what was deemed the 'not yet,' thus allowing the nation-state to have political aspirations (McVeigh 2014). These policies encouraged people to look towards the future, alongside the state. Within this Japanese modernity it forms a united stage between the government and the people. One of these groups I wish to focus on in particular are those with disabilities.

Disability: modern Japanese charity

Janet Lyon (2015) describes modernity in the context of disability as a system of classifying people. This system became more prominent as bureaucratic systems began to take hold. For this reason, these bureaucrats established, "asylums and general hospitals...in the seventeenth century, in order to sequester impoverished invalids and...disabled populations rather randomly and always through the common denominator of poverty" (Lyon 2015). This

evolved into an idea that disability is a problem that needs to be solved via “bourgeois systems of charity” (Lyon 2015). Under this definition disability is a social-economic problem to which a modern governing power must find a solution to. This is because, economically powerful nations have the resources to take care of all their citizens, even ones that are problems. The solution is state based institutions, such as asylums, hospitals, charitable systems, or individuals that take care of those with disabilities. These systems of charity prescribed a role to the disabled individual and assigned them a symbolic status that services that nation. The way both Europe and Japan incorporate these symbolic statuses will show their systems of disability and modernity. As established by Janet Lyon (2015), these two macroscale ideas of disability and modernity are subjects of governance, and subjects of charity.

Those with disabilities being subjects of both the state and capitalistic consumers’ tendencies make them relevant bodies. Both Japan and Europe have established their own unique understanding of disability, within the modern context. Using the general points of modernity established earlier, and using certain disability centric happenings will provide context to how disability and modernity assemble. Disability in the context of modernity is united by the core idea that the disabled individual is pitiable. This is because of their involvement in being the benefactors of charity. Within these notions of charity there are differences. For Europe, disability charity can be used to establish a legitimization of a public institution, and used to create a narrative of the ideal disabled person. In war time, Japan it took the shape of passionate individuals whose dedication became a symbol for the nation to rally around. A symbol synonymous with post war Japan was that those with disabilities were reliant on the charity of others. The transition from wartime Japan, to post war Japan, created a system that was more like Europe. Rather than the disabled body being directly linked to state power, the body was now

associated with medical institutions. Since modern disability rights issues have a cultural exchange dimension to it, I propose looking at modernity and disability through three different lenses: European notions of disability and modernity, Japanese pre-war notions of disability and modernity, and Japanese post war notions of disability and modernity.

The European Take

During the 1700s in Europe there were stories of those with disabilities being saved by medical institutions. As reported by newspapers, and narratives perpetuated by medical institutions and word of mouth, an idea was being conveyed that those with common ailments were being cured (Barsch, Klein and Verstraete 2013). In the year of 1780, “the French magazine *Mercure de France* published a...story about two brothers” one of them who was blind, one who was deaf, who were both cured by an unnamed neighbor (Barsch, Klein and Verstraete 2013). As a result of being cured, certain parts of their lives took a turn for the worse, stemming from the new knowledge regarding the world they received.

This story was part of a paradoxical disability understanding at that time. These are stories of medical institutions curing the disabled, thus giving them hope, but also warning of the dangers of not ‘overcoming’ your disability (Barsch, Klein and Verstraete 2013). This presented the idea that France’s medical institutions are amazing, and can ‘fix’ the disabled. However, the disabled populous should not be reliant on these institutions. Ideally they would be strong and inspirational individuals. While these are contradictory ideas and it represents the disabled individual in two dissimilar ways, there are common threads that connect them. That common thread being a strong sense of economic logic within these stories.

While wanting to establish a narrative that these medical institutions are doing amazing things, thus worthy of support, it warned of the dangers of being reliant on them. The economic logic behind it is if those with disabilities use these institutions for their medical healing purposes, they would become an economic drain. It means these individuals needed to support themselves, not to expect a handout. This built a standard framework of the ideal disabled person; a pitiable but hard working individual. The story shows that the disabled individual became a symbol of pity, to such an extent, that they legitimized support for governmental medical institutions. They also became symbols of public inspiration. Despite their disability, they were willing to join everyday society, and make meaningful contributions to the nation. This symbol of inspiration is reliant on the disabled person's status being naturally pitiable. In the European disability modern context, the disabled person was governed as a group, that only can be saved by systems of charity. However, the ideal disabled person can save themselves.

The Japanese take

For the Japanese context, the symbolic status of the disabled soldier, will elucidate how Japan incorporated disability into modernity. The powerful image of the disabled soldier was used for several different purposes. First, to display for the public that those with disabilities are part of this national discourse. Second, to make those with disabilities feel like they are part of Japan. Third, to provide a solution to the 'disabled problem.' Last, to get the public further invested into the royal family and national causes.

All of these concepts changed in the post-war period, in which Japan was forced to function within the international context of 'solidarity work,' a "mechanism (used) as a means of rallying public and governmental support" (Hankins 2014). This internationally sanctioned

system of understanding disability shaped Japan on three levels. It forced Japan to provide systems of charity to all individuals with disabilities. Second, with this charity system in place, the disabled soldier lost the context that made them presentable to society, thus diminishing the symbolic worth of this group. Third, with the symbolic value of the disabled soldier dismantled, it showed a denigration of the emperor centric system of Japanese liberalism. It established a reality in which the disabled veteran held no status, because they were no longer “acceptable icons of sacrifice.” (Pennington 2015). Meaning that the disabled soldier was no longer part of Elizabeth Povinelli’s idea of “co-substantiation.” The public and the government were no longer able to understand the experience of the disabled soldier. Meaning that the public’s and the government’s world were no longer intertwined with WWII veterans (Povinelli 2011) (Hankins 2014).

War time Japan

In Japan, especially during World War II, when reverence for the royal family was at its height, disability and liberalism collided. As a result of war, there was a spike in the disabled population. Many of these disabled soldiers, in the war-time period, were considered heroes that put their lives on the line. They fell to a cruel fate, and became pitiable individuals. At that time the Japanese government would use lighthearted images of the community banding together to help these disabled veterans. These images showed the disabled soldiers helping with the war efforts, by being ‘workplace heroes’ (Pennington 2015) (T. Supplitt 2015). Which served as a space for the public to give reverence to the disabled soldiers, and everything they represented.

By being incorporated into the workplace, even on a superficial level, this reinvested these disabled individuals into the state. The work place gave them an area to continue expressing their national pride, and a space to receive an income. In addition to this, the pension

they received and the medical benefits, were tied to their livelihood. It established an economic logic to be a symbol of the nation. It also served as a tool of survival in the harsh and unforgiving setting of wartime Japanese. This established social benefits and life essentials for disabled individuals, in exchange for their investment into the state.

All of these steps were achievable thanks to the inclusion of those with disabilities into the Japanese idea of liberalism; making them subjects of the emperor. By accepting the symbolic values that those with disabilities represented, the public accepted this governmental system that supported these war time heroes. This notion of disability that the government portrayed had benefits. While the soldier was just a subset of the disabled population, it was the disabled body that the public was invested in. The two reasons that the symbolic value of the disabled body was successful was its natural pitiable status, and the juxtaposition of disabled individuals working for the state that was created. This implies that due to their status as a disabled person, they are naturally considered unable to work. Nevertheless, due to their passion toward the war effort they overcame this naturally weak status and contributed to society. This increased sentiment within the Japanese population, who in turn started to accept this image. With both those with disabilities and the public contributing to the state, via the symbolic power of the disabled individual, it legitimized the power of the state and emperor.

Postwar Japan

In the post-war period, due to mass social changes, while certain ideas were maintained, Japan was forced to reform some of the ideas that made 'Japanese modernity,' and subsequently Japanese disability modernity unique. When America occupied Japan, due to the reforms that were instituted, the status of the disabled soldier changed. These changes were seen on three levels. First, the reforming of the exclusive benefits the disabled soldier received. Second, the

implementation of “bourgeois systems of charity,” (Lyon 2015). Last, the decentralization of the means that brought about respect for the disabled soldier, the emperor.

As America occupied Japan, one of the first things they did was dismantle the symbolic status of anything militaristic. The reason for this was during war-time Japan, most of the nation’s nationalistic sentiment came from militaristic symbols. When instituting reforms, America put a particular emphasis on reforming any group associated with the military. As Pennington (2015) explains, one aspect that America eliminated was specialty services for military personnel. This not only reduced all soldiers to the level of everyday citizens, it also got rid of a status symbol for the wounded veterans.

This status symbol was also a necessity of survival. It made those with disabilities take on the role of beggars. These changes forced the adoption of the mindset that those with disabilities are a symbol of poverty whose problems need to be solved via “bourgeois systems of charity,” thus being a product of pity (Lyon 2015). This was seen with the Japanese government’s the management of medical institutions for those with disabilities to be reflective of those institutions found in Germany. These institutions were often in rural areas, away from the eyes of the public. They were now *reliant* on the system of charity established by the state or provided by religious institutions.

Since the royal family’s power was curbed, the disabled soldier lost a system of support. This created a reality in which their high-status position was dismantled. It was via the systems of legitimizing the power of the royal family that the disabled body was granted status. Those with disabilities earning benefits by sacrificing their body for the emperor no longer existed. They were now just disadvantaged individuals in need of saving. This meant the connection

between wounded veterans and the emperor was severed. With the reforms in place, the American successfully instituted western values of disability modernity into Japan.

Three understandings of disability

Within the context of modernity, those with disabilities are a group of people that start to become understood in new ways. Janet Lyon (2015) offers the idea that the modern context of disability promotes systems of charity. These systems of charity will be predicated on the context within a social environment of a nation-state. For example, there is a unique European understanding of modernity. This system both legitimized medical institutions, while discouraging people from becoming reliant on them. In Japan, there were two different interpretations of disability modernity, one for wartime Japan, and one for postwar Japan. Wartime Japan brought disabled soldiers into systems of charity because of their veteran status. In the postwar period, the exclusive status of the disabled soldier received was dismantled. All people with disabilities could access charity. I believe the idea of subjects of pity and subjects of charity tie all three of these narratives together. This is because in the context of modernity disability is a problem that needs to be solved. Nations will work together to solve these disability related problems by establishing an international exchanges of ideas.

Germany and Japan, a medical exchange

There are several unique ideas that construct the way Japan governs the disabled body. I want to elucidate the other side of the coin, and look at how Japan was part of an medicalist exchange. By this I mean an exchange in which Japan's medical institutions and social policy were shaped, influenced, and inspired by outside forces. This will demonstrate a collision point of different

ideas of modernity, and how outside ideas were easily exchanged and implemented despite certain differences. To demonstrate this, I will look at the cultural exchange between Germany and Japan. In Japan, there are German style institutions, and German style solutions to disability. This interaction can be seen with hospitals and governmental policy within Japan.

Japanese medical professionals commonly looked towards Germany in the move from Eastern medical practices to those medical expectations set out by the west. An example of this was seen with the medical literature in Japan that came from Germany. In addition, prominent German medical practitioner Emil Kraepelin engaged in field research in east, and south East Asia (Nakamura 2013). As proposed by Yuehtsen Chung (2002), “based on previous scholarly production ... Japan and Nazi Germany constituted suitable parallels for a comparative study of eugenics.” With this exchange of medical ideas it shows like notions of ‘local science.’ ‘Local science’ demonstrates “a particular approach (that) focus(es) on problems with special relationships to or meaning for a specific country or region” (Chung 2002). Japan, and Germany had similar ‘local science,’ with both Japan and Germany showing signs of addressing similar medical problems with similar approaches. For this reason medical solutions that appeared in Germany started to appear in Japan. To understand better how outside influences shaped Japanese medical practices in regards to disability I will show the similarity between the way Germany and Japan incorporated those with disabilities into their medical institutions, and how eugenics policies were implemented.

German medical institutions

In Germany, injured military personal were given preferred treatment in hospitals over disabled inpatients. Military service was seen as a “sacred right” and “disabled veterans were celebrated

as the first citizens of the Third Reich,” meaning that their disabled identity made them into a social power (Diehl 1993). The social power came from the association with military service. During war time, psychiatric hospitals were utilized by individuals with war time injuries. This placement of injured military personal was usually at the expense of the mentally ill. As Julia Torrie (2010) summarizes, the policy of wartime German health officials were, “beds of the mentally ill should be at least temporarily vacated in order to receive... (victims) of a catastrophe, the mentally ill should be accommodated in makeshift beds in heatable corridors, dining rooms, asylum chapels etc.” This symbolized a hierarchical relationship between different classes of the disabled. Those with mental disabilities were expendable when their healing came in conflict with those with more legitimate concerns. This is because these disabled individuals were not the good type of disabled individuals. They were reliant on a system into which they contributed no value. This created a distinction between people with an earned disabled status, and those who were a burden on the society. That is why those with war time injuries were considered superior to those who were disabled non-soldiers. The ex-soldiers still had a benefit to provide to the state, the non-soldiers did not.

German eugenics

The way that German medical institutions functioned was an offshoot of their eugenics philosophy. This was another area in which disabled soldiers were compared with the everyday disabled person. In this philosophy, those who were thought to be unable to contribute to the state were sterilized or put to death. Per Greg Eghigiah (2000), Nazi era Germany’s policy of eugenics was founded out of the notion of *volksgemeinschafts*, or national community. This included those with disabilities. These were campaigns against those who were “incapable of

being part of the community” (Eghigian 2010). The everyday disabled person being a subject of charity and reliant on governmental institutions was seen as unable to serve the state and support the community. Consequently, there was an economic logic working against them to delegitimize their lives. The disabled soldier on the other hand did not fall into this system of eugenics. Due to their military service, they were seen as part of the national community that were capable of being productive German beings. It cements the distinction between the disabled soldier and the everyday disabled person. Systems like this also appeared in Japan.

Japanese medical institutions

Japan also took part in a campaign of distinguishing between the disabled soldier and the everyday disabled person. Japan made this differentiation within the hospital environment, where the disabled soldier received prioritized medical treatment. In the 1900s the Japanese government passed the Law for the Confinement and Protection of the Mentally Ill (Nakamura 2013). This law gave an either-or situation for those with mental disabilities. They either had to be confined to their homes, or if the opportunity arose, be placed in a hospital. In reality their opportunities were limited. In 1919 the Mental Hospital Law was passed which expanded the numbers of mental hospitals in Japan. This caused a shift from the mentally ill being in public hospitals to private specialty hospitals. Despite this law its impact was limited due to the general lack of funding being received. This derived from the Japanese interpretation of modern capitalism. Since these disabled bodies could not provide service to the emperor they should not receive funding. For this reason, the Japanese government was not interested in funding those who had mental disabilities; they were a low priority. Those with disabilities were pushed to be hidden away from society in a way that cost the state the least amount of money possible. This is

seen in efforts to get those with mental disabilities out of the public hospitals, and move them into their family homes or private hospitals. This space was now reserved for injured war heroes. Eventually in the 40s, when hospital space became more valuable, eugenics took hold with the intent of solving this mental disability ‘problem’ for good.

Japanese eugenics

Japanese medical officials used eugenics within the context of disability. Otsubo and Bartholomew (2008) notes that Japan drew inspiration from British, American and German scholarship. In this system moves were made to eliminate some naturally occurring disabilities. This was an approach that Japan appropriated from Germany which differentiated between the disabled soldiers and the everyday disabled individual. In July of 1941, the Japanese government ratified the National Eugenics Law. The scope of this law was to “improve the quality of the population by preventing people with serious hereditary diseases from procreating” (Otsubo and Bartholomew 2008). In this system, under a doctor’s medical discretion, an individual could be forcibly sterilized for exhibiting one of the aforementioned traits (Chung 2002). The Japanese government pushed the ‘humanistic’ values of this system of eugenics, citing the benefits of the law to greater society (Chung 2002). This falls under the logic of Japanese liberalism. These sick individuals could not function within the collective to support the state. For this reason, under the pretense of helping the state, the Japanese government managed the disabled body in such a way so their sickness could not spread, or these disabled individuals would no longer suffer. This reality of eugenics came to form due to the way Japanese hospitals were structured and because of a focus on the idealness of the disabled soldiers.

The way the Japanese government managed the Japanese populous showed signs of a campaign of distinguishing between the disabled soldier and the everyday disabled person. This was seen with the two examples provided above, and it presented the narrative of the ideal disabled person, the body that should be supported by the state. The disabled soldiers were a celebrated group of people. They gained status and benefits to go along with their distinguished disabled position. Since the non-soldier was not the ideal disabled person, the state pushed them aside. The disabled soldier has earned his disability while the non-soldier was a victim to it.

Conclusion

For Japan, the start of the Meiji period was a time in which new systems of governance were established to become competitive with the European nations. The way the Japanese government cultivated modernity resulted in a system in which the Japanese populous became loyal subjects of the state. The concept of societal control runs contrary to what is expected with modernism, but in thanks to Japan's unique take on liberalism, its uncolonized history, and emperor centric capitalism, it was able to put into place a revised system of modernity. Those with disabilities were a group affected by this modernity push. In wartime Japan those with disabilities held high status. If someone was disabled this likely meant they were injured because of the war. These bodies of wartime injury became symbols of the state. The system of institutional support that they received was reliant on their acceptance of the emperor's power.

In the prewar and wartime period Japan was in a medical exchange with Germany. Ideas from Germany flowed into Japan as Japan took steps to establish reforms that would assist with the process of obtaining world power. This is a system that would allow Japan to become more relevant to the west. Both Germany and Japan adopted a philosophy that distinguished between

the disabled soldiers and the non-soldiers disabled. Within these domestic values, the disabled soldiers were the ideal disabled people. They were given prioritized medical treatment. This prioritized medical treatment came at the expense of the ‘problem’ disabled person. The way in which they were dealt was with either hiding them, or absorbing them into a eugenics program. In the way Germany and Japan managed the ‘problem’ disabled individuals made a reality where they were a drain on the state. The one service they could provide to the state was that of the counterbalance to the strong disabled soldier.

In the postwar period this system was dismantled. America came in and established the paradoxical understanding of European disability modernity in which those with disabilities were pitiable and reliant on “bourgeois systems of charity” (Lyon 2015). Those disabled soldiers in Japan were now stuck in a void, but the athletic disabled body soon became a symbol to fill the void left behind by the disabled soldier. They present a reality of a Japan that evolved into a western modern disability mindset, but also held onto the values that made them unique. This built spaces where interaction with the disabled identity could occur.

