

Self-Responsibility of the Japanese Hostages in Iraq: Discourse Analysis of Japanese Daily Newspapers Concerning the Self-Responsibility Discussion in April 2004

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Abstract

Two successive Japanese hostage cases in Iraq in April 2004, where hostage-takers demanded the withdrawal of the Self Defence Forces in return for release of the hostages, turned into a discussion about 'self-responsibility'.

This paper concentrates on an analysis of the discursive representation of 'self-responsibility'. The aim is to explain how the media discourse on the hostage crisis and the hostages' 'self-responsibility' is regulating and determining social structures with respect to which tasks self-responsibility has to take over, on the basis of the critical discourse analysis proposed by Norman Fairclough .

The argument is that the principle of self-responsibility has come to replace the hitherto valid responsibility of the state to protect its citizens. This is happening in favour of the newly emerging principle of not accepting terrorism and of fulfilling one's duty as an international state.

Keywords: hostage, Iraq, risk, self-responsibility



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Introduction

Hostage crises have been happening around the world not only since the most recent outbreak of conflict in Iraq. Some get more attention than others, some have a happy and some have a tragic ending.

On 7 April 2004, Imai Noriaki 今井紀明, Takatō Nahoko 高遠菜穂子 and Kōriyama Sōichirō 郡山総一郎 were abducted in Iraq. In a video message, the hostage-takers demanded the withdrawal of Japanese troops in Iraq within three days or otherwise the abductors, who called themselves Saraya al-Mujahideen, would burn the hostages alive. Only a week later, on 15 April, Japan was shocked by the second hostage case, as Yasuda Junpei 安田純平 and Watanabe Nobutaka 渡辺修孝, too, were kidnapped in Iraq. But because there was no message this time from their abductors, Imai, Takatō and Kōriyama were the first hostages taken in order to threaten the Japanese government and demand a withdrawal of Japanese troops. The Japanese Self Defence Forces (SDF) (Jieitai 自衛隊) had been sent into the southern part of Iraq in March 2004 (Pohl 2004: 133). This decision was not without criticism even from the coalition formed by Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō 小泉純一郎, as well as from the majority of the Japanese population. While Japanese conservatives aimed to boost the Japanese state as an international player, arguing that only the SDF would be able to carry out reconstruction aid in Iraq, liberals stated that the deployment was unconstitutional, and the Japanese left saw an opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of 'non-military' humanitarian aid (Leheny 2006: 177).

Both hostage cases ended with the safe release of the hostages, while the government had maintained its strong stance of not withdrawing the Self Defence Forces. But despite the fear that the hostage crisis would become a crisis for the Koizumi administration, the three former hostages were vilified for having failed to exercise 'self-responsibility'¹ (*jikosekinin* 自己責任). During their abduction and after their release, the abductees saw themselves confronted with an avalanche of criticism. Even their families, who had insisted on accepting the demands of the hostage-takers to free their relatives, were called 'villains' ('*omae tachi wa zainin da*' 「お前たちは罪人だ」) amongst other names and received hate mail and threatening phone calls (Imai 2004: 170).

Eventually, the discussion about the self-responsibility of people who risk their lives by going into a conflict area took over most of the public attention and special emphasis was given to the personality and actions of the five people taken hostage in Iraq. 'Self-responsibility' became a widely known term in Japan.

1 If not otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

References and research interest

The literature on self-responsibility, which is a term connected with the state-citizen relationship, is manifold and not only bound to the hostage crisis. For this paper, publications particularly concerned with the kidnapping of the five Japanese citizens in April 2004 in Iraq are the main references.

In a symposium held by the ‘Organisation to Support the Five People Who have been Freed from Iraq’² on 24 July 2004, Takikawa Hirohide 瀧川裕英, assistant professor at the University of Ōsaka, introduced three different types of self-responsibility³:

- a) Self-responsibility as one’s duty (*sekimu toshite no jikosekinin*
責務としての自己責任)
- b) Self-responsibility as cause (*gen’in toshite no jikosekinin*
原因としての自己責任)
- c) Self-responsibility as burden (*futan toshite no jikosekinin*
負担としての自己責任)

According to Takikawa’s conclusion, the three types were not clearly distinguished in the hostage crisis debate (Takikawa 2004).

Takikawa also states that this discussion will have a further impact on the willingness of Japanese citizens to incur risks, because people in a society in which responsibility for risks, which an individual cannot take on alone, is not assumed by the state, will cease to accept ‘challenges’ (*chōsen* 挑戦). Takikawa also arrives at a definition of the term ‘self-responsibility’ as the responsibility one has to assume as a consequence of results unintentionally caused by actions already known for bearing a certain amount of risk. For this reason the state should not be held responsible (Takikawa 2004).

In Western literature, the concern is around the relationship between the Japanese state during the post-war era and the Japanese citizen. Glenn Hook and Takeda Hiroko centre on the question of ‘how the state has deployed the discourse of “self-responsibility” in recalibrating the citizen’s exposure to external and internal risks’ (Hook and Takeda 2007: 95). They describe self-responsibility as a characteristic of liberal democratic states, based on the fact that the policy-making elite seeks to regulate and transform the relationship between the citizen and the state concerning the state’s ability to protect its citizens (Hook and Takeda 2007: 95).

