

INSTITUTE OF HEALTH RESEARCH

Qualitative Research Support Group

S E M I N A R

22nd November 2018

13.00 – 14.00 Room SC 2.13, South Cloisters, St Luke's, Exeter

Dr Iza Kavedžija

<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/sociology/staff/kavedzija/>

Crafting Communities of Health: The Work of Hope in Aging Japan

Unprecedented life expectancy and associated demographic changes in Japan have led to widespread anxieties about aging on several different scales: at the national level; in local communities; and on a deeply personal level. Communities and individuals are responding to the challenges of aging and of care in older age in various and often imaginative ways, crafting networks of support and strengthening social ties. In this paper I draw on ethnographic fieldwork in a community in Osaka, chosen for its high proportion of elderly, and describe some of its networks of support, focusing particularly on a Non-Profit Organization (NPO) which began as a mutual aid network (or *tasukeai*) inspired by the ideas of a well-known social activist. I focus on the activities of people involved in these networks of support, many of whom are themselves elderly or concerned about aging; in doing so I explore the broader social and organizational context within which hope arises, and move to explore the motivations of the people involved, outlining what I term an 'attitude of hope'. I argue that for those involved in community activities and support networks, hope is not a form of passive resignation but rather an active attitude and a form of citizenship.

Iza Kavedžija is a Lecturer in Anthropology at the College of Social Sciences and International Studies, University of Exeter. As an anthropologist of Japan, she began her research on aging, care and wellbeing in 2007 at the University of Oxford. She conducted intensive ethnographic fieldwork in the city of Osaka in 2008-9 and again in 2013. Iza's monograph, entitled 'Making meaningful lives: Tales from aging Japan', is forthcoming with the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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For further information please contact linda.dumchen@exeter.ac.uk

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