Chapter 3:

Postwar ‘Social’ Disability and Organized Advocacy

Different groups become invested into the disabled body in different ways and on different levels of social interaction. These social interactions and stages change the narrative of who is influencing who, and who is the group in power. McVeigh (2014) proposes that there are four separate but overlapping spheres of modern life: official (government), civil (NGOs, advocacy groups, religious institutions), private (individuals, personal relationships), and market (corporations). Within this section, I will be looking at the interaction and overlaps between the private, civil, and official. When the official sphere crosses over with the civil sphere social movements take place, and when the civil crosses over with private personal affairs get exposed (McVeigh 2014). I believe all of these groups have a hand in forming these understandings about disability and these interactions take place within a top-down and bottom-up system. This overlap and the purpose of this section is to see the different ways that groups understand the collective disability existence, within this point of intersection, and in what way they have a hand in shaping it.

Within Japan disability exists on several different plains. It existed in the immediate postwar period where wounded veterans started to take on new roles in society. The former wartime heroes of Japan began to refill the nationalistic void they left behind. It exists within the public’s understanding of it. In which, society’s social norms and expectations hold power over those with disabilities and shape how people understand disability. It exists on the governmental level. On this level the Japanese government is using disability as a tool of leverage to demonstrate international power. Lastly, it exists within the disability community. Within their community they negotiate what it means to have a disability, and projects this self-understanding

outward via systems of social advocacy. This chapter will show that there is complexity within the disability identity and that many different groups interact and are invested in it.

Soldiers that do athletics in Japan

In the year of 1964 Japan had the opportunity to showcase itself as a reformed nation, and demonstrate that they have rejected their old imperialist ways. This was seen with the hosting of the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games. After Japan was selected to host the 1964 Olympics, the Stoke Mandeville planning committee fully expected not to be invited by the city of Tokyo to host, these then optional, games in Japan. At first this was fully the case. Japan was not aware of the games, and the Stoke Mandeville planning committee did not think Japan would have the resources to pull off this event. Suddenly, the idea of hosting the games caught on. After learning about the Stoke Mandeville Games in 1962, Iimuro Susumu of Lions Club International contacted the Asahi Shimbun Social Welfare Organization, announcing Lions Club International's intent on having the Stoke Mandeville Games in Japan (Brittain 2010). This had a trickle-down effect which eventually resulted in a 21-person committee being formed on May 10, 1962, and the games being approved on May 14, 1963. With this amount of enthusiasm, it is easy to think that Japan was ready to showcase itself as a reformed nation to international audiences, but this was not fully the case. For this I want to problematize this idea, and show in which way the Stoke Mandeville Games was a return to older ideas of Japanese modernity. Japanese officials managed the Stoke Mandeville Games as a chance to reinvest the Japanese public into national imagery and as a stage to bring the disabled soldier back to the front and center of Japan. Thus functioning in a top-down system, where those in official positions showed

signs of using the civil collective of the disabled athlete to send national sentiments to the private individual.

National imagery

One of the main reasons that the Stoke Mandeville Games were able to become reality was because the reverence people still had for the royal family. Crown Prince Akihito was one of the main actors who pushed Japan's short turnaround from not hosting to hosting the games. This is because once the event caught the attention of Akihito, he announced his support for the games. This then incentivized other governmental officials to announce their support. These governmental officials included the Prime Minister, the Labor Minister, and the Health and Welfare Minister. The effect of this high-level of support, as stated previously, was the games being approved on May 14, 1963. As Dennis Frost (2013) argues

“the link between the Crown Prince and the Paralympic Movement in Japan was no mere happenstance, but rather a carefully cultivated relationship meant to generate publicity for the Games and bolster the international reputation of Japan's future monarch.”

Within this Stoke Mandeville Games environment Akihito became a cornerstone of the games. He gave a speech at the opening ceremonies in which he expressed his desire to “foster change for those with disabilities” and have these disabled soldiers “recover their health” (Frost 2013). His role was very similar to old ideas of Japanese modernity, that all things needed to be linked to the royal family. The Crown Prince was able to create a reality, via this stage, where Japanese liberalism could be redeveloped while he supported this western charitable system. Within the athletic setting Akihito became the bond that brought the Japanese public, and the Mandeville Games together. With this, the stage was set for the disabled soldier to reclaim the status they once held, but this time this soldier was called a disabled athlete.

Disabled soldier

It was one of Ludwig Guttman's intent for the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games to establish a healing process with in Japan. Within the context of these games those with disabilities in Japan did not only physically heal, but they also socially healed. While the disabled soldier was a symbol of war-time victimhood, on both the international stage and the domestic stage, the soldiers used to be symbols of strength and Japaneseness. With the American occupation of Japan there was a void in the area which the disabled Japanese soldier used to represent. It was on this stage, of the Stoke Mandeville Games, the Japanese disabled athlete came to fill this void. No longer confined to the wearing of their white hospital gowns, they donned their new Japanese team sports uniforms to represent the nation. Shigeo Aono, a wounded veteran who was "partially paralyzed (due to) taking an enemy bullet to the lower back during the Shino-Japanese war" was selected to deliver the player's oath during the opening ceremonies (Jojima 2016). For this moment of time, Aono was the voice of Japan. His status as a wounded soldier was apparent, but once again he was a symbol of national pride, not synonymous with wartime stigma. This sent the signal to those with disabilities, that you too can come to represent Japan.

1964: The new Japanese self

When Japan was selected to host the 1964 Olympic games they found a new environment in which they could express the nationalistic values that were once ingrained into their reality only 19 years previously. Within this system of sports, the Japanese people and those in powerful positions once again had a forum where they could express pride in their nation. For those with disabilities and those who revered the wartime veteran, the Stoke Mandeville Games provided a

forum in which they could celebrate this previously lost identity. Crown Prince Akihito associated himself with these disabled athletes. This association provided a space where the values of those with disabilities represented could be tied back to lost Japanese morals from wartime Japan. For Japan, celebrating these former soldiers was no longer a product of wartime stigma, it represented having pride in Japan right now.

A story on a train ride: Society and disability

In the early afternoon, riding a crowded train, one in which there was no room to sit, but enough room that one could stand and have a semblance of personal space, I was in the process of returning home from a day of fieldwork. Zoned out, and thinking today's observations was all but done, I suddenly hear a man let out a loud yell. I turn my head and see a commotion going on about one set of doors down. A middle age salaryman (middle-class white collar worker), and a nicely dressed, but very pudgy, young high school aged boy were in an interlocked battle for an umbrella. On lookers sternly said, in a half concerned and half annoyed manner, “やめろ。” (stop, in imperative form). While this happened, the young boy stayed eerily silent, while the salaryman let off a strew of comments that roughly translated to, “APOLOGIZE!” “TALK!” “WHY DON'T YOU SAY ANYTHING!” The atmosphere was tense, because no one knew how to respond to this odd spectacle. Somehow the atmosphere grew more tense and heavy, to the extent the train began to feel stuffy. The atmosphere transitioned into dread when the young boy let out a blood-curdling scream, and then another, right in front of the salaryman's face. This is when it clicked with me, the crowded train, the boy's weight challenges, the quick transition from complete silence to screaming, this boy likely had autism. The salaryman jolted back at the screams, as the young boy began to jump up and down with amazing force. Screaming at the

same time, pounding, with an open hand, the door of the train, the side paneling of the seats, and the TV above the door. He did this while tears were rolling down his face. No one did anything, they just watched as this event took place. Before long the train rolled up into the station, the station in which I needed to make a transfer. The young boy bolted out, made it three or four steps, collapsed on the ground, and began to thrash around. All while he continued his screaming. I looked over to the location where the incident was taking place, and I saw a man standing next to the young boy's now fallen body. The man's face conveyed the emotion of concern, but all rolled up in confusion. His eyes were wide open with a thousand-yard stare; as if he was trying to find any bastion of help while he glanced back and forth between the young boy and the sea of people. Not wanting to target this boy as a research subject in a time in which he is most vulnerable, I made my quick train transfer going down the stairs, and returning upwards on the next train island over, where I continued to hear the screams. This young boy's verbalized frustrations continued till I left. My train departed, leaving me ignorant of how events unfolded beyond that.

Disability and social customs

What pertinent information can this incident provide to the current understanding of disability in Japan? This scene touches upon what Duncan Starkey calls, 'proxemics', the "use of social and personal space and man's perception of it" as a system of communication (Morsbach 1973). This means within the context of a space, the way people interact with the space, becomes ritualized with certain culturally based actions. The train is one of these ritualized spaces in which social understanding is built non-verbally. This holds an importance because, per Chie Nakane, within systems of communication, including non-verbal communication, relationships are developed in

which positive and negative associations become established, and verbal and nonverbal communication becomes a tool for “avoid(ing) confrontation, for self-defense and to conceal hostility” (Morsbach 1973).

In modern day Japan culture and disability collide in very subtle ways. What may seem like a small and isolated incident is actually symptomatic of a greater cultural system of how the Japanese see proper citizens of the nation. Social customs that were built between the space of civil and official institutions, brought themselves down to the private level where two individuals’ views of these customs were at odds. This showed some cultural traits shutout those with disabilities, and allowed for negative emotions to take hold. I believe the event on the train is a window into the Japanese publics’ understanding about disability, and how certain Japanese cultural characteristics can build negative social environments. In these environments those with disabilities are forced to conform to an abled body setting, where their stigma becomes recognized. Erving Goffman proposes that minority identity can take two forms, “the discredited and the discreditable” (Hankins 2014). The discredited are

“those people who have either a swiftly recognizable or recognized stigma. They must deal with the social ramification of constant stigmatization and are saddled with the task of managing social situations in response. The second category comprises people who have a stigma not yet recognized by other people... The burdens anxieties, and potential joys of the discreditable and the discredited are parceled out according to their ability to ‘pass’ or not. (Hankins 2014)

This young boy was in a situation where he was discreditable about his disability status, but the social situation made him discredited. There are four cultural traits that caused this confrontation on the train, and this shift from a discreditable identity to a discredited one: 1. Unspoken train etiquette 2. The public’s recognition of disability 3. Language features and 4. Expectations of

social respect. All of these norms governed this boy, which resulted in his disability being projected to the public.

The first thing that I want to bring attention to is the presumptuous nature of this scene; there is no way for me to truly know this young boy's life situation, or his medical history. I am not exempt from being an actor in this scene. Just because I am doing academic research, does not free me from the instantaneous assumptions that are built up from my previous life experiences. My assumptions stem from my attending an American 'special needs' high school, which was dedicated to assisting those with either learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral issues, autism, or any other social issue that might be disadvantaged in a regular education setting. With my personal upbringing and cultural assumptions, I projected the frustration I saw with many of my high school classmates with their experience in an over stimulating and stressful environment, onto this boy. This gaze, and projection, also extended to the other peripheral actors, built upon the Japanese culture's way of establishing roles and expectations that must be fulfilled. Many of the actions in this scene demonstrate the barriers that still lay within the Japanese culture for those with invisible disabilities

Autism and social signals

This difficulty in dealing with the crowded trains is not exclusive to those individuals with autism, but an issue that might arise for many different people who might experience unique issues, as a result of their individual disabilities (or current life situation). This is why the priority seating system and wheelchair/stroller section was implemented. In this system, people yield seats or sections of the train to groups such as: the elderly, pregnant women, people with temporary injuries, or the disabled. This system only works for those who are obviously and

visibly disabled. For example, during my field research in Japan I had a casual conversation with an individual that uses a wheelchair. He expressed that he had no trouble with his daily commute to university because, with the help of the platform agent, people would yield spots for him on the train. This does not mean that this system only works for those with physical disabilities, but for those who can be discerned to have any disability. For example, on a train ride in a city in southern Japan, I saw a man who was visibly intellectually disabled enter the train with his brother, and a seat was immediately made available to him to the disabled individual, but not the brother. This means although it is not explicitly stated, the benefits of these trains seats extend to anyone who can be recognized as disabled. This puts those with invisible disabilities in situations where they are disadvantaged, much like the situation with the young boy on the train.

The relevancy of this comes in with the concept of ‘invisible disability.’ Per Marjorie Olney and Amanda Kim, an invisible disability is a “disorder or a disability that is (not) immediately apparent to others” (Black 2004). Since this young boy’s disability is not apparent to others this lets him fall into Erving Goffman’s concept of discreditable stigma. This is “stigma that is predominantly concealed” (Chaudoir, Earnshaw and Andel 2013). On the other side of the coin is Goffman’s concept of the “discredited,” who “are individuals who have a stigma that is predominantly visible” (Chaudoir, Earnshaw and Andel 2013). These ideas are relevant to Yuko Ogasawara’s (1998) belief that a “disadvantage position as a group provides opportunities for individual(s).” This means within certain instances of stigmatization comes select power and benefits that is not available to those in positions of power. Since this boy’s stigma was invisible, thus making him discreditable, he was unable to tap into his opportunities as a stigmatized individual. In this case, having the opportunity to sit within the priority seating section of the train. By not having a seat, it intensifies the opportunity in which the young boy’s

out-look and function of life could run contrary to the expectation that Japanese society places on him.



Figure 9 Priority seating poster. Photo by the author

The rules and customs of the train

In the terms of individuals on the autism spectrum, subtle and assumed social rules, such as the ones explained above, may be difficult to understand, and there is a difficulty “interpreting every-day social signals” (Hoffmann, et al. 2016). The train system in Japan in general has its own rules and customs, which are full of complex social signals. Within this situation, because it is unclear what social rule was broken, I wish to take a step back and prove that the social customs and rules of the train environment can prove to be difficult for those who cannot easily pick up on every-day social signals. I will use the idea of interpersonal distance to prove this.

It is not uncommon for trains to be extremely crowded. While this is true, there is still the expectation that personal space will be honored in some symbolic manner. While there is no physical space, “interpersonal distance” is created, making the situation tolerable (Morsbach 1973). An example of a ‘symbolic substitute’ for personal space on a crowded train is the avoidance of eye contact, and the avoidance of making noise. During rush hour, actual physical space is not being honored, but the avoidance of looking someone in the eye represents the mental physical space being honored. Once the eye contact is made, and personhood is attached to the person in the physical space, this causes the mental space to click over to feeling violated. This violation forces the acknowledgment that there is human nature in the individual ‘in your personal bubble.’ Seeing them as somebody with thoughts, feelings, emotions, and as a person capable of judging your character.

As for the auditory barrier, it once again returns to this concept of mental space, and in general just physical comfort. Obviously when one is forced to be in a situation where they are physically pressed up against an individual, it is common courtesy not to make noise due to the close-proximity to the subject’s ear. By making noise, even encompassing whispering, it might illicit actual physical pain of the eardrums, or just general annoyance. To build upon the more general point I am trying to make, by making noise, and adding another sensory indicator, beyond touch, that someone is next to you. It helps deconstruct this mental barrier, that one tries to build, that someone is not violating their physical space. When this mental barrier is deconstructed, and the acknowledgment that a social rule is being broken, this is when stress and discomfort may arise. This is because the “interpersonal distance” has been broken, making the situation intolerable (Morsbach 1973). For those who struggle with understanding social

signaling, they may not understand they are playing a part in an intolerable social situation. This could result in a social conflict as with the events on the train.

Stopping social disruptions

When this expectation was broken, and when the combative situation began, the way in which the peripheral actors were taught to deal with social disruptions, and their general knowledge to analyze a situation like this, further put the young boy in a position of disadvantage. Within Japan it is thought that conflict is something dealt with by the primary actors. The outsider has a minimal role. The value of self-resolved conflict is taught at an early age in the Japanese education system. For the peripheral actors, since it is not their issue, it is not their responsibility to be involved. In this case, since the peripheral actors were being disrupted by the event, it means they were involved in the conflict, though indirectly. In doing this they ended up exasperating the situation, and creating an overstimulated environment for the young boy. In this case, saying “やめろ” (“stop” said in a way that is a command) in a firm manner lead to this disadvantageous environment.

The nature of the Japanese language allows power within words. In the case of this incident, the Japanese imperative form holds weight. “やめろ” is the bare bones structure of the imperative form, and is the most demanding. In his research into the difference between Japanese and English imperative forms, linguist Hidemitsu Takahashi (2012) states that the Japanese language’s vast amount of sentence modifiers, and sentence final particles can make subtle distinctions in the level of politeness and force, causing clear distinctions between a command and a request. “やめろ” having no sentence final particle, and no sentence modifier beyond the change of “やめる” (dictionary form) to “やめろ” (bare command), makes it into a imperative

command, which holds a lot of weight, and a lot of social force in the Japanese social-linguistic context. For a non-Japanese context, think of the command/imperative form, like “やめろ”, as a way to verbally communicate an exclamation point. With this verbal exclamation point being pushed upon this boy, it led to an increased intensity for this over stimulating and stressful environment.

During the confrontation, and already over stimulated, the people around him were commanding the young boy to do things in this short and powerful form. This passive-aggressive way of trying to defuse the situation runs contrary to what should be done in the case of an autistic meltdown. This was not a calm form of communication, where ideas were expressed clearly, which would have been better. Instead, this was distant non-associative speech which used a language form and word that is typically associated with negative emotions, and actions. It does not matter to a certain extent that the peripheral actors of this event could not recognize this young boy as a person with autism, but the actions and roles they are expected to fulfill in dealing with his disturbance put him in a further disadvantage.

Aisatsu

This set of circumstances was intensified even further with the salaryman's much more aggressive “talk” and “apologize” commands. These were built out of hierarchical expectations. The Japanese language, and Japanese society are filled with hierarchical expectations in general. They stem from several Confucian ideals, and State Shinto's ideals of “national morality.” The Confucian ideas of filial piety, respect for elders, played a role into the salaryman's expectations of the young boy. In addition, State Shinto's (Japan's national religion in the pre-WWII era) ideas of national morality played a role in this conflict. In this situation, the young boy acted

outside the salaryman's social expectations in a social situation where he had to socially adapt himself to the actors present.

State Shinto promoted ideas such as national morality and morality based education. The vessel in which this was taught to the Japanese public at that time was Confucian based curriculum (Paramore 2015). This means during the World War II period, concepts like filial piety were not only government supported, but supported by the academic institutions. This deeply ingrained these values into society, and allowed them to be held over even to today. This idea plays into *Aisatsu*. Which Brian McVeigh (2014) describes it, when, "social actors take into account variables of age, status, and gender... and manage various versions of themselves depending on the situation." Linking this back to the event on the train, this means it is expected that the individual in the higher status, the older salary man, can make demands on those who are younger. In addition, within this line of expectation, the young boy is expected to admit fault, so that the elder can save face. Since the young boy did not apologize as soon as this conflict began, the man called upon this the young boy to apologize. The young boy became non-verbal, thus functioning against conventions. This made the salaryman frustrated. Not only was this young boy not respecting the request of someone in a higher social status than him, he would not even acknowledge a request that was made of him. With these social expectations, being placed upon this young boy, it once again needs to be stated that he was placed at a disadvantage, struggling to 'manage various versions of himself' that are required to survive the Japanese social setting.

Being on the train

On this train ride this young boy was in a situation where he was discreditable about his disability status. Since he was passing he did not get any of the reserved benefits to being

disabled. Japanese cultural circumstances then started to blur the line between the discredited and the discreditable. On this train, a system was put into place where this young boy's minority status was involuntarily pulled from him. A set of cultural expectations came together, projected itself onto two individuals, to make a situation in which this boy could not pass, thus forcing a public projection of his disability.

These subtle social cues can hold great weight. Those individuals who may not easily adapt to these cues are disadvantaged. Within the train situation, the way the Japanese culture operates placed this young boy in disadvantageous circumstances. Japan is a system of mass transit. This mass transit can get overcrowded, and difficult for those with invisible disabilities to navigate, because they do not receive the benefits reserved for those with disabilities. By not receiving these benefits, it forces them to function within the subtle cues and customs of the train culture. This young boy struggled with these expectations. When these cues and customs were not realized social conflict emerged, which pulled in peripheral actors who only saw further cues and customs being broken. These peripheral actors dealt with this situation in a hands-off and distant method. They began to make quick commands on the main actors. The older gentleman saw that the situation was not defusing, and proper social respect was not being received, so higher levels of aggression emerged. This series of events, and their cultural expectations, allowed this very public, autism based meltdown to occur. These are deep cultural norms that buildup this disparity, and constructs situations where certain individuals cannot leverage power. This shows that disabled bodies in Japan are not only governed solely by national policy, but also public norms. This social sphere of the individual, and the ways the disabled and nondisabled interact with it, became a space of social hostility, and a spot of negative disability understanding.

Japan's circle of life, taking ideas and giving ideas

The Japanese government is showing signs that there is the belief it can become an example these international standards of disability that other nations can model themselves from. This came to light during an interview with a Tokyo based disability rights organization, in which they stated one of the goals of the 2020 Paralympics was to institute a cultural exchange with African nations so they can find solutions to disability problems (Group 2016). These African nations would ideally use Japanese ideas to address disability issues in their country. What Japan is doing is establishing a type of international legitimacy via 'public diplomacy.' As described by Martina Topić, and Grifford Malone,

“Public diplomacy (is) a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and cultures, as well as its national goals and current policies” and “[The goal of public diplomacy is]... to influence the behavior of a foreign government by influencing the attitudes of its citizens”.

This is showing legitimacy on the part of the Japanese government. It demonstrates that Japan is both economically powerful enough, and influential enough that it can go out and help other nations. The culture is strong enough to have sufficient solutions to complex disability problems.

This desire for the nation to project a positive and mimicable national disability image will represent that Japan has come full circle. It presents the narrative of a Japan that once looked towards Germany for solutions that are now the one being looked at. To demonstrate this coming full circle, I will show how post-war Japan showed signs of taking in the solutions put forth by German advocates of disability rights in order to find solutions to their disabled problems. These solutions shaped the way Japan accommodated those with disabilities in group homes and hospitals. Then I will explain how Japan is using the Paralympics as a stage to project their

values surrounding disability outwards. Japanese officials once looked towards German civil institutions for disability solutions, now they are functioning the other way around. Japanese officials are showing signs of moving their official policies to the African civil sphere. This shows that while Japan was once was on the receiving end of public diplomacy, it is now leading public diplomacy efforts.

Germany's equal rights movement

In the postwar period for Germany there was a push by disability rights advocates to pull those with disabilities back into everyday society. These organizations wanted to dismantle the isolationist narrative that the disabled community faced in the past. This functions within the logic of the social model of disability. The advocacy groups were attempting to build the mindset that those with disabilities are even more disabled when they are not part of society. It presented the logic that disabled people were not isolated because they are disabled, but they were isolated because society was constructed against them. These equal rights organizations wanted to improve access for those with disabilities by dismantling two types of barriers: social barriers, and physical barriers.

In Germany during the 1950s and early 1960s parent and doctor run disability advocacy organizations began to form. It was the goal of these advocacy groups to make specialty establishments for those with disabilities in which they can live separately from an institutionalized environment (Poore 2010). This would establish a place where those with disabilities could insert themselves into society via interacting with abled-bodied individuals alongside with disabled companions on the same stage. An important part of independent living is accessibility, and it was part of the social advocacy discourse in Germany to have those with

disabilities insert themselves on the public/cultural level. Per Fiona Geist, in the 70s, as the German bureaucrats worked towards rehabilitating those with disabilities to be fit for employment, disability social advocacy groups made spaces where those with disabilities and the non-disabled could work together to address public prejudice and inaccessibility (Poore 2010). Then, in the 1980s those who were part of West Germany's disability rights movement went to America to learn about the American disability rights movement. This advocacy group wanted to build from previous successful movements to further integrate those with disabilities into society. These activists then "returned to (Germany) to establish the first center of independent living," which continued to expand into the 1990s (Poore 2010). These were the steps that were taken for Germany to reach the independent living movement. These stories of post-war disability advocacy are surrounded by the narrative of pulling those who are disabled out of the shadows of postwar defeat and integrating them into society.

Japanese reforms

The way that Japan instituted changes to disability's place in society was a reflection of the German approach and functioned within this social model mindset. In 1985 there was a mass overhaul of the Japanese pension system. This new system targeted those with disabilities to receive better coverage in this system by allowing disabled individuals to gain control of their financial situation. It tossed out this idea of earned pension, and targeted those in disadvantaged statuses (Stevens 2013). The change in the pension system created a path that allowed those with disabilities to move into society based on their own ability. This law was significant because it granted the pension money to the legal adult (age 20) with the disability, rather than the family member (Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japanese Society for Rehabilitation of

Persons with Disabilities n.d.). Symbolizing that it is now expected that the disabled individual can live independently and is no longer reliant or hidden within the family structure.

This system is also seen with the Japanese disabled person's relationship with official medical institutions. Currently there has been a shift from "mass institutionalization to independent living...which (is allowing for) many more people with severe mental illnesses to live outside of closed hospital wards" (Nakamura 2013). This builds a stage in which the public can interact with those with disabilities in an everyday setting, in an unsolicited manner (i.e. out in the town vs. hospital visits). To further pull those with disabilities out of the shadows, the Japanese government, in 1994, published a series of recommendations of accessibility for buildings that would be utilized by the public (Stevens 2013). The government hoped that these standards would translate into improving disability access in everyday society, and the hiring of those with disabilities into jobs.

While these efforts for a barrier free society are not as comprehensive as those in Germany, it still shows a hope that those with disabilities will be granted better access into everyday society. To find these solutions, Japan took a path similar to those nations in the west who integrate their disabled population thus projecting a narrative of disability acceptance. Additionally to this, it presents a narrative that the acceptance of those with disabilities in Japan is on par to the acceptance of disability in the west.

Japan, giving ideas to Africa

Japan is coming full circle, and the Paralympics seem like the stage to fulfill the last step in its journey. On this Paralympic stage, the Japanese government can demonstrate that they have solutions to disability problems, and African nations can take in these solutions and use them to

benefit their disabled population. Per Maurice Roche (2010), large events like the Paralympics represent “the bringing of an order to an otherwise disorderly world.” Don Houlihan builds upon this with a more general point saying,

“The network of (sport) IGOs and INGOs reaches state and communities in parts of the world that are not part of the other major world institutions...[International sports provides governments with an] elaborate but low-key network for contact and dialogue (Roche 2000, 229).

Within the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic stage, and the proposed exchange with Africa, the Japanese government is showing signs of bringing order to the disorderly world of being disabled in Africa. They are reaching out to the communities that have been untouched by comprehensive solutions to disability. The significance of this is the legitimization it brings Japan. The officialdom in Japan could be utilizing systems of public diplomacy to insert themselves into a power role on the international stage. It would symbolize that the Japanese government is no longer taking ideas, but making ideas to help the international disabled community. It shows Japan engaging in multiculturalism in which they can disrupt “standard patterns of recognition and instate new ones” (Hankins 2014). However, within this exchange, signs point to that the government “is not try(ing) to have a better understanding of (other) cultures, but (trying) to spread understanding of Japanese culture (Qi 2011). This means, within this cultural exchange system, the Japanese government is showing that it is taking steps to manage disability solutions in Africa, but is not showing an interest in accepting African solutions. It could be described as a system of cultural imperialism, which is made possible by public diplomacy on the stage of the Paralympics.

A connected narrative

Japan has tried to come full circle with disability. In an interview with a large disability rights organization it stated the government is hoping to have a cultural exchange in Africa in which they can implement solutions to everyday disability related problems (Group 2016). For the Japanese collective, this is an act of symbolic importance because Japanese social rights organizations have cited to “politicians and bureaucrats...how far behind Northern European countries Japan is in its disability welfare policies” (Nakamura 2005). Japanese governmental leaders are cultivating Japan’s standing on the world stage. Doing this dismantles the notion of being behind European disability policy. In the same way Japan looked to the west, Africa can look to Japan for solutions to disability. It shows they are now a nation of power, they are now strong, influential, and progressive enough to define universal standards of disability. They are no longer this nation that is behind the curve. Via public diplomacy, Japanese officials can not only take care of their disabled population, but also be active in taking care of those with disabilities in other nations. This is what coming full circle symbolizes. The Japanese state can now bring order to the world of disability, and build networks to solve the problems those with disabilities face. Japanese officials are demonstrating they are functioning in a system of top-down interaction. They are taking official disability solutions of Japan and are moving them into African civil society. Doing this gives those with disabilities a reason to come together and influence the way their bodies are discussed.

Language is power, power is the organized disabled identity

Language has power, and powerful language has been used to describe those with disabilities. One of the ways disabling language functions is with the “uses of demeaning words or phrases in

reference to people with disabilities” (Torkelson-Lynch, Thuli and Groombridge 1994). This functions beyond this definition and includes using demeaning words about those with disabilities, to describe people who are non-disabled. This type of tone-deafness is a cause disability rights movements to have attached themselves. In a sense, this has awakened the sleeping giant that is the disability rights organization. Philosophers like Jurgen Habermas and John Dewey argued that “publics take energy and effort to cultivate and maintain. They can lie ‘latent’ until properly, mobilized” (Hankins 2014). Warner compliments this idea by noting how “assembling a public relies around garnering attention” (Hankins 2014). This is a reality seen with language advocacy by disability groups in Japan.

For both Germany and Japan as those with disabilities started to drift together they started to take more hardline stances against groups that tried to control the way their bodies were being described. This type of ‘word-hunting’ advocacy appeared on several different levels, from domestic to the international level. These individuals came together and formed a civic collective. They intern put the media, the government, and other officials in their advocacy gaze, working in a bottom up manner. Since disability advocacy groups are now mobilized and garnering attention, it forces those in power positions to address multiculturalism. To demonstrate how those with disabilities in Japan have become a united advocacy group I will show in what ways they are trying to control the way disability is described and discussed through internal reforms and outwards advocacy. First, to show the power of this advocacy, and the common narrative in which this is a universal disability issue, I will draw upon how German disability rights advocates took control of how society discussed disability, making bottom up connections that link the civic to the official. Then I will show how in Japan, in order to awaken those with disabilities with regards to the stigmatization of words, disability advocacy groups established

internal reforms for disability words. In this system, those on the civic level are working downwards to the individual to institute change. Third I will show how this now awakened public in Japan will visibly pressure those in power positions to use disability friendly language. In which these civic associations work upwards to shape the official sphere. Lastly, I will demonstrate how these organizations then insert themselves on the international stage in order to sway the Japanese government into adopting these linguistic standards, are establishing an environment where the government is being influenced by organizations above and below them.

Germany and ‘Tone-deafness’

The German disability rights movement started near the late 1950s and early 1960s with the formation of parent and doctor run disability advocacy organizations (Poore 2010). These groups helped build a movement that wanted to address societal stigmas of disability. Within this movement these social activists wanted to defy preconceptions about disability. It was via word hunting that they did this. In Germany activists challenged the ideas surrounding their ‘worthless’ existence, and supported a forum where the disabled population could expend energy uniting under the disabled identity. These groups demonstrated the desire to have a hand in shaping the disability discourse in Germany. This encompassed the presenting of ironic awards to the most socially tone-deaf moment regarding disability each-year. An example of this was giving the ‘Golden Crutch’ award to the Association of Automobile Insurance Companies for their seatbelt safety campaign, “To be crippled for the rest of your life is a fate worse than death” (Poore 2010). This auto safety campaign fell into the trappings of the classic disability rights mantra of “better off dead.” Disability rights scholar Joy Weeber describes it as, “a particularly heinous narrative

frame (which) presents disabled people as ‘better off dead’ because of their perceived subordinates to able-bodied people and...having a worthless status” (Haller 2010).

These German activists were willing to confront people who were opponents to the German disability identity. This implies a coordinated identity where groups of social actors understand a narrative that is being levied against their identity. The disability rights organizations were cultivating and maintaining their identity via mobilization. Word hunting provides a space in which advocates can expend energy to feel like they are part of a cause. Since the Golden Crutch was a yearly event it kept the disability rights organizations in Germany invested in this narrative of proper depictions of those with disabilities. It is a spot of mobilization, in which the public’s attention is grabbed, and they are awoken to the issues those with disabilities face in Germany. Public scrutiny is applied to the group committing the offense, which may result in the offending organization changing its ways.

This actively defies set stereotypes of disability being passive, inactive, and worthless. The activists wanted to decentralize the idea of disability away from the framework of the medical model. Which will move away from ideas that those with disabilities need to be helped, saved from conventional society, and are victims of a cruel fate. They had the mantra of “people were talking about us but not with us” (Poore 2010). The disability rights movement of Germany wanted to insert itself into the political process of determining of their own future. They did this by cultivating, maintaining, and deploying a united disability identity.

Japan and word hunting

There are three main ways in which word hunting takes place in Japan, public disobedience, international advocacy and forming standards internally. These three types of advocacy

demonstrate different ways to change language surrounding disability which awakens and mobilizes the disability identity. Within internal standards, it constructs a space where word hunting advocacy is cultivated. It develops an understanding internally of the goals and the purpose of word hunting. For public disobedience, it shows that there are areas in which powerful organizations are constructing narratives of inferiority in regards to the disabled body. This builds into the volitional decision to attack these narratives of inferiority via public systems of disruption. With a constructed and active identity, international advocacy can take place. This awakens the public in regards to this discrimination in which ‘sympathetic selves’ are built. It invites the public to join this realm of advocacy (Hankins 2014). These sympathetic selves in tandem with these united organizations are mobilized to play into ideas of multiculturalism. It sways international organizations to support disability rights causes which places pressure on the Japanese state. All of this demonstrates a united and active disability identity in Japan. Like the disability community in Germany, a coordinated identity is established. They see power being leveraged against those with disabilities, so they cultivate, maintain, and deploy a united disability identity.

Japan and internal reforms

To start out this word hunting advocacy narrative, I will explore kanji advocacy via internal reforms. In this system those with disabilities are coming together to understand themselves as discriminated against, they are deploying themselves as activists, and are choosing to address myths about their body that helps construct stigma. One of the most contentious kanji compound word is 障害者(*syougaisya*, disability). The reason that this kanji compound is so contentious is the kanji meanings. 障 means hinder, 害 means harm or evil influence, and 者 means person (Jisho.org 2017). The controversial kanji is 害. Talking to a disabled wheelchair

athlete he said that he particularly does not like the 害 kanji because he is not harming anyone.

The alternative, in which this athlete likes, and many organizations are pushing for is 障がい者, which omits the 害. In a simple Google search of “障がい者” many disability organizations that do not use that the 害 kanji appear. Such as the, Disability Research Institute (障がい者総合研究所)³, ATGP an organization that markets themselves as “障がい者の総合就職・転職サービス” (Coordinator of job searching and careers for those with disabilities)⁴, and the Japanese Para-Sports Association (日本障がい者スポーツ協会)⁵.

The removal of this kanji from the disability lexicon functions off the notion of disabling language, in which a word can “perpetuate myths and stereotypes about people with disabilities,” and the way that attitudes can improve is by reforming words (Torkelson-Lynch, Thuli and Groombridge 1994). Doing this gets organizations and advocacy groups to talk about language and meaning within the context of disability, thus challenging the status quo in how disability organizations talk about themselves, forming an always moving and deployed advocacy group. This group chooses to understand themselves as discriminated against. They become discredited, meaning that these social advocates become invested into responding to the stigma attached to this kanji (Hankins 2014). This contested kanji is the disability rights movement’s way of addressing tone-deafness, in so far that they provide a possible narrative in which there was not one before. They are looking internally for ways to understand their identity. As in, the disability rights advocates in Japan do not see themselves as harmful, thus they are projecting an intentional narrative in which they challenge this understanding. Deeply ingrained linguistic

³ For more information on the Disability Research Institute go to: <http://www.gp-sri.jp/>

⁴ For more information on the ATGP go to: <https://www.atgp.jp/>

⁵ For more information on the Japanese Para-Sports Association go to: <http://www.jsad.or.jp/>

norms levied that the disability identity was ‘harmful.’ They want to attack this myth from within, because if they are not willing to make this kanji change, who else would be.

Japan and News Organizations

Disability rights organizations are more aggressive with organizations in power positions who associate negative narratives or connotations to disability words. Within this disruptive space those with disabilities are able to shame those in power to conform to disability rights organizations’ expectations of linguistic acceptance. This is done by gaining public sympathy. Japanese language linguist Nanette Gottlieb brings particular attention to how news organizations use the word *kichigai* (madness, lunatic), and how advocacy organizations react to its usage. News organizations would use the word *kichigai* to describe people obsessed with something to the extent it is negative. Examples of this is *sakka-kichigai* (soccer-mad), *kuruma-kichigai* (car-mad),” and similar ideas (Gottlieb 1998). In this instance disability rights organizations, such as the Osaka Association of Families of the Mentally Disabled, called upon the news organization and TV announcers that used the offensive word to apologize for their actions. They will call upon disability groups, and minority rights allies, to protest the station and attempt to bring this transgression to the attention of the public via advocacy means. This prompted the news organization that made the offense to apologize and add *kichigai* to their banned word list (Gottlieb 1998).

To these disability rights organizations this movement of shaming news casters is about being in control of how their body is described. Via this aggressive means of self-assertion, the disability rights organizations in Japan are proclaiming that their existence is not a negative existence, thus it should not be used in a negative context. This type of aggressive advocacy, was made popular by organizations like the Buraku Liberation League, and is called *kyūdankai* or

denunciation sessions. During a *kyūdankai*, “*buraku* activists gather to publicly decry discrimination” (Hankins 2014). This creates power because these organizations can project their ‘sympathetic selves’ to the public under the pretense that they are victims, per Colin Barnes, of “society’s barriers cause(d) by a disabling environment and culture” (Haller 2010). This is because within pity and a marginalized status there is power. The disabled community can intentionally utilize this pitiable stereotype to form an “ideology (that) invoke(s) pity and charity,” showing a group in need of saving (Haller 2010). This is done while the group steps into a position of power. The *kyūdankai* is an intentional pivot that both awakens the public about discrimination, while simultaneously power is obtained by the advocacy groups. Within the *kyūdankam* groups are able to control their own identity (projected pity), the actions of the public (collective sympathy), and the actions of powerful organizations (public shame). Actions like this are what catches the attention of NGOs and relevant United Nation organizations.

Japan and international advocacy

These domestic Japanese disability advocacy groups also have an international reach. With this reach those with disabilities in Japan begin to have their issues internationally recognized, meaning that they now have better “mechanisms as a means of rallying public and governmental support” (Hankins 2014). The importance of international organizations are that they can pressure domestic governments to abide by their standards. With this international sway, domestic governments will be more accepting of these inter-state minority issues. When they accept these values they come off as progressive, and accepting, and gives the Japanese state a space to demonstrate multiculturalism on the international stage.

Prompted by the 1981 United Nation International Year of Disabled Persons, Japan reformed some legal terminology to be more friendly to those with disabilities (Stevens 2013).

An example of this came with replacing *fuguhaihitsusha* (deformity) with *shogaisha* (person with a disability) when discussing disabled soldiers (Stevens 2013). In addition, “the Ministry of Health and Welfare...moved to remove the terms *tsunbo*, *oshi*, and *mekura* (derogatory terms for deaf, dumb and blind) from disability welfare laws” (Stevens 2013). The objectives of the International Year of Disabled Persons was to place an emphasis on

increasing public awareness; understanding and acceptance of persons who are disabled; and encouraging persons with disabilities to form organizations through which they can express their views and promote action to improve their situation. (United Nations 2003).

This is demonstrating a clear bottom-up system of disability advocacy. In which the demands of the disability advocacy group resonates upwards to the international level, then trickles downwards to the state. Within the international discourse, organizations such as the UN have been swayed by this advocacy. Since those with disabilities function under the notion of multiculturalism, it takes their “issues and lands them on the international Japanese representational landscape...because (those with disabilities) are objects of discrimination.” This in turn “haunt(s) social and political interactions in Japan (Hankins 2014). Thus, establishing an activist situation in which two forces are looking at Japan, the United Nations from above, and advocacy organizations from below. For the Japanese government, it shows signs that they believe that proper word usage is synonymous with progression in regards to disability rights. When a nation-state uses progressive disability terminology, it has become a symbolic jester of disability acceptance. This is part of the idea of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is when a nation is willing to accept its citizens in minority statuses. By accepting these standards, it is not only showing a sign that Japan is willing to demonstrate a progressive ideology, but it also demonstrates a nation willing to act as a world leader.

Words and advocacy

In Japan, much like with the German ‘Golden Crutch’ award, disability rights activists are trying to address certain tone deafness with a practice called “word hunting.” This act of word hunting provides an opportunity for those with disabilities to understand that they are discriminated against. This gives them the opportunity to form a united and mobilized group. This takes place with self-reflective actions, as seen with advocacy based reforms regarding the use of 障害者. This is also an internal process, in which disability rights organizations attempt to challenge assumptions about their own body by the projecting of a narrative outward. Disability rights organizations pressure authors and news organizations to use politically correct words. If they do not agree they will publically shame the organization or person as being out of touch. This captivates the publics’ attention with the *kyūdankam*. This form of activism demonstrates that disability advocacy organizations have systems of power in which they can not only leverage change on the gatekeepers of publicly broadcasted messages, but also on the international discourse.

Nations, like Japan, who have this type of advocacy present, start to become obliged to listen to the advocacy, since it holds power and sways the logic of governance. Those with disabilities are making a reality in which they talk with the government, not have the government talk about them. They use many different social systems to do this, the construction of pitiable selves, the maintaining of and mobilization of social advocacy groups, and the interaction with groups on the international stage. United groups in Japan, like disability rights organizations, have power and they will be shaping the disability discourse in Japan for years to come. From the 2020 Paralympics and beyond. The disability rights movement of Japan has inserted themselves into the political process, being the dictators of their own future.

Conclusion

Within Japan, the disabled body interacts with many different actors, and the way these actors interact with those with disabilities changes within different social settings. Within the sphere of modern life, different collectives of people can interact and influence each other via systems of top-down interactionism, or bottom up systems of interactionism. An example of a historical system where this took place was the 1964 Stoke Mandeville games. In this interaction, governmental officials demonstrated an interest into cultivating the former disabled soldier into a new national symbol, the disabled athlete. In which, they were brought into contact with national imagery, thus becoming a product the disabled and non-disabled individual could invest themselves into. In a modern day example, individuals, both disabled and non-disabled, must negotiate historical and contemporary social customs in relevant spaces. As seen with the train, this space, and the social customs inherent within it, was inaccessible to a young boy with autism. This resulted in the negotiation of these broken customs with a salaryman. During these negotiations, the young boy could no longer pass his disability, resulting in a public outburst, which allowed negative understandings of his disability to form.

Next, the Japanese government is showing that they are using the civic standing of disability rights and the Paralympics to project relevancy on the international stage. The Japanese government is working with African civic associations, in a top-down manner to do this. The relevancy of this is seen with the way the Japanese government used to cultivate official disability solutions. This cultivation took place by bottom-up historic interactions with German disability civil associations. The way that Japanese disability civil advocacy groups use word

hunting as a system to, not only shape and influence the individual disabled person, but also the domestic Japanese government and international government, is the last system of interaction. These interactions show that the relevancy that those with disabilities have within Japan is growing. It also demonstrates that many people have become invested into this disabled body. One of the locations where the Japanese disabled body is starting to become more relevant is sports.

Chapter 4: Sport and disability in Japan

Sport has meaning in Japan. It is a place where the community gathers together and bonds over a common factor that unites them. This could be a stage in which people are united by their Japanese identity, or the region where they live. The Japanese people will look at these sports stars and will come to understand their identity as Japanese from it. This is because there is a symbolic power the high-level athlete holds over the public. This system also applies to particular identities like those with disabilities. Those with disabilities in Japan will look towards domestic disability, and international athletic stars to better understand themselves as disabled. Lastly, these disability sports stars will be held up to a standard that those with disabilities are expected to match. Those with disabilities are expected to become the ‘super-crip,’ someone the public can use for inspiration, because they do not fall victim to their naturally pitiable state. This is all possible due to the way sport wins over the hearts and minds of the Japanese public.

Japanese high-level elite sports stars are a body that can establish what it means to be Japanese. They can form ideal notions of Japaneseness that is consumable and accessible to the Japanese public. This is because those individuals in these elite statuses have a close alignment to the state, thus allowing them to interact with the nation on a macro level. On the other hand, those who are not elite athletes do not have the opportunity to represent Japaneseness, they can only emulate it. Those on the non-elite level can only interact with the nation on the micro level, from an individual to individual basis.

This system is not just reserved for those representing the Japanese identity, but also to those representing the disabled identity too. It is within the space of sports where the disabled athlete can become distinguished from the ‘normal’ every day disabled person. Those elite individuals with disabilities in Japan can function on the macro level, thus becoming a basis in

which disability becomes understood from. The way that these elite level disabled athletes represent the disabled identity will become the foundation of the ideal Japanese disabled person. This will become a model that all people with disabilities are expected to emulate.

The differences between these different collectives of disabled individuals (soldiers, athletes, normal disabled individuals), their reach within the nation, and how their disability is understood functions within the social model of disability. These standards are set by nondisabled actors. In this system “nondisabled observers...believe they can make moral judgments of what it would be like to live with a disability” (O'Brien 2011). Both the disabled and non-disabled people of Japan absorb the values these elite disabled athletes demonstrate. They place a moral judgment on these bodies, and decide how they would want to live that embodied experience. Within this system judgment, assumptions, and values are attached to these lived disabled experiences. Those who are able to fulfill these expectations, both elite and non-elite, will be considered the ideal representations of the disabled body. It is systems like this that establish differences between the disabled athlete, the idealized disabled body, and the non-idealized disabled body, and there, like, but also different interactions with the state and the public.

The shooting ‘sports’ stars that Japan loves

I wish to shift focus from disability to the power of sport in Japan. Like many nations, Japan has a love of sports, and identifies with local and national teams. Within Japan there are many large baseball stadiums, sumo is constantly on TV, and children take part in sports at school. It is very easy to say sports holds a significant importance in Japan. This is important since sports are significant to the people which, means it holds power over the people. For this reason sport can

be used as a tool of soft power. Soft power meaning a tool that can win the “hearts and the minds” of the people (Atkinson 2014).

Sports are meaningful to the Japanese identity, both domestically and on the world stage. High-profile athletes play a meaningful role in the way that Japan comes to understand its placed based identity and/or cultural identity. As Simon Gwyn Roberts (2015) writes, in the regional context of sports, “sport (is) acting as a vehicle for the promotion and celebration of regional and sub-national identities ...pointing out that identity politics (are) simultaneously a product of those forces.” Sports teams stress locality, loyalty, and identity (Roberts 2015). Cohorts are built within this sports context and broader claims are proscribed for that placed based identity. These identities become a point of bonding for these groups of people, because it is a location in which they can rally around an identity and see distinguished individuals that separate themselves from the normal of society.

I wish to problematize this Simon Gwyn Roberts theory and apply it to a single athlete that functions on different levels and stages. I believe that a single athlete can come to represent the identity of a whole region or nation. These identities are negotiated on different levels. I wish to demonstrate, via sports stars, that identity can be both negotiated from the in-group and projected to the outgroup, or it can be negotiated from the outgroup and be projected to the in-group. This means that a sports star’s identity can be negotiated on the state level, in which a representation of Japaneseness is formed, and then be projected and absorbed by those outside the nation-state. On the other hand, a Japanese sports star’s identity might become symbolic of Japaneseness within an outside nation. This nation’s understanding of the Japanese athlete will be understood by those on the micro level of society, moral judgments will be attached, and then this understanding will be projected back into Japan.

The Japanese sports stars I will use to prove this are Hitachiyama Taniemon and Ichiro Suzuki. Historically, sports stars like sumo wrestler Hitachiyama Taniemon, have been used as a symbol of Japaneseness. Within Japan, the public looked up to Hitachiyama and saw an individual that represented all the positive traits of being Japanese. Thus he became a social marker for Japaneseness projected outwards. Ichiro Suzuki is also a major sports star in Japan and is seen to represent positive understandings of the Japanese identity. However, his identity and the positive attributes are negotiated in America, and then are projected back to Japan. The Japanese absorb these traits and see them as a positive. This is because it is not uncommon for national sports stars to be “adopted (as) popular cultural symbols and as markers of nationalism” (Jackson and Andrew 2002). This means Japan is not only part of a domestic sports market, but an international sports market too. Domestically sports can help convey an idea of regional identity to both those within the community and outside it. On the other hand, those outside of the community can project an understanding onto groups of which they are not part of thus, playing a part in shaping that identity.

Hitachiyama: The ingroup to the outgroup

Sports stars have long inserted themselves into Japanese society by being raised to the status of national leaders and symbols. Examples of this can be seen throughout Japanese history. In 1922 famed Sumo wrestler Hitachiyama Taniemon passed away. In the eyes of many Japanese this was a national tragedy. Japanese sport scholar Dennis Frost (2010) described the emotional outpouring similar to that of the death of an emperor. This means that Hitachiyama, as an athlete, was a person of great importance in the public’s eyes. Thus, it demonstrated he represented something to the Japanese general populous. He was not a normal member of society, there were

grander morals attached to him. For this public, he represented what it meant to be Japanese. The way Hitachiyama acted came to represent sumo, and the Japanese athlete to those on the outside.

Hitachiyama was very dominant in Japan's unique and indigenous sport, the sport that separates Japan from every other nation. He also represented the very disciplined lifestyle that many Japanese deem as ideal. As Hitachiyama writes himself as a wrestler he must "strictly observe...doctrines and rules", train every-day of the year, follow a strict and restrictive diet, and conduct himself with temperance (Hitachiyama 1907). These values of uniqueness and discipline are the values that the Japanese government wanted to convey to the public, and since Hitachiyama won over the hearts and minds of the Japanese people, this means they accepted these values. Once the Japanese public internalized these values outsiders began to understand Japaneseness, in the context of sumo, via these lenses.

These ideas of uniqueness and discipline, in regards to Japanese sumo, are projected outwards, and the outsider comes to understand what the Japanese athlete is within this context. The tourist guidebook, *Sumo-Japanese Wrestling*, is one of these mediums that conveys to outsiders what sumo is like in Japan. This guidebook describes Sumo as, "Japanese wrestling, is an art of exercising the body and strength in a way peculiar to the Japanese race" (Hikoyama 1940). It continues to describe the sport as "the fundamental object is the training of mind and heart, the cultivation of a vigorous spirit of the development of the body" (Hikoyama 1940).

There are two core concepts to draw from this of what sumo is: uniquely Japanese, disciplined and spirited. These ideas are conveyed to the outside readers, thus shaping their understanding on what it means to be a Japanese athlete. From this understanding, broader ideas of Japanese identity are established. It should be noted that sports are not just reserved to the domestic populous, a sports star may come along who becomes a symbol around the world. With

the national construction of sports stars in mind I wish to shift the focus to world sports stars and what they come to represent to the Japanese, and how these preconceived notions just established come to shape it. It demonstrates an outsider to insider connection that shows an athlete can come to represent the values of the state.

Ichiro: The outgroup to the ingroup

In modern-day Japan, sports stars still hold a significant role. Many kids look up to them, the current standings of Japanese athletes are a topic of discussion, and they are perceived as social superiors. It is not difficult to say the sports is significant to the everyday Japanese person. One of the key examples of this is Japanese baseball player Ichiro Suzuki. Like Hitachiyama, Ichiro develops pride in the Japanese identity, but this pride is in part shaped by outsiders' understanding of his Japanese identity. Ichiro is one of the few pro-baseball players who were able to bridge the gap between the Japanese baseball league to the American baseball league, Major League Baseball (MLB). Ichiro Suzuki was a staple player for the then Orix BlueWaves of the Nippon Professional Baseball league. In the year 2001 he made his way to the MLB and spent most of his time with the Seattle Mariners, also making short stints with the New York Yankees, and Miami Marlins. In the context of baseball in the United States, he is a household name, and he represents the Japanese baseball mentality and athletic style.

In Ichiro's debut season in 2001 his popularity swept a crossed America. Chong Chon-Smith notes a news report that described a Seattle Mariners promotion in which they would give a free Ichiro bobble head to the first 20,000 fans that came to the ballpark. In anticipation for the scale of the event, the Mariners hired extra security, setup portable bathrooms, and brought in additional trashcans (Chon-Smith 2014). To Chon-Smith (2014) this Ichiro bobble head is very

symbolic in how the American public came to understand the Japanese style of baseball, and the Japanese athletic nature. Ichiro was a new type of non-American masculinity. His Japanese body was not big and strong, and he did not act in a loud and boisterous manner. He was small, quick and reliable, and was quiet and reserved. (Chon-Smith 2014). Like the American's understanding of sumo, Ichiro was a uniquely Japanese product, whose nature was disciplined and reserved.

Due to Ichiro's success in America, he started to represent what Japanese baseball is, and he became an individual that represented something beyond the micro level of society. These American moral judgments of Japanese baseball players were projected back to Japan and became symbolic of what a desirable Japanese player in the MLB is. Since Ichiro is a sports star who won over the hearts and minds of the public, what he represents about baseball is significant. Through the projection of America and his success, he represents a uniquely Japanese play style, and being disciplined and reserved during play. This is part of the reason why within Japanese baseball a "flashy manner (of play is) a "grievous sin"" (University of Michigan n.d.). This is because in Japan Ichiro was able to align himself with greater Japanese values. It helped Ichiro become a national symbol of Japaneseness.

Athletics and the Japanese identity

The Japanese people both identify with famous athletes like Hitachiyama Taniemon and Ichiro Suzuki. These two top-level athletes won over the hearts and minds of the Japanese public, and were able to disconnect themselves from just being an individual on the micro level in Japan. They are both part of a discourse in which their stardom helps build a representation of what it means to be Japanese. Hitachiyama's stardom was negotiated on a national level. Through his athletic status, an idea was constructed that Japanese sport stars are unique and disciplined.

These cultural notions were celebrated, and projected outwards. Ichiro's identity negotiates Japaneseness in America, and this identity is projected back into Japan, where it is absorbed. This is a proof of Simon Gwyn Roberts idea about how sports can build a regional identity. This holds true in Japan. In addition, the case of Hitachiyama and Ichiro shows it can be applied on different scales. A single person can come to represent a whole nation's identity. However, it can also move from the domestic Japanese stage to the outsider American stage, but also from outsider American stage back to the domestic Japanese stage.

The shooting 'sports' stars that the Japanese disabled love

As established in the previous section the Simon Gwyn Roberts model of sports can function within different contexts. An individual athlete can come to represent an identity, and this identity can be negotiated both on the inside and the outside. For this section I wish to push this model even further. I believe that this can apply to a particular identity, such as the Japanese disabled athlete's identity. In the case for those with disabilities, they will look towards different collectives of the disabled identity to better understand their existence. These disabled individuals in Japan both look towards domestic disability sports stars to understand their own identity but also disability sports stars from the international stage. When looking at these sports stars, they will be judged on the different ways they represent the disabled experience. I believe this sports identity, functioning in the context of disability sports, can strengthen the disability identity and build an internal understanding of the Japanese disabled self. It builds a disabled body that people would like to live like. This understanding will be projected outwards. Greater society will come to understand disability sports from this outward projection. The public's understanding will be absorbed by the disabled community in Japan, and the cycle of identity

negotiation will repeat. Within the context of disability sports the idealization of the strong and active disabled person is constructed. This identity can be governed and controlled due to the symbolic powers of these superstars. I will look at Shingo Kunieda and Oscar Pistorius to show how the Japanese disabled community looks towards the domestic disabled sports stars and the international disabled sports stars, projecting this identity outwards.

Shingo Kunieda

For this section I will be looking at Japanese wheelchair tennis player Shingo Kunieda. Shingo is one of the top ranked wheelchair tennis players in the world. He has held the top rank in the sport multiple times. Some of his career highlights include: winning the Australian Open eight times, winning the French Open six times, winning the US Open six times, and winning the Paralympic gold medal twice. After winning gold at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, Shingo's wheelchair tennis career became an object of inspiration for those with disabilities in Japan. At these games he represented the moral values of success, disability, and the Japanese identity all rolled into a single product. He signifies to the Japanese disabled community something they should strive to be like.

Every young person I interviewed at the tennis tournaments I attended stated that they were inspired to join the sport after watching Shingo Kunieda's performance at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics. He became a body they wanted to emulate. I believe this is true because of the nation-state connection these young individuals have with Shingo. The fact that Shingo is Japanese shows these young athletes that someone coming from the same circumstances can be successful, and not only become a domestic sports symbol, but an international sports symbol too. He is an ideal representation of the disabled body. Shingo wants to be an ambassador of

disability sports in Japan. As it is written on his personal website, “He worked as an ambassador for 2020 Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic campaign, and is expected to be a key person to promote all sports for people with disabilities” (Kunieda 2015). Shingo’s actions brought these young men into the discourse of the Japanese state, and made them proud Japanese citizens. These younger individuals that I interviewed said that they want to represent Japan in the 2020 Olympics, following in the footsteps of their idol.

In addition to this he became a symbol of strength in the disability community. Seeing his strong performance pushed these disabled individuals to take part in athletics. Per Shingo Kunieda’s personal website, his motto is “I am the best!” (Kunieda 2015). To these young Japanese athletes, he is the best. He changed the narrative from what cannot be done to what can be done. The positive attributes of being active and overcoming a disability is projected onto the disabled community. This establishes the ideal narrative of both being ambitious in one’s life while co-existing with their disability. It sends the narrative that these young athletes should focus on what they can do, because they too can become the pride of the nation.

Shingo Kunieda is the quintessential example of a domestic disability star who comes to represent what it means to be a disabled athlete in Japan. His existence as a Japanese representative established a reality where being a proud disabled person and a proud Japanese person can co-exist. This shows that Shingo Kunieda became a marker for nationalism via the context of disability sports. He is also seen as someone that brings positive disability traits to the disability identity. While he falls under the definition of a discredited minority, he is able to very successfully manage his stigma via a publicly active lifestyle. Lastly Shingo is successful in three ways: He is a successful athlete, a successful disabled person, and a successful Japanese citizen. The young athletes at these wheelchair events are using Shingo Kunieda as a

representation of what it means to hold the Japanese disabled athlete identity. These young athletes model themselves from him and project his identity onto their own.

Oscar Pistorius

When I was doing my research in Japan I was talking to a Canadian born swim coach about the process of teaching young disabled people how to take part in sports. When I was telling him about my research he advised me not to lose sight about the international perspective of sports stardom. This is because his personal sports heroes, and the sports heroes of many of the children with whom he works are not limited to the domestic athlete pool. I believe the sentiments behind what he said rings true. That beyond a cultural identity there can be identities that do not have national boundaries, and those with disabilities are one of those. These international disabled sports stars and the disabled athletes that watch them are still connected by their disability. While many Japanese disabled athletes might look towards Shingo Kunieda, there are also international non-Japanese stars that build the Japanese disabled athlete's understanding of their own identity.

An easy argument to put forth is the world's most famous disabled athlete is, now disgraced runner, Oscar Pistorius. Oscar Pistorius is one of the few Paralympic athletes that have bridged the gap between the Paralympics and the Olympics. This bridging of the gap occurred during the 2012 London Olympics and it gathered much media attention. More recently Oscar has gathered media attention for the homicide of his girlfriend in 2013. This means for this section I need to make a distinction between Oscar Pistorius, the athlete and Oscar Pistorius, the criminal. I will only be looking at Japan based discussions on Oscar's athletic achievements, and will ignore his criminality. Doing this will give me a clearer understanding how on an

international, macroscale disability sports stardom takes place, and what traits are conveyed to those with disabilities in Japan about the disabled athlete. Oscar's achievements will be something that can stand on their own. He will be not only someone who is separate from the normal disabled collective, but he will also distinguish himself from the disabled athletic collective. This is because, the moral values attached to his livelihood are as seen as something truly worth emulating. He is the body that people are pushed to be like, because he is an ideal disabled body.

In a pre-Olympic issue of the Japanese magazine of *Sports Graphic Numbers*, there was a brief discussion about accomplished Paralympic athletes. The translated quote below was in a section about revolutionaries in disability sports.

“Single below the knee prosthetic user Markus Rehm's (Germany) appeared at last year's IPC's World Athletics Games' long jump event, where he jumped 8M 40cm, which exceeded the winning record of the London Olympics, and Oscar Pistorius (South Africa) who participated in the 400 sprint at the London Olympic with double leg prosthetics, those are notable examples” (Jojima 2016).

By acknowledging the existence of Markus Rehm and Oscar Pistorius, and explaining their significant accomplishments it establishes them as authoritative examples of what a disabled athlete should strive to be like in the Japanese context. These are the traits that domestic disability athletes absorb from these international sports stars. It is someone who breaks down barriers, and bridges the gap by competing on the level of the more legitimate abled bodied sports. In addition, the magazine makes no mention of Oscar Pistorius's current legal trouble. This symbolizes that Oscar's athletic achievements, and contribution to disability athletics is to the utmost significance. That even with his illegal actions his accomplishments should be discussed as if he was still a superstar because his triumphs can motivate others.

The representation of an identity

The interaction between sport stars, and the public is complex. A sports star can come to represent a regional identity but can also represent a more universal identity that passes through national and regional boundaries. An example of this is with the Japanese disability collective. Disabled athletes in Japan will look at both domestic and international sports stars to better understand their identity. Since sports stars hold power over their disabled selves, they will internalize these traits, assign moral values to them, and promote and celebrate them. Domestic athletes such as Shingo Kunieda convey ideas like the intertwining of a proud Japanese identity and proud disability identity. Those with disabilities want to be a mirror of his success and his ambition, and they want to emulate his embodied experience. Oscar Pistorius, via his status as an international superstar represents the positive aspects of being a disabled person that can break down barriers and bridge gaps. Since these sports stars have become the ‘regional’ identity of disability athletics, those who identify as a disabled athlete in Japan will come to understand part of their athletic identity in relation to the ideal ways Oscar and Shingo are portrayed.

These disabled super star athletes won over the “hearts and the minds” of these lower level Japanese disabled athletes (Atkinson 2014) . This means they have entered into this national discourse of soft power. They are being groomed to be the new national symbols of disability in Japan and symbols of disability internationally. The Japanese government is demonstrating they are making positive symbols for these young individuals on which to base themselves. Even if they do not reach stardom, this active life style is being presented to them as something positive and attainable. By the government supporting athletes like Shingo it is spreading the values he represents to the people who look up to him. These values being Japaneseness and disability as a unified identity. As the tournament coordinator said at the

opening ceremonies for a wheelchair basketball tournament, “You are the future Paralympic athletes of Japan.” Many of these young athletes are slated to become the next symbols of disability in Japan. Much in line with what Oscar Pistorius represents to the disability identity, the ideal disabled person does not lament in their disability but are strong and positive individuals. This is the disabled identity the Japanese government is fostering and allows to exist in the Japanese national discourse. The disabled body thus becomes a symbol called the ‘super-crip’.

Sports stars and ‘super crips’: the good, the bad and the ugly

In Japan, the disabled body exists on several different plains. It could be an object of inspiration, or an object of pity. The Japanese disabled athlete is part of this discourse of inspiration. This means that both their identity as a disabled person, and their identity as an athlete come together to form the ‘super-crip.’ Disability studies scholar Ronald Berger (2008) describes the ‘super-crip’ as “individuals whose stories of courage, dedication, and hard work prove that it can be done, that one can defy the odds and accomplish the impossible.” Due to the expectations of social forces that attach moral judgment to the disabled body, the ideal state for those with disabilities is perceived to be the ‘super-crip.’ This idealness is present in different collectives of the disabled community, both the extraordinary and mundane level. This means for the ‘super-crip’ identity in Japan, it comes to represent someone that is doing something inspirational, i.e. something that they should not be able to do. They form a clear contrast to the disabled person who is labeled pitiable or victims to their disability, which is a negative representation of the disabled embodied experience.

To prove this I will look at how narratives about disability give commentary on what type of person they are; a good disabled person or a bad disabled person. I will look at several news stories that depict different narratives about achievement. These news stories will show a pitiable disabled individual, an inspirational disabled individual, and a disabled athlete. When these news stories are compared, it shows there is an idealness of the 'super-crip' within Japanese depictions of disability. This is because individuals are always counterbalanced to their minority status because, in the public's attempt to negotiate the marginalized identity of those with disabilities, the public establishes standards for judging their behavior (Faier 2009).

Pitiable

During my field research, the Sagamihara mass stabbing incident took place. On July 26, 2016, Satoshi Uematsu broke into a disability care center and went on a killing spree, which resulted in the death of 19, and injuring 26 individuals. Satoshi cited that one of his motivations for this act was, "It's better that the disabled disappear" (Kyodo 2016). This mass killing was not only the subject of domestic interest, but also world interest. This Japanese news story portrayed those with disabilities as victims, passive, and not in control. The actors in this story were understood only via the lens of negative characteristics.

This national headline news story logically portrayed the people at this disability center as victims of an attack, but the idea of note is the way many news outlets portrayed the people living in this facility to be powerless victims, I.e. being a vulnerable population. The article states that Satoshi "tied up some residents and staff as he went on the rampage," (Kyodo, 2016). Consequently, while explaining that the victims with disabilities were attacked in their sleep, the news story presented the idea that the staff would be the ones in power to stop him.

In addition, the article cites that Satoshi himself was disabled, explaining the he was admitted to a mental hospital before the attack took place, leading the reader to make the connection that Satoshi is vulnerable to his disability. Since he was a victim of his disability, he made other people victims. This explanation, and strands of logic used to construct the narrative, presented a story of victim-perpetrator, cause-effect, and causation-correlation. Those at the living assistance facility were victims of their disability because they could not act. Satoshi was a victim of his mental disability thus he went on the killing spree. The staff were tied up because Satoshi thought they were the only ones that could stop him. This showed that the idea of those with disabilities being portrayed in the victim role is very much alive in Japan.

The mundane

Next I wish to show how non-athletic disabled individuals in Japan can cast off the stigma of being victims to their disability by replacing it with a narrative of inspiration. Thus, advertising to the public a narrative of what a positive disabled body looks like, i.e. the 'super cripp' idea. This is the space where mundane tasks seem amazing. Eric Parideaux of *The Japan Times* wrote an article entitled "Blind doctor finds new way of seeing", which is about Seiji Sakai, a psychiatrist who uses adaptive technology to do his job.

The article uses phrases to introduce Seiji such as, he uses "a digitally powered magnifying glass — and squints through it to read. Finding the information he needs, he types a memo on a laptop that recites the words aloud in a robotic voice" (Prideaux 2006). After the article explains how he does this mundane task, it goes on explain his disability as the basis for defining his struggles in life. It states why doing mundane tasks like writing on a computer are amazing, with lines such as

"Sakai at work is something to behold. Typically, when Japanese people write on a computer, they choose appropriate kanji characters from pop-up menus that can stretch on interminably. Sakai goes about the same process, but in audio" (Prideaux, 2006).

The article continues talking about the tools, the people, and organizations that helped form Seiji into a successful person. Showing that he is amazing for overcoming his disability in a positive way, rather than being one of the “bad” disabled individuals that want to die, that are angry, that drink a lot (Prideaux, 2006). This article shows that in Japan the idea of the 'super-crip' exists in the definition which is opposite of the vulnerable or weak disabled person in Japan.

The super star

This is also the case with Japanese disabled athletes. I will be looking at the Japanese weekly magazine *Sports Graphic Number* and their 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympic preview issue. This magazine, in addition to looking at Japanese athletes for the Olympics, also looks at Paralympic athletes. Within this magazine I will be looking at the section which covers wheelchair basketball star, Hiroaki Kōzai. The reason I selected the report on Hiroaki Kōzai is because he is a famous para-athlete in Japan, who holds a high profile. This means he would naturally be the subject of much public interest, which helps establish him as a ‘super-crip’ and an authority on disability issues in Japan.

Sports Graphic Number first establishes Hiroaki as a fighter. The article starts off with saying “He grew up in the world, and he has been fighting the world.” This article elucidates that Hiroaki “has been fighting the world” that is built against him, and by becoming a top-level athlete he has “defied the odds,” thus making him into a product of human interest (Matsubara 2016). The article also calls, Hiroaki the “ace” of the Japanese men’s wheelchair basketball team

(Matsubara 2016). An 'ace' in the context of sports is a marker for the captain and the most skilled member of the team. This is to say that Hiroaki belongs to the crème de la crème of those who are disabled athletes. It demonstrates that his accomplishments are more notable, thus deserving of praise. This is intensified within the context of his disability.

When compared to the non-disabled athlete, one would not commonly think that the non-disabled athlete has overcome the odds by the mere fact they are pro-athletes. This disabled exclusive stereotype is how the reader is first introduced to Hiroaki, thus becoming one of the key defining factors of who he is. Beyond this introduction, *Sports Graphic Number* portrays Hiroaki in a very typical way: making hard choices between his sports future and family, his dreams for success, and reverence for his coaches and teammates. Lastly, *Sports Graphic Number* used this interview with Hiroaki as an opportunity for him to discuss issues for disabled athletes in Japan. This is a unique idea attached to the elite disabled athlete collective since by their mere existence in this role they become symbols of disability and the movements attached to it. For this reason, Hiroaki's voice on disability issues resonates stronger than most other disabled individuals. Most other sports stars are typically not tied in with social issues, which makes the reporting on Hiroaki unique, and shows the macroscale issues to which his existence are attached to. Hiroaki is permitted to become this authority because of his 'super-crip' status. He suffered at the hands of his disability, but overcame it. This gives Hiroaki the authority to speak on disability issues.



Figure 10 Wheelchair Basketball Hiroaki Kozai. Photo by Enomoto, Asami

Hiroaki, Seiji and Satoshi

There are many ideas that separate Hiroaki and Seiji, but the way their body is compared to the bad disabled person is the same. Social issues are what shows the difference between Hiroaki's 'super-crip' status and Seiji Sakai's 'super-crip' status. The way these two men are counterbalanced against each other provides contextual clues to the power of the 'super-crip' label. Hiroaki's accomplishments, and his status as an important disabled athlete, are two ideas that force an association between his livelihood and large disability social issues. Hiroaki is a high-powered star, while Seiji is an everyday working class man. The level in which they insert themselves into the macroscale of society is the key difference. Hiroaki can interact with the state because of his association with larger issues, Seiji is unable to make this connection because he does not hold this national representative status. Both men are the subject of inspiration, but only Hiroaki is symbolic of grander social issues. This is the result of his status

as a Japanese representative. This means his body as a disabled person functions on the macroscale, thus allowing his disabled body to become representative of larger disability-related social issues. His status as a Paralympian athlete brings him in close ties with the state, which then builds a symbolic understanding that he represents Japaneseness. Thus allowing him to speak with authority on these social issues, further legitimizing his moral authority over the disabled existence as one that is a desirable one. Hiroaki's disabled body is politicized; he represents the positive attributes of being disabled. When his success is compared to his body, he becomes the 'super-crip' that the public believes in, and the disabled strive to be like. Seiji is like Hiroaki, but on a smaller scale. While he will not be able to speak with authority on the macroscale issues, he is the everyday representative of the successful disabled body. Much like with Hiroaki, Seiji's current life situation is counterbalanced to his disabled body giving him this status of 'super-crip.' This makes Seiji's body governable as an obtainable 'super-crip' body, this is because his body is on the same level as the everyday disabled individual. Seiji and Hiroaki are the disabled bodies the public comes to love and idealize.

The difference between Hiroaki and Satoshi are representative of what a good disabled person is and a bad disabled person is. They are illustrative of the bifurcated reality that there are weak and passive disabled people, or there are the strong and successful disabled individuals. The idea of the strong disabled person being in the desirable status is counterbalanced with the passive, disabled person, who comes to fulfill the role as the undesirable disabled person. Hiroaki overcomes his disability, while Satoshi falls victim to it. This happens because of the powerful symbolic value the 'super-crip' holds. The 'super-crip' is the counterbalance to the pitiable disabled person. On their different planes of disability, they come to define each other, Satoshi's existence as a bad disabled person allows Hiroaki to become

the ‘super-crip.’ This narrative of inspiration allows Hiroaki to be the good disabled person, a model in which other disabled people base themselves from.

Three identities, three depictions

Seiji, Satoshi, and Hiroaki all represent different collectives of the disabled identity. The success and failure that these three men experience are defined in the context of their disability. These men come to provide a counterbalance for each other, while their ‘super-crip’ status is built or diminished. This provides a space where moral judgment can occur. While everyone may not become a Hiroaki, they may become a Seiji, a person who does not fall victim to their disability. Satoshi’s existence as a bad disabled person allows for Seiji and Hiroaki to be good disabled individuals. Hiroaki’s authority as a ‘super-crip’ shapes the expectations placed on Seiji and Satoshi, implying that they should be like him. This is because the way Hiroaki experiences his disability makes his life worth living. This means that this status of ‘overcoming’ or the ‘super-crip’ label appears in different avenues in Japan. It demonstrates that the ‘super-crip’ idea is not just connected with the universality of sports. It is also an idea that is embedded into the Japanese culture with regards to disability. People with disabilities are seen as brave and courageous souls (‘super-crip’), or as the antithesis, a vulnerable population. These statuses can be a leverage for change, that is why they are important for the governances of the disabled body. The ‘super-crip’ exists in Japan, and the disabled body exists on many different planes. These different images of the disabled body in Japan are what negotiate what the ‘super-crip’ is, and how it is the ideal state a disabled person can reach.

Conclusion

Sports are meaningful to the Japanese people, it is a spot where community is formed, and identity is constructed. Examples of this are the Japanese identity, the disabled identity, and the ‘super-crip.’ Via systems of soft power, these three different identity collectives will be influenced by sports. Models like the once proposed by Simon Gwyn Roberts show the power of sports and how it can be used to build a collective identity. This is because this system brings cohorts together to understand and celebrate an identity. An example of this is how athletes like Hitachiyama and Ichiro Suzuki establish complex systems of identity negotiation. Hitachiyama demonstrates what it means to be Japanese to the Japanese populous, and Ichiro demonstrates what it means to be Japanese to outside nations. Roberts’s model also applies to different collectives of the disabled identity. This functions with both domestic disability sports stars and international disability sports stars. Values of the ideal disabled body are attached to disabled individuals like Shingo Kunieda and Oscar Pistorius. These two men provide a template in which disabled individuals should follow. They should model themselves from these men because they are strong and successful disabled individuals. This constructs ideas regarding the ‘super-crip.’ The ‘super-crip’ is the disabled living experience that the general public wants the general disabled person to experience. To do this, moral judgments are attached to different collectives of the disabled body. Examples of this is the pitiable victim of their disability, Satoshi Uematsu. It is because of Satoshi Uematsu’s pitiable status that the mundane ‘super-crip’ such as Seiji Sakai, and the athletic ‘super-crip’ Hiroaki Kōzai can exist. The Japanese government has an investment in these disabled bodies. When the Japanese government promotes these ‘super-crip’ models it is called the elite approach.

Chapter 5: The Elite Approach

Zhixun Guan (2015) dubs the ‘elite approach,’ as a system that aims to make “quick result with medal rankings” by providing comprehensive and dedicated funding to top-level disabled athletes (T. Supplitt 2016, B). Zhixun Guan uses the ‘elite approach’ to describe what happened to Chinese disabled athletics after Beijing was selected to host the 2008 Paralympics. After this selection, China started to reach major Paralympic success winning, each event by a wide margin. Guan (2015) cites that the inspiration behind this elite system was to support, “ideological superiority, economic prosperity,... (and) national revival.” While China very explicitly supported the top-level of disability athletics, those athletes on the bottom were all but ignored.

I believe that Japan is part of this ‘elite approach.’ The Japanese government have managed certain policies that utilize these elite athletes as representations of Japanese social and economic power. This is a form of governmentality. Governmentality is

“the governing of people’s conduct through positive means rather than the sovereign power to formulate the law. In contrast to a disciplinarian form of power, governmentality is generally associated with the willing participation of the governed. (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc n.d.).

Within this elite approach the disabled population is defined, thus making it into a collective visible to the Japanese public. This allows for the public to identify, classify, and form opinions about this now singled out identity. In this case, the elite athletic identity is distinguished from other collectives of society. This allows for these athletes to voluntarily participate in events closely associated with the state, such as the Paralympics or disability sports. The way that these elite disabled athletes function across the nation-state will build a framework that attempts to find solutions to disability based problems via socialization, not policy making. This will

motivate others to self-govern and invest themselves into this discourse, thus allowing a diverse assemblage to come to understand problems those with disabilities face within Japan. In the case of the elite disabled athlete people will come to understand them as a framework for establishing solutions to disability struggles. Within the elite approach it constructs the narrative that those with disabilities should be emulating the top level ‘super-crip’ athletes.

While this system is a way to support and idealize the top-level athletes, the issues that the non-elite disabled athletes face are not addressed. The focus of this chapter will be around this elite approach. First I will demonstrate how the Japanese government is putting an emphasis on the elite level Paralympian. This will be established by first showing the complex minority identity of these disabled athletes. The Paralympian is naturally subordinate to the Olympian which allows for a system of governmentality to take place. Based in their natural subordinate athletic status, groups like advertisers and the government will pull this body from its minority status and use it as a symbol that the public can rally around. This system of rallying around the disabled athlete will be the second point of this chapter. From this I will show how the government is showing signs of managing this now elite athletic body to legitimize its self via multiculturalism and governmentality. With this information in mind, I will flip the narrative, and show how the lower level athletes are still facing many problems while being all but forgotten bodies.

Japanese disability athletics: separate

In the wartime period, there was a push to define that disabled population in a way that made them visible to the Japanese public. This was seen with the comparing and contrasting of the ideal disabled soldier with the disabled individual that was not a soldier. Since the disabled

soldier was a group that was identified and classified to the public, via this comparison, they were able to be compared to different groups, such as the able-bodied soldier. Within this comparison, despite both being part of the soldier identity they were understood in different ways. The disabled soldier was a willing participant in this difference of governance, thus allowing them to be set apart. In the modern day context, the Japanese Olympian can be compared and contrasted to the Japanese Paralympian. This is because in a social system constructed on binaries, ideas such as male/female, able-bodied/disabled, Olympian/Paralympian results in a world of oversimplification, and in which one binary comes to describe, and dominate over, the other (Clarke and Olesen 199).

Within the world of sports, the Paralympian will take a subordinate role to the Olympian, and the male athlete will come to take a dominate role over the female athlete. Within this section I wish to explore the limits, boundaries, and consequences of this constructed binary. I want to establish a relationship between these ideas that demonstrate that there is a natural subordinate status within the Paralympian identity. I will construct this narrative via the lens of gender differences in sports, alongside the Olympian/Paralympian difference. Doing this will provide a context from which to build a narrative from. This is important because as minority identities get projected outwards towards the public, certain ideas will fall victim to “passing.” This is the way in which social markers are concealed to avoid stigma (Brune and Wilson 2012). To prove this I will look at two photos from the magazine Sports Graphic Numbers, one of an able-bodied male athlete, and one of a disabled female athlete.

The historical Paralympic issues

One of the major issues with the Paralympics is that it will always be seen as an event that is less than the Olympics (Brittain 2010). The Paralympics have been historically subordinate to the Olympics via two lenses: socially, and economically. Before examining the photos, I want to look at this Olympic/Paralympic history to demonstrate the implications of this less than status. In the contexts of athletics, abled-bodied sports are considered dominate over sports for the disabled. This means for someone to be considered an athlete, and be in the top of their craft, they must be abled-bodied. There are a variety of reasons for this such as “disability sports in many societies have a relatively short history” thus have not had time to develop (Thomas and Smith 2009). By allowing the definition of athletics to only encompass abled-bodied athletes. According to Dictionary.com, an athlete is “A person trained or gifted in exercise or contest involving physical agility, stamina, or strength” (Dictionary.com Unabridged Random House, Inc. n.d.). This type of definition is another example that demonstrates a difference between the Olympics and Paralympics. Those with disabilities are thought to be lacking in strength, stamina, and physical agility. Since society has constructed a narrative that those with disabilities are in opposition to these traits, it means they cannot be athletes, thus meaning the Olympics are better than the Paralympics. This difference is not present because of the establishment of strict governmental policy, but the result of how society began to understand differences between the identification of the disabled body and the able-bodied individual. Since the Paralympian willfully participated in this system of sports governance, it provided the means for general society to further classify, and identify these differences. This is where the original disparity between the Olympics and the Paralympics comes from.

The idea that the Paralympics are less than the Olympics has historically extended to the structure of the games. The Paralympics were a separately organized part of the Olympics till the 2000 Sydney Olympics in which the IOC and IPC signed an agreement to work together. This agreement marked the first time which the Paralympics became a required part of hosting the Olympic game set. This forced the Paralympics to be held in the same city as the Olympics. This is just part of the long delayed history of the Paralympics due to their subordinate status. An example of this delay is that the first-time the Paralympics hosted a winter portion was in 1994, long after their Olympic counterpart. In addition, as of 2012 the IOC and IPC reached an agreement to allocate more money to the Paralympics. This demonstrates throughout history that the Paralympics have been less than the Olympics. Within this international sports relationship, the Olympics are able to economically and socially control the Paralympics. This defines a difference in which the Paralympics are subordinate because, those with disabilities are not as athletic as able-bodied individuals, and the Paralympics are economically reliant on the Olympics.

Photo comparison: elite and non-elite

With the macro-level disparity established, I wish to look at how the Japanese disabled athlete is being depicted in comparison to the abled-bodied athlete. In addition, I will also look at how gender roles play a part in these pictorial narratives. This will show the complexity within the construction of these identities, by considering the gender stigma in sports, which can burden the disability stigma. It will essentially construct a situation of passing, thus demonstrating how ‘passing’ plays a role in disability sports. This will provide context for the unique disparities that have cropped up in Japan for these two classes of athletes. To demonstrate this, I will look at the

magazine *Sports Graphic Numbers*. First I will examine a photo of a female disabled swimmer named Mei Ichinose. The way that Mei is depicted will be compared to a male able-bodied swimmer named Kosuke Hagino. He will serve as a ‘blank unstigmatized slate’ in which Mei’s differences can be highlighted. From this, I will determine if there are any unique social characteristics separating abled-bodied and disabled Japanese athletes.

Mei Ichinose

Mei Ichinose is the athlete I will be looking at from the Paralympian side. She is a young swimmer who is missing her right hand. I will be examining a photo of her in a well-lit lap pool. In this photo, she is holding onto the lane divider by having her arms hooked around it (T. Supplitt 2016, A). Since her arm is submerged, it is obscuring her disability, but a keen eye will notice her missing hand. In this photo her mouth is slightly open as she looks directly at the camera. Her lightly toned skin pops out from the blue backdrop. She is motionless in this pose, not performing her athletic role. The viewer sees her upper torso, while her bare legs are obscured by the lightly rippling water.

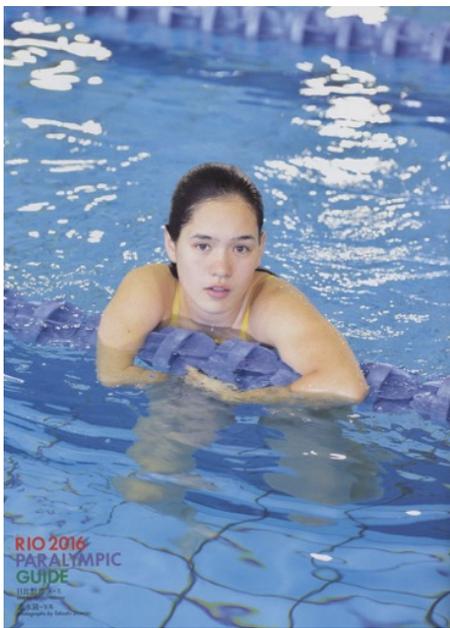


Figure 11 Swimming Mei Ichinose. Photo by Shimizu, Takashi



Figure 12 Swimming. Photo by Fujita, Takao

Within this photo, ideas regarding gender and disability come into play. The gender stigma of the unattractive disabled person plays a major role in the construction of this photo. Those with disabilities are said to have “an inner beauty that compensates for their less-than-perfect exterior” (Norden 2016). In addition, females in the context of sports are said to have “unfeminine appearance and” ways of acting (Frost, 2010). This photo seems to directly address this stereotype by making this into a glamor shot per say. It provides Mei access to narratives of physical beauty and femininity that she is typically shut out of due to her status as both an athlete and a disabled person. The photo creates a setting where disability and beauty can co-exist. While the photo does make Mei very beautiful, and attacks certain stereotypes head on, issues arise when stigma of athletes with disabilities are drawn upon.

This photo fell into typical trappings which are associated with disability being non-active. The photo avoids showing athletic prowess, and elects to show her as a passive being. It is an undeniable fact that Mei is an athlete, but this photo does not depict her as one. It cannot be

described as a snapshot of, “a person trained or gifted in exercise or contest involving physical agility, stamina, or strength” (Dictionary.com Unabridged Random House, Inc. n.d.). She is discreditable within the context of the shoot, but highly discredited in the context of her identity. This means, the picture does not provide a space where Mei’s disability co-exists with her disabled athletic nature. This photo could have proven to be very interesting. The fact Mei is a swimmer and missing a hand could have provided a moment where people could look at this photograph and think more deeply about disability (T. Supplitt 2016, A).

Kosuke Hagino

A photo of swimmer Kosuke Hagino is the next photo I wish to analyze. Kosuke is an abled-bodied swimmer for the Japanese Olympic team. This photo of Kosuke is of him in action. He is executing the backstroke swimming technique as he violently cuts through the water. There are large wakes of water, and droplets are flying through the air. As Kosuke lifts his left arm out of the pool, the water flows off his arm, demonstrating the quickness of his motions. In this well-lit pool, the viewer can see Kosuke’s upper torso and head, but he is partly obscured by the size of his wake. Regardless of this the intensity on Kosuke’s face is conveyed to the viewer.

Kosuke’s masculine nature is on display in this photo. He is being shown as a strong and active individual. His violent motions, such as cutting through the water, provide an insight to the strength he has. Within the photo, the viewer can see certain parts of Kosuke’s muscular body. This builds the idea that he has been focused on training for this event. The look that his faces conveying is a notion of seriousness, showing that he is intense and competitive.

These masculine ideas support Kosuke’s identity as an abled bodied Olympian. This is because, the definition of an athlete provided above is full of masculine descriptor words.

Kosuke’s photo depicts an intense athlete with a strong body. It shows a photo of someone who

would be considered an Olympian. He gives off an aura that he is strong, intense, and important. With his quick and violent movement through the water, the photo legitimizes him as an athlete. His body constitutes three different traits, an athlete, an elite-body, and a top-level sportsman representing Japan. Kosuke's body is able to co-exist with both his athletic body and male body at the same time.

Mei and Kosuke

Despite that both Mei, and Kosuke are both swimmers representing Japan on the international stage they are conveyed in two different ways. Traits such as gender, and disability status play a role in how these two individuals are identified and classified. The opinions that emerge from these understandings establish the differences within the identities. Kosuke is depicted as a legitimate athlete, while Mei is depicted in a very passive manner. The reason for this is Kosuke's gender identity can co-exist with his able bodied athletic identity. Mei was unable to make this identity negotiation. While her gender identity was displayed in a way to counteract the way disability stigmatizes it, the way the photo depicts her resulted in passing regarding her disabled athletic identity. Kosuke is pictured in a situation in which he is active, while Mei is in a situation where she is passive and not performing the duties of an athlete. Due to the fact, that Kosuke is performing athletic actions it opens him up to several benefits to being an athlete. Such as having the ideal body, being considered to have a life full of achievement, and existing on a level that is above conventional society. Due to Mei's very passive photo, it lessens the symbol of the athlete, and she cannot hold the same status as Kosuke. The reason for this is that society places one binary over the other, the Olympian over the Paralympian, the male athlete over the

female athlete. This system of classifying differences via social means further builds the narrative that the Paralympics are less than the Olympics.

Japanese disability athletics: but equal

While there is a clear narrative that the disabled body is not as legitimate athletically as the nondisabled, body both government and advertisers establish narratives in which they pull the disabled body to an equal status. The logic behind this is tied to the economic logic of biopolitics. The reason for this is that there is a desire to further incorporate those in minority positions into the discourse of a product, or the nation-state. With advertisements, it constructs a path in which the minority becomes a consumer of a product. With the state, it brings in bodies that can be governed and can serve the nation's needs. For this section, I will look at the efforts of advertisers and the government to win over the disabled body, via the means of pulling the less than disabled Paralympian body to equality with the Olympian body.

Experts in advertising, Stefano Puntoni, Joelle Vanhmmme, and Ruban Visscher (2011), believe that, “current social trends are leading to greater consumer diversity require that advertisers pay increasing attention to minority groups within society,” because of the “significant positive target market effects of covert minority targeting.” The research team's findings are that minority groups, in this case homosexual males, they react more optimistically to a product that positively depicts their minority lifestyle. As the Huffington Post contributor, Taylor Griffith (2015), adds further, it has been a trend for “company brands (to)... call attention to themes centered on gender, body image, and sexuality.” For advertisers, there is an importance into supporting these minority groups. Hankins (2014) describes that by working with and supporting these minority groups the company can stay properly mobilized, and recruit

attention. These corporations are functioning in a system call “corporate social responsibility.” It is “a powerful set of practices that aims to position the corporation as a particular kind of human rights agent in society” (Walker-Said 2015). In this system corporations, can “reconnect themselves to the human world” and negotiate themselves into the

“political economy that extends beyond particular business practices to include the determination of the roles of corporations in assuming responsibility for global economic development that reconciles growing human needs with increasingly demanding business imperatives” (Walker-Said 2015).

It provides a system that corporations can use to reinsert themselves into society within changing economic and social systems. They can remain deployed in society via advertisements and sponsorships that are closely allied with minority identities.

Per an employee of a Tokyo based disability rights organization, he stated that disabled athletes in Japan are getting sponsorships with corporations (Group 2016). These sponsorships are not only important as financial backing from which pro athletes can make a living from, but within sponsorships an athlete becomes a face of an organization. These advertisements are broadcast to the public where ideas about the athlete are formed. This is even more important with disabled athletes because not only ideas regarding themselves as a commodity are formed, but ideas regarding their disability are established. This gives both advertisers and the government the opportunity to play into positive public sentiments about disability, and reinsert themselves into the changing economic and social systems that are part of the backdrop of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

Onemizuho and The NHK

Onemizuho Bank and The NHK, in order to be relevant in the lead up to the 2020 Paralympics, and to position themselves in this discourse, utilized disabled athletes in their commercials. This

allowed the Japanese disabled public to build positive feelings towards these brands. In these advertisements, the disabled body was established as an equal identity. Each advertisement took this definition of equality in different ways, Onemizuho brought the disability identity equal to those in everyday society. The NHK pulled the Paralympic athlete upwards to an equal status with the Olympian. By these advertisers making themselves relevant they are able to make consumers out of those with disabilities, and the people in general society. In doing this, the disabled identity is decentralized, which allows the public to understand those with disabilities in new ways.

Onemizuho

The first advertisement I wish to look at is from the bank Onemizuho. This ad features a one-armed badminton player. The ad starts off with her playing badminton, then it shifts to her life after the sport. It shows her driving home from practice, arriving at home, and walking inside her house. After this it shows her cooking, then eating that food with friends as they watch the Paralympics. The ad ends with the saying, “Tannoshimou” (It's fun).

This advertisement was very humanizing, showing the complete gambit of the daily life of an athlete. This humanization approach is important for both connecting the athlete to the viewing audience, while showing to the audience the everydayness of the disability experience. This add was able to communicate three things about this badminton player's identity. First, the advertisement does not gloss over the fact she is an athlete. Unlike the *Sports Graphic Numbers* photo, this ad shows athletic nature, and does not fall into the narrative of passing. It allows the viewer to make the association that athletics and disability can co-exist. Next the advertisement shows that those with disabilities are capable of everyday tasks such as driving and cooking. It shows with the proper accommodations those with disabilities can live independently. Lastly, it

shows this disabled athlete in a social situation. It demonstrates that she can host a positive social interaction. Moving her away from the typical stereotypes of the hidden and sad disabled person. It sends the message the viewer can have positive social interactions with disabled individuals, and they should not feel any trepidation to in engaging in the social interaction.

NHK TV

The next advertisement I want to look at is a TV advertisement I saw at Haneda airport. It was an advertisement for an upcoming NHK TV program about the athletic body. This advert showed great respect to these athletes, pulling them into this godlike level. The program seemed to be discussing the scientific aspects of the athletic body such as muscle usage, body tone, blood circulation, and similar ideas. The important part of this advertisement is that it features both Para and abled bodied athletes. The commercial contained some level of intensity, with dark lighting as the athletes posed in front of a camera. There was serious narration with text that popped out. I believe this advertisement helps legitimize the Olympic, and Paralympic athletes. Sports are typically considered a very masculine activity. By showing this intensity, it pulls these male athletes more in line with the ideal of masculinity, a trait that those with disabilities are often denied by society. The next thing this commercial does is group together para-athletes, and abled bodied athletes in one cohesive unit. Bringing these athletes into the understanding that their body is incredible and that it is worth public interest. The reason that bringing both able-bodied athletes and disabled athletes together is important is because it presents them as equal. If this special just featured disabled athletes it might run the risk in making a spectacle out of the disability. If the special just featured abled-bodied athletes it would be discounting the legitimate athletic nature of those with disabilities. By having them functioning on the same plane it acknowledges them as equal.

The power of advertisements

Per Puntoni, Vanhmmme, and Visscher's (2011) findings, advertisers who use a minority identity in a positive light, gain the favor of that minority. This was the case with Onemizuho and the NHK. In the Onemizuho advertisement, the athlete is pulled from their unclear athletics status, and is projected to take part in the everydayness of life. With the NHK special it did the opposite. It used the ambiguity of the disabled athletic body, and pulled it into something ideal, sought after and godlike. Both of these ads do not have the disabled body exhibited on its usual planes of existence. It pulled them to certain extremes, a mundane living or god like body. Since the negative stereotypes are removed they become marketable bodies. Corporations like Onemizuho and the NHK are able to remain relevant with these advertisements. They bring the disabled body into their corporate discourse and foster changing social beliefs. These are bodies the disabled public would accept because of the positive way it depicted the minority identity. It also got the public invested. These ads provided a space where they could view the disabled athlete in a positive light, and associate positive feelings about the product. With this approach the advertisers got two things from this strategy, positive feelings from the general public, and brand relevancy. This shows the complexity of the disabled athletic identity in Japan, and provides a space that the public can get invested into disability sports.

The government that is invested into disabled body

I believe that Puntoni, Vanhmmme, and Visscher's findings do not just apply to advertisers, but can also apply to systems of governance. A nation state can utilize a minority identity in a certain way that gets the public invested in the state. I believe that Japan is doing this with the disability

identity. The 2020 Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic planning committee are representing the games in a way that engages the public in the Paralympian identity via systems of governmentality. By using selective advertising, it will increase the visibility of this disability minority in Japan. Joshua Roth (2008) believes that there is increased visibility there are “potentially positive identities for the disabled minority.” The public wants to become invested in these positive disability identities. This personal investment into minority identity shows up in Japan as “*tabunak kyōsei*” or multicultural coexistence (Hankins 2014). This multiculturalism on this large stage will result in the public’s investment into the state. To show how the Japanese government’s portrayal of multiculturalism on the stage of the Paralympics translates into an invested public I need to prove three things: 1. The Japanese government is supporting multiculturalism, 2. The public wants multiculturalism, and 3. The stage of the Paralympic Games is an effective place to convey this.

Japan supports multiculturalism

Harkins states that, multiculturalism “establishes conditions under which...stigma can generate positive value.” The Japanese government is cultivating positive value with the stigma of those with disabilities, because “a modern bureaucratic state attempts to keep acts of resistance within the confines of social norms” (Nakamura 2006). This means by generating this positive value through displays of multiculturalism, the Japanese state can control minority resistance. One of the ways that the Japanese government is displaying multiculturalism is by marketing the Olympic and the Paralympic games on equal levels. When evaluating the marketing of the Olympic and Paralympic games it demonstrates a type of governance that utilizes disability and its minority status. It should be noted that these ideas of control should not imply the

implementation of legal framework, but the governing of the public through positive conduct, within a system of governmentality.

Leading up to the 2020 games merchandising is very important. It not only helps build the 2020 brand, but it also helps spread the word of the games. An example of this is there has been a very strong narrative of government officials saying “Olympics and Paralympics” when discussing the games. For example, when making a speech about the event’s stadiums, Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, "Japan can complete the stadium by the time the Olympics and Paralympics are held in Tokyo” (China Daily USA 2015). This shows the public that the government is dedicated to making both the Olympics and Paralympics equal. This also provides a space where the Paralympics is removed from its subordinate status, and where willing subjects can negotiate and become invested into this identity. This notion of equality also shows up with merchandizing. The Japanese government, as of my time in Japan in mid-2016, was already merchandizing the games. There were shops set up throughout Japan in such places like the M-Wave 1994 Nagano Winter Olympic museum, and inside Shibuya station. There were many different types of items that were sold at these stores such as T-shirts, keychain, pins, and hand towels. The significant thing to note is that all of the products that had the Olympic logo had a Paralympic counterpart. This means despite the fact the Olympics are significantly more popular, the organizing committee wanted the Olympics to be considered equal to the Paralympics. The symbolic gesture of this is to say that the Olympic logo and Paralympic logo are equal, because in this defined space that represents the 2020 games, one is just as likely to see the Paralympic logo in this environment. It gives the public as a consumer equal chance to literally invest themselves in the Olympic and Paralympic games, and represent these games in public spaces by

showing off the merchandise. With the way the government talks about the games, and merchandizes them, it provides a path in which the public can get invested into the games.

The public supports multiculturalism

Per Hankins (2014), “Multiculturalism has become a buzzword of sorts in millennia for Japan.”

The Japanese public is getting invested in the ideas of multiculturalism and this is reflected in Kiluko Nagayoshi’s findings. While researching multiculturalism Nagayoshi (2011) found that 52.6% of the Japanese public explicitly endorses multiculturalism. To further contextualize this 72.19% of Japanese people either say they find ethnic homogeneity ‘important’ or ‘very important.’ (Nagayoshi 2011). This bodes well for groups like the physically disabled in Japan because they are a minority incorporated into multiculturalism, but also ethnically Japanese. This is why there has been an increase of public support of the disabled athlete through watching Paralympic sports. These disabled athletes are both markers of multiculturalism and the Japanese ethnic identity.

As stated by the employees of the Tokyo based disability rights organization, people in Japan feel more invested in the Paralympic team because the event is coming to Japan (Group 2016). This idea was collaborated by one of the athletes at a Tokyo area wheelchair tennis tournament that I attended. He said that one of his teachers that works for the NHK claimed that the upcoming 2016 Rio De Janeiro games were going to be the largest viewing event ever in Japan for the Paralympics. This anticipated public support for the games has pushed TV stations to provide more disability athletic programming within their broadcasting block. Per the director of a disability sports gym in the Kansai region of Japan, he said there has been a very large increase in the coverage of the Paralympics ever since Japan was selected to host the games (Anonymous

2016). Within an interview I conducted in the Tokyo area with a disability rights organization, they agreed with this idea. One of the interviewees said,

“We have NHK...the NHK has a digest program around 7 O'clock, digest sports Paralympic, it would take 30 minutes or so, and most of the case, the people are watching through these program, recently Paralympic sports are getting popular, so some channel for example Hodo, ...they may have some program, maybe digest program for Paralympic and athletes” (Group 2016) ⁶

For these people who are viewing and are becoming invested into this mega-event, they are part of this system of raising awareness for the disabled individual in which this awareness is predicated on the system of government support on the Paralympic stage (Brittian 2010).

The Paralympic stage

The international athletic stage is a space which can “provide the individual with a sense of belonging, a valued place within their social environment, a means to connect to others, and the opportunity to use valued identities to enhance self-worth and self-esteem” (Fyall and Shipway 2013). Stages like the Olympics and the Paralympics are public spaces gathered around the combination of sports and national identity. I believe as a result of this national identity dimension; the Tokyo Paralympics are being used as a stage of nationalism via the symbolic value of the disabled athlete. Per Elise Edwards (2008), “sports events and competitions (can be used) as sites for the creation of new public rituals in the service of nationalism.” This new public ritual is watching disability athletics as a symbolic representation of Japanese multiculturalism.

⁶ This interview was conducted in English with an individual whose native language is Japanese. Some grammatical points within this quote were edited for clarity sake, but a conscious decision was made to keep the quote as close to the original as possible.

Those who support disability rights and/or multiculturalism will be pulled into the governmental discourse of the games. This is because these types of events provide “access to a social environment of like-minded people” (Edwards 2008). These ‘like-minded’ people who are supporting Japan’s Paralympic games display three traits: support of disability rights, support of the Japanese national identity, and support of athletics. Since the Japanese government was the one who established the product of the 2020 Paralympics, it can utilize these three traits for nationalistic purposes. This means the people who support these games, or one of these like-minded people, will reflect positive feelings towards the government. This functions in the logic of exchange circuitry. McVeigh (2014), describes exchange circuitry as “the regulatory and legal infrastructure of officialdom that establishes, prescribes, and monitors what we call a society.”

The Japanese government and relevancy

Maurice Roche (2003), argues that ‘mega-events’ like this, that are staged internationally, are “international markers of time, history and ‘progress.’” For Japan, this is a time of multiculturalism and the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, is a stage in this progress. Japan demonstrates they are making attempts to display this progress to the public via these disabled athletes. An example of this is advertising of the Olympics in tandem with the Paralympics. The Japanese government can build relevancy on the international stage by projecting this multiculturalism. In addition, they can build willing subjects to support it. This symbolic action is seen, absorbed, and accepted by these established bases who support disabled athletics. All of this is done through the staging of the Paralympics because this establishes the key exchange between the government and the public. The government provides the stage and the means to include those with disabilities in the national discourse. The public will provide support and legitimization for

the state. This system is only possible via systems of governance, and very explicit support for disability athletics called the ‘elite-approach.’

The elite-approach

In Japan, the government is not showing signs of addressing those issues that every day disabled athletes experience. This becomes evident when looking at the discourse of the elite-approach to disabled sports. The Japanese government is taking a more surface level approach when it comes to disability athletics. This means Japan is fostering the Japanese national team, not the idea of disabled sports. The failure to support athletics for the disabled in general is what causes the issue that disability athletes face to gain a noticeable foothold within the disability community in Japan. For many of these athletes the key issues they face are a result of a lack of opportunity. Within the field of disability studies, this narrative of a lack of opportunity is encompassed into the social model of disability. Ronald Berger (2013) describes the social model as a system that defines disability in the context of social constructionism. This model says that disability arises because of our societal expectations of what is normal, and how we physically and socially mark our society (Berger 2013). I believe that the issues that low-level disabled athletes face in Japan is a result of social constructionism. These issues are only reality due to the government’s focus on the elite approach to disability. To prove this I will look at two issues in the Japanese world of disabled sports. These issues will then be compared to the solutions America has initiated to solve them. These problems are: places to work out/funding and lack of opportunity.

No place to work out

In Japan, those with disabilities have a hard time finding a place to work out. The way Japan addresses the issue of gyms for those with disabilities results in a twofold problem: 1) It is common for normal gyms in Japan to reject someone's membership application because they have a disability 2) This forces these athletes to go to publicly funded athletic centers for the disabled which are uncommon and underfunded. Wheelchair basketball player Hiroaki Kōzai expressed to *Sports Graphic Numbers* that he believes it is very difficult to get a gym membership as a disabled person in Japan. He states, "When trying to get a gym membership in...Japan, there is a great degree that (the gym owners) demonstrate a disapproval, due to a concern of damaging the floor. (Matsubara 2016). In addition, Mei Ichinose echoed that statement when she explained how she felt slighted when a sports center rejected her application due to her disability (Hibino 2016).

The second part of this issue came to light in an interview I had with a disability sports center in the Kansai region of Japan. The center's director expressed that some of the gym's facilities have five hour long waiting times. When I followed up with asking if there are plans to expand the facilities to remedy this problem, he said there was not. When asked why there is no plans to expand he said, "It depends on the finance of (the) city, and I heard it is difficult." He also thinks this is a common problem for most disability sports facilities, and he wishes for the city to give his sports facility more opportunities (Anonymous 2016). This sentiment was echoed by two people I met at a wheelchair tennis tournament in the Tokyo area. Saying that it was difficult for them to work out because there was only one gym in that respective hometown that could accommodate their needs.

Places to work out in America

In America, this gym issues not a problem because of existing legal protection that those with disabilities have. The funding part of this problem is virtually non-existent because those with disabilities can join private gyms. They can join these gyms because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This law established certain legal requirements, that places of business must meet, with regards to barrier-free access for those with disabilities. If a place of business does not meet the standards laid out by the ADA, they will be subject to a large fine by the government. This forced a change in the American social environment, because “the law (was)...an effort to shift society’s perception about disability” (Haller 2010). When this model is compared to Japan three things become clear: 1) Many gyms in Japan do not see the potential profit from having those with disabilities coming to the gym in comparison to the cost of accommodation. 2) This is not due to the reality of the situation, but due to a lack of understanding from conventional Japanese society. 3) By having these separate facilities it limits the opportunities of those with disabilities.

Limited opportunity

Another problem for these lower level competitions that was expressed to me is that for the tennis tournaments I attended, there is limited opportunity based on disability. For example, in the Tokyo area wheelchair tennis tournament, one of the fathers of a player expressed his dismay to me that his son, who is a quadriplegic, had to participate in a paraplegic tennis tournament. This was due to the fact there is not enough opportunity for him in quadriplegic tennis tournaments. According to Dr. Ryne Supplitt, a trained physical therapist, in theory a paraplegic would be able to participate in a para tennis tournament if they had control of their C7 and C8

nerves, but they would be at a disadvantage due to the limited mobility that comes with that type of disability (R. Supplitt 2016). Within disability sport there are many technical and complex groupings of disability that are taken into account when deciding what athletic event in which someone participates (Brittain 2010). Talking in more simplistic terms, in the 100m swimming event a person with a leg amputation will be classified differently than a person with an arm amputation. While it is easy to fill these complex classifications at a high-level event like the Paralympics, it is more difficult to do so in a local level tournament. This is especially true in Japan because, those with disabilities do not have a gate way to join, and get adaptive equipment to participate.

A united system

I believe due to legal systems like the ADA, which provides a system for those with disabilities to come together in a public environment, it results in more opportunities to take part in disability athletics. An example of this is within the documentary Murderball. Murderball is a movie about the United States National Wheelchair Rugby team. In the movie, there is a scene that shows the members of the US national team trying to recruit new people into the sport (Rubin and Shapiro 2005). In addition, I have a friend who was recruited into playing wheelchair basketball three years after he became a paraplegic my friend now plays an active role in recruiting new members into the sport. I believe that the key difference between America and Japan, in regards to sports membership, is with how deployed and organized the disability community is. With the support of comprehensive federal law, those with disabilities in America have a vast amount of opportunities to make connections on a personal level. Those with disabilities in Japan, do not have as many opportunities to make personal connections from people with similar life situations so they must look upwards to sports stars for inspiration.

Non-elite athletic struggles

In Japan those with disabilities face certain difficulties participating in sports. This is because in Japan the elite-approach to disability is the reality. This results in governmental policy, regarding disability athletics, to be superficial and unable to address deeper disability issues. These issues can be seen with the difficulty many low-level disabled athletes face when trying to find a place to work out. In addition, the opportunity to take part in disability athletics is not widely available in Japan. These are self-imposed restrictions that Japan has placed on itself. In places like America, which has comprehensive legal protection for those with disabilities, athletes do not experience these issues.

Conclusion

Both the public and the private sectors of Japan are invested into the elite disabled athlete. This is within a system called the ‘elite approach,’ that distinguishes disabled sports stars, from the everyday disabled athlete. The way the ‘elite approach’ is occurring in Japan is on a social level, via systems of governmentality. In this system, both disabled athletes and the Japanese public are invested in this idealized disabled athletic body. They construct understandings, and form opinions about the disabled body through this system. This allows them to become willing subjects of governance. The ‘elite approach’ is predicated on the disabled athlete being separately understood from the able-bodied athlete. This difference is that the disabled athlete is subordinate to the able-bodied athlete. It is an idea that has been reflexive throughout the history of disability sports and in the ways these disability sport star’s minority status is represented. An

example of this is seen with the way the magazine *Sports Graphic Number* visually depicted a disabled sports star in comparison to an abled-bodied sports star.

Due to the fact that these classifications of athletes are different, they can be utilized by corporations to build relevancy with the Japanese viewing audience. This works because by representing a minority identity in a positive way it can build positive sentiments with the public. This brings these corporations in line with narratives of human rights, and gives them the space to adapt to a changing economy. Onemizuho and The NHK did this with their representation of the disabled athlete in their advertisements. The Japanese government is also doing a similar thing. The Japanese government is pulling the disabled athlete to be equal with the able-bodied athlete. This is being done through the way the government is talking about the games and merchandizing them. This projects ideas of multiculturalism to the willing public, and outwards to the international stage. Lastly, as the Japanese government supports these ‘elite athletes’ the non-elite disabled athlete still faces problems in Japan. This includes a lack of funding, and a lack of opportunity.

In China “the Paralympics elite approach served the central government’s political purpose which is showing the world that the Chinese government is able to look after all groups of their people within the context of economic success” (Guan 2015). This seems to be the narrative that Japan wants to build. Since the Paralympics are incorporated into the discourse of the Olympics, they too come to represent, as the Olympic flag symbolizes a, “represen(tation of) the five continents of the world, united by the Olympians” (The Olympic Meseum 2007). Within this context, the 2020 games in Japan are becoming the stage in which the world is celebrated. If Japan wants to truly celebrate disability, they must celebrate it on all levels, from the elite to the low-level athlete.

Conclusion

Seeing is believing, Japan's path to disability sports understanding

Since the Paralympics are coming to Japan the public is becoming more exposed to disability. This exposure will take place regardless of the Japanese government's intent for the games. I wish to prove that disability sports provide the perfect opportunity for the public to interact with disabled individuals. In the athletic situation, the disabled athletes are the people in power. By this I mean that they can be in control of their independence. Independence, in the context of disability, is somewhat different than the conventional definition of 'being free from the interference of others.' In many of my discussions with disability studies scholars of what it means to be independent, the conclusion it is not this notion of doing things by yourself. Our conclusion was independence is being able to do things of your own choosing, with who you want, in your time, unimpeded without obstruction. This definition will include those with personal assistance, or those who need temporary assistance at some point. I believe when those with no previous exposure to disability, when seeing the control that those with disabilities have in this sports context, they will come to understand this definition of independence. They will shift from the idea of serving those with disabilities, to working with those with disabilities.

To demonstrate this narrative I will look at volunteers at two different wheelchair tennis tournaments. These actors will show how the interaction changed based on the amount of previous experience someone has had with disability. These actors will include: first time student volunteers, prefectural wheelchair tennis representatives, and disability *tōjisha* (people directly concerned with). The first-time student volunteers' interactions with the wheelchair athletes will be more in line with someone serving those with disabilities. The tennis representatives' and *tōjisha*'s interaction with the athletes will be like an assistant. To make this narrative come to

life, I will establish a series of short vignettes, each of which will be organized by each of the groups. After a group's set of vignettes are completed, I will provide analysis on the disability interaction narrative up to that point. The first group I will look at is a group of young volunteers from a sports high school to college system. From this I will look at prefectural sports officials, and lastly the *tōjisha* (family of the wheelchair athletes). All of these groups will come to represent the importance of interacting with those with disabilities.

Hardworking volunteers

On an excessively hot, and humid summer day south of Tokyo, an elite level wheelchair tennis tournament was taking place. After arriving 10 minutes late to the tennis tournament, due to mistakenly riding the local train over the rapid, I was shocked to see an event so large, and what seems so well coordinated. In comparison to the previous wheelchair tennis tournament which I attended, this event seemed very official. Walking up a flight of stairs, which was positioned next to a winding wheelchair ramp, I emerged to see 12 tennis courts, six on each side of me. The courts to my left were a little sunken from the middle island, in which the courts were two small steps down. The courts on my right had stadium like seating, having four rows of concrete seats going downwards, with the additional two small steps that allowed access to the courts. Seeing that warm ups were happening, and the game to my immediate left was about to begin I settled in. As I watched the games throughout the next four days something became apparent, this high level of organization was in thanks to the very passionate and dedicated volunteers, but this passion did not come without its faults. This resulted in several strange and awkward interactions between the players and volunteers. This is because some of the volunteer's mindset

was that of a serviceman, not that of an actor whose purpose was to make the event and games run smoothly.

After a strong volley the tennis ball lands out of bounds and proceeds to roll away from the court of play. Two of the three volunteers that were on the court proceed to run for the ball. A volunteer from the stands even jumps up and begins to run after the ball, lagging a few seconds behind. One person eventually got to the ball first, and he or she was awarded upon the right of giving it to the serviceman. His or her competitors would race back to their respective positions, and play would be resumed, waiting for the next opportunity to chase after a loose ball.

After a double bounce, thus ending play, the ball rolled passed the receiving player, hit the wall and started rolling back to the player. While the player started moving towards the ball to pick it up, a volunteer quickly ran over trying to pick the ball up himself. The tennis player raised up her hand in a stop motion and said something along the line of “No its okay, I can get it.” This prompted the young volunteer, to stop and return to his post, while the player simply picked up the ball herself.

Near the beginning of the day, while the sun was beating down on the courts, and two of the players were locked in a battle for points. They were on a court which was next to the mouth of the wheelchair ramp that led up to the center island. A middle-aged man, likely coming from the player break area, rolled up the spiraling wheelchair ramp. He was in his normal everyday chair, and he was pushing his sports chair with his athletic duffle bag on it. He exited the mouth of the wheelchair ramp, and just entered the middle island from which he could watch the games. Nearly instantly after he made it onto the middle island, a volunteer approached him. The volunteer asked him if he needed help and if she could push his sports chair for him. The player politely rejected the volunteer’s offer for service and quickly went on his way.



Figure 13 Wheelchair Tennis Tournament. Photo by the author

Those with red hats

A clear majority of these volunteers were from the same college-high school system, which is focused on fostering young sports talent. This is information I attained via an informal interview/English practice session with one of the head student volunteers. It appeared that it is likely that this prefectural tennis association reached out to this local school to get people to volunteer for the event. Beyond the students, there were other volunteers, which I will call the “red caps” for their red hats. These people were older and from the local prefectural wheelchair tennis association. This is the explanation for the different level of interaction these two groups had with the players. With the red caps being more experienced, they knew it would be more acceptable if they played a more passive role. Within the context of this event it was their job to be line judges, and match chairs. The judges’ interaction with the players, and the game in general was more in line what would be seen with a normal tennis match.

For example, when a tennis ball was hit directly at one of the end line judges, all she did was calmly step out of the way. She did not chase after the ball or pick it up, despite the fact it was right next to her. To this line judge it seemed that she held a clear and defined role within this context, someone who says if the ball was in or out. There was no notion that she needed to

act any differently because she was around those with disabilities. This person had an understanding based from experience dictated that if the wheelchair tennis player needed help they would ask for help. This was the reality in the next interaction that took place.

The only unique wheelchair interaction between a red cap, and a player I noticed, was when in a doubles match one of the players had a mechanical malfunction, and he needed a wheel replacement. He was stuck in place and a red cap came over and began talking to him. The man's teammate went and grabbed his teammate's replacement tire, and brought it over to the spot in which his teammate was stuck. The red cap held the man's wheelchair during the wheel replacement process, and then moved back to her position after the incident took place.

Currently in Japan there is a narrative that the choice to use service does not fall upon the disabled individual but that an individual chooses to serve the disabled person. This seemed to be the situation at the tennis tournament with the student volunteers. From my analyses, the mind-set of many of the volunteers were that of servicing the players, not functioning as a component of the tournament. The volunteers for this event, likely due to never having comprehensive exposure to those with disabilities, adopted this mind-set. Being exposed to someone with a disability and being able to see their ability to function, and live independently (the definition of independence provided above) builds the mindset that those with disabilities do not need to be served. The red caps at this Tokyo event did not step out of the role they were assigned. It was only when they were asked did they perform tasks outside the role of a prefectural representative. To further prove this point, I will look at a different, all be it smaller and less significant wheelchair tennis tournament in the Kansai area of Japan. Within this event there will be *tōjisha*, and their interactions with the wheelchair athletes will be a positive one.

The *tōjisha*

In a very suburban part of the Kansai area, in a surprisingly out of place indoor tennis center, there was a small-scale tennis tournament. At this event, there were 9 tennis courts, 4 on the left side of the building, 4 on the right, and one in the middle with colosseum like seating. When I arrived at the indoor tennis center, which was on a top of a hill in a sleepy park, people were just casually talking. After several minutes of me just waiting around, someone made an announcement that opening ceremony was about to begin. The players, and the staff lined up in their socially appropriate place. The few people who were not players lined the sides with cameras, and phones out. After the opening ceremony, the staff and players gathered behind a banner the had the events name written on it. After photos were taken someone called upon family members to join the photo A vast majority of the crowd moved in, which ironically left only a few people left to take photos. This told me one important thing, of those who were not players, the majority of the people attending the event were family members. Meaning the volunteers that I would be seeing help run the matches will be ones who have been exposed to disability on a regular basis, thus *tōjisha*.

At this Kansai event, the people in charge of being on the lines and chasing the tennis balls were much more hands off than those in the Tokyo area tournament. For example, often if the ball was near the net, and it seem like it was not going to affect play, the ball shaggers would not retrieve the ball till it was necessary to do so. This was not to say that the volunteers were not excited about helping, it was actually very much so the opposite. The volunteers would switch out every once in a while, because they wanted to participate in the process.

Much like with the previous tournament, there was the occasional confusion of who would get the ball, but they would not both run for the ball at the same time. Usually if someone

saw that a fellow ball shagger was going for the ball they would stop, and proceed with the little song and dance of yielding to each other. Sometimes the players would even pick up the balls themselves. They often did this when they were handing the balls over the net to their opponent for the next game. There was even an instance where a player asked for help when his leg got twisted up when transferring chairs. At this point a volunteer came over and assisted the man with the transfer.

The thing to learn from all of these interactions with the *tōjisha* was that they were player based. While the *tōjisha* did interact with the players, it was in a much different style than what was seen with the high-level wheelchair tennis tournament. It appeared that the students from the Tokyo area entered this situation with the intent to prove their positive intentions for those with disabilities, stemming from an idea of service. While the older family member *tōjisha* of the Kansai area likely felt they did not need to overstate their positive interactions with the disabled players. The *tōjisha*'s interactions were actually much more in line with the red caps from the Tokyo event. This difference in interactions becomes more apparent when comparing the different types of social interactions seen.

Loose tennis balls

The first and the most apparent interaction was how the different groups chased after loose tennis balls. With the young students, I saw a high desire to create a positive interaction. This is seen with several individuals chasing after a loose ball. While on the other hand the “red caps” did not chase the balls because it was not their job. This is somewhat similar to the Kansai tennis tournament's *tōjisha*. They did not feel the overwhelming need to chase every ball because they did not seek out this constant interaction with the players, nor did they feel the pressure to

perform particular tasks that could be done by the players themselves. This leads to the second point of allowing the players to retrieve their own tennis balls. The young students were always in the mindset of chasing the ball, regardless of the proximity of the tennis ball to the player. This is different with the Kansai *tōjisha*. As explained previously, they did not chase after the ball, and during the transitions and court switches they yielded to the players to get their own tennis balls.

These interactions stemmed from an experience in dealing with those with disabilities. By separating these three groups of people to two distinct groups, those with previous exposure to those with disabilities, and those with little exposure to those with disabilities. The red caps and the *tōjisha*, are in the group of those who have proven exposure and interaction with those with disabilities. The student volunteers were people without previous interaction with those with disabilities. The ‘red caps’ and the *tōjisha* had the more positive interactions. They were not serving those with disabilities, but helping the flow of the tennis tournament. This positive interaction stemmed from previous exposure and first-hand experience.

On the other hand, there was the student volunteer group. They were overcompensating their actions in order to build a positive interaction. Additionally, they demonstrated a want to service the players over servicing the games. This idea can be summed up with instances such as asking to push the wheelchair for the athlete on the ramp, in comparison to when the man in Kansai had difficulty transferring chairs. This exposure builds an understanding between assumed service, and necessary assistance. The difference between doing a task for someone verses working with someone to complete a task. The understanding between these two ideas comes with exposure to disability. High level sporting events such as the Paralympics can be an

introduction for many people to this world. It will help build an understanding of what the disabled person can do, over what they cannot do.

2020 Paralympics

This is why the upcoming 2020 Paralympics is so important. The Paralympics will establish changes for those with disabilities in Japan. It is an opportunity for those in Japan to make meaningful connections to the disabled community. It also provides a chance for those with disabilities to come out of the stigmatized shadows and also make these connections. For some people these connections will be meaningful, as with some of the students experiencing disability for the first time. For the Paralympics to be successful in Japan the narrative surrounding the games cannot slip back to what it once was, a system of service. The narrative must become a disability controlled narrative. The 2020 Paralympics is a meeting point, much like the tennis tournament, where disability identity is negotiated. It is a spot for letting those with disabilities build their own narrative. If examples of this include allowing those with disabilities to decide what they can and cannot do, or dictating if they want help or not, then improvements occur. These are changes that exposure can bring, but only if they are meaningful and not superficial. Only when the year 2020 rolls around, we can see what interactions will take place within Japan.

The Paralympic logo

The 2020 Tokyo Paralympics is an opportunity for the Japanese government to showcase its standing in the world when it comes to disability. This is a meeting point in which the world showcases and celebrates those with disabilities within the spirit of international cooperation. Establishing that a single nation, such as Japan, is part of a larger discourse when it comes to

disability. The Paralympics is the domain in which Japan is stepping up, and inserting itself as a leader on the international stage. The checkered ring Tokyo 2020 Paralympic logo is representative of this. Per the official Tokyo 2020 games website the logo “represents different countries, cultures and ways of thinking. It incorporates the message of “unity in diversity”. It also express that the...Paralympic Games seek to promote diversity as a platform the connects the world” (The Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games n.d.). That “regardless of our ability or disability we are united in our humanity” (Tokyo 2020 2016). Below this logo is the word ‘Tokyo 2020’, the base that is supporting this notion of diversity, unity, and humanity, via the lens of the disabled body and international sports.



Figure 14 Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Game Emblem. By Tokolo, Asao

Summary

The road for Japan to reach this status was long and hard fought. Japan started off as a small and mysterious nation that not much was known about. They emerged as a disproportionately powerful small island nation. Which they were celebrated for their strength and power, till their humiliating defeat in World War II. This humiliation did not last for long, as Japan reclaimed power, while being an active member of the world's functions. This is also an apt way to describe the history of those with disabilities in Japan. As subjects of impurity, they were hidden away, and remained a mystery to most parts of society. Slowly they began to emerge in the national discourse, taking on roles with spiritual connections. Like those who are blind making music or being masseurs, or those who heard voices being the mediums into the other world. As Japan militarized, those with disabilities exploded on the scene playing a key role in establishing pride in the Japanese nation, but within the immediate postwar period this was not long to last. Those with disabilities were now the humiliated ones, no longer powerful, and only a dot in the sea of suffering that is the post war time frame. Nevertheless, those with disabilities made it back into the national discourse as sports stars, and as a powerful symbol that the public can reinvest themselves into.

Modernity was a system that brought those with disabilities into systems of socialization. Japan has a unique take on this system. This is due to their different understandings of liberalism, the unbroken Japanese lineage of control, and Japanese centric capitalism. For Japan modernity was not separation from power, but a new way to interact with it. This played a role in how the Japanese came to understand disability modernity. Disability modernity is the notion that those with disabilities can only be saved through systems of charity. In the European system of disability modernity it proposed the notion that those with disabilities can only be saved by

medical institutions, but the ideal disabled body will not be reliant on the state. For the Japanese notion, in the wartime period disability modernity encompassed the reverence of soldiers, while the postwar period was a charity for all system. These models influenced a medicalist exchange between Germany and Japan. In this exchange, the German hospital structures, and systems of eugenics showed up in Japan. This was a system that distinguished between the ideal disabled body and the non-ideal disabled body.

These models of disability provided spaces in which the disabled soldier were differentiated from other disabled individuals. For example, the disabled soldier was compared and contrasted to the disabled non-soldier. From this system, the public recognized this difference and took the disabled soldier as the idealized disabled body. This allowed for the disabled soldier to receive economic and social benefits, because of their sacrifice, while the non-soldier was pushed aside due to their dependent status. This idealization was weakened in the postwar environment, but was reclaimed with the 1964 Stoke Mandeville Games.

It is systems like this where opinions about the disabled body, and how it can be used within modern society start to be formed. This is a space where new conceptions of the disabled identity start to be recognized. In addition, those with disabilities can start to understand their own identity within this space. Everyday interaction provides a shared space where disability can be understood. For example, this was seen with the events that transpired on the train. This train environment built a situation where a young boy with autism was forced to deal with a social environment built against him, resulting in a public projection of his disability. On the international level, the Japanese government is showing signs of using the disabled body as a bridge to connect themselves to African nations. By using the disabled body, the Japanese government can attempt to understand African disability problems. With the recognition of the

identity, those with disabilities are able to understand their own identity via systems of social advocacy. Social advocacy allows for those with disabilities to insert themselves into the discourse regarding the governance of their bodies.

Disability athletics is a system that can be used by the Japanese government and corporations to win over the hearts and the minds of the Japanese public. This is because sports are a vehicle for presenting and understanding identity. Sports stars like Hatachiyama and Ichiro Suzuki are elite athletes that distinguish themselves from everyday society, and make the idea of Japaneseness consumable to the general public and to those outside of Japan. This is also the case of disabled athletes. Through sports certain disabled people can distinguish themselves from the rest of disabled society. Shingo Kunieda and Oscar Pistorius represent successful and strong disabled bodies. Regular disabled people are expected to mimic this ideal disabled body. This allows for the ‘super-crip’ model to take hold. The ‘super-crip’ is a body of public inspiration, and is predicated on the bifurcated assemblage of the disabled identity. In this system, Satoshi Uematsu is a pitiable disabled person, while Seiji Sakai and Hiroaki Kōzai are the ideal inspirational disabled people.

The ‘super-crip’ is a body used with the elite approach framework. In the elite approach the Japanese government conducts themselves through positive means which builds willing participants to be governed by the state. This system is predicated on the naturally less than status of disabled athletes. This is true for the Paralympics as an event, and the way particular athletes like Mei Ichinose are depicted. Corporations like the NHK and Onemizuho are invested into this body. In order to remain relevant in a changing social environment, and to win over public sentiment, companies use the disabled Japanese Paralympian in their advertisements. The Japanese government is also showing signs of doing something similar to this. The Japanese

government are pulling the Paralympics up to be equal to the Olympics. By doing this the Japanese government can project a multicultural self to the public and the world, while getting the same benefits listed above. This is seen with the way the Japanese government talks about the games and merchandizes them. The support of the elite level disabled athlete takes place while issues of the non-elite disabled athlete are passed over. Those with disabilities in Japan have issues finding places to work out, and sometimes lack the opportunity to take part in sports.

The 2020 Tokyo Paralympics is a grand stage in which the public is exposed to disability, and it is a spot for the disabled athlete to take on further relevancy in Japan. In this time where the rebranding of the disability identity to fit an international focus better is occurring, I find it important for the Japanese government to discover ways to build interactions with those who are disabled and the people of everyday Japanese society. In the space in which those with disabilities are this powerful symbol of national equality, the government can re-invest themselves into strengthening the nation for all citizens. This path to equality is obtained via open interactions with those with disabilities. The Japanese government, the public, and those with disabilities are all invested in the success of the 2020 Paralympics, because they are invested in the Japan that hangs above them. To make sure that there is this bright future I call upon those in the government, those who research international sports, and those who study Japan to ask the question, what does disability represent within the Japanese context?

Epilogue: A wheelchair basketball tournament

As the last day of the wheelchair basketball tournament came to a close, the emotions run high after the final whistle blows. There was a standing ovation from the spectators while at the same time there was celebration on the part of the victors. The spectators viewed the winners and acknowledged the greatness in their identity. For those who donned the corporate sponsored jerseys this whistle and ovation meant defeat, nevertheless there was an expected, but somewhat unexpected feeling of unity among these teammates, because despite not being the champion, they could find solace within their own team unity. A TV camera surveyed these disabled bodies, likely giving unsuspecting individuals the chance to gaze upon the scene. The volunteers came onto the court, faced the players, and held up the signs identifying the team names. The players acknowledge this request and began to line up behind their respective team signs while facing the flag of Japan. The audience and all of the players were ready to celebrate the dramatic and hard-fought basketball tournament that took place, in which they would now pay respect to all of those in wheelchairs who put their bodies on the line in the multi-day battle. Celebrating the strength and courage they needed to be in the top of their craft. After a speech by the director, the victors of the tournament lined up in front and were awarded a medal to represent their status as champions, while the family members and on lookers took photos. Once the champions returned to their spots, the announcer called for the all tournament team (the best players of each position), to come and receive their awards. Three out of five of the individuals were from the corporate sponsored team, demonstrating the strength of their brand. After the final award was given, there was a speech, as the flag of Japan hung high above these individuals, it represented the amazing opportunities these young athletes could bring to Japan. It represented the high

status in which the spectators saw these athletes, and it represented the great place their home has become.

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