2 Iraku kara kikokusareta 5 nin o sapōtsuru kai イラクから帰国された5人をサポートする会.

3 *Mitsu no ‘jikosekinin-ron’* 三つの「自己責任論」.

For a broader view of changes in the Japanese post-war state, one should also take into account the intention of the Japanese policy-making elite to ‘normalise’⁴ the Japanese state. The perception is that, in order to do so, a stronger international role and a more robust military contribution are necessary. For that reason, Japan again forged close ties with the United States and the Japanese government also became more oriented towards global norms on counter-terrorism by putting into effect the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law approved by the Japanese Parliament on 29 October 2001. But, according to Leheny, the Japanese government, in its effort to become a normal state, realised too late that through a stronger international and a more robust military role, Japanese citizens are becoming more exposed to new forms of risk outside of Japan (Leheny 2006: 149). To act as a normal state by obeying international norms, such as ‘no concessions to terrorists’, was to stand against the expectations of the Japanese public that the Japanese state should protect the lives of Japanese citizens (Leheny 2006: 137). Leheny, as well as Hook and Takeda, finally came to the similar conclusion that the self-responsibility discussion can be seen as an important way of teaching Japanese citizens a new collective symbolism, so that they would know how to behave in a normalised Japanese state. In this concrete case—the attempt to off-load risk on to the citizens—the hostages were criticised for having failed to exercise self-responsibility and their action therefore was viewed as irresponsible (Hook and Takeda 2007: 113). As stated above, this led to the abductees facing heavy criticism.

The present study, however, concentrates on taking a closer look at the collective symbolism⁵ presented in the media coverage of the hostage crisis, in the context of self-responsibility, in three of the major daily Japanese newspapers: *Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞, *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* 日本経済新聞 and *Yomiuri Shinbun* 読売新聞. The main question is how self-responsibility was received, evaluated and defined and which discursive identities were developed for the hostages and their families, in the media discourse. In short: which description of ‘reality’ the newspapers analysed were offering their readers. An analysis of how the self-responsibility discussion influenced the discursive representation of the hostages and their families and the handling of risk is also part of this work; in particular, how a risk, such as a hostage crisis, should be handled by Japanese citizens and also by the government, in accordance with the collective symbolism represented in the media discourse, which is discursively given to the Japanese public and the Japanese government. The aim of this paper is to explain how the media discourse on the hostage crisis and the hostages’ self-responsibility regulates and determines social structure.

4 ‘Normalisation’ describes the ‘convergence of the states’ (Weiss 2000: 21-55).

5 The term collective symbolism was developed by Jürgen Link and describes linguistically realised symbols which in turn become the communicative and cultural common property of a society (University Duisburg-Essen 2009).

Methodological and theoretical framework

My analysis is based on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Norman Fairclough. According to Fairclough, 'discourse' is a social practice and 'discourses' are differentiating representations of social life, that is, viewed and represented by social actors in different positions in different ways and discourses (Fairclough 2001: 123). In short, a discourse is a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective (Fairclough 1995a: 14). To Fairclough, discourse is 'text', 'discursive practice' and 'sociocultural practice'. 'Discursive practice' mediates between pure 'text' and 'sociocultural practice', which represents the wider cultural context of communication in, e.g., the mass media, and also the ideological impact and the hegemonic processes in which discourse is functioning (Blommaert 2005: 30). Basically, CDA emphasises the interdiscursivity and intertextuality of a discourse (Wodak 1996: 14). Therefore, discourses cannot be clearly separated and partly overlap with each other. In this study I try to narrow down the discourse concerned with self-responsibility; consequently, the discourse is subjective and mirrors my interest as a researcher. In addition, CDA is concerned mostly with ideologically distorted discourses, which arise according to political trends, and with the question of how those discourses are polarised between 'us' (in-groups) and 'them' (out-groups) (Fairclough 1995b: 52). In respect of this work, discourse analysis reveals that the hostages and their family members are represented as part of the out-group and do not act in accordance with the ideologies that institutions are dictating to them, since institutions have the capacity to naturalise ideologies. Naturalising ideologies implies that an institution's ideology is accepted as common sense.

Following Fairclough's theories, I attempted to embed the phenomenon of self-responsibility in connection with the Japanese hostage crisis in the construction of Fairclough's 'ideational-discursive formations'. Self-responsibility at some point is represented in the newspapers analysed as a sort of common sense that should be in the nature of all Japanese who are travelling abroad. After all, the aim of Fairclough's CDA is to denaturalise ideologies and identify them as hegemonial norms (Blommaert 2005: 158). Self-responsibility is therefore a norm in accordance with which the members of the group constituted by Japanese citizens have to act.

Discourse, identity and social change

Discourse, as it shapes the collective knowledge base in a society, also shapes discursive identities. According to Jan Blommaert, identities are not owned by people, rather, their identities are constructed through actions that produce identities. To create an identity, it has to be recognised (or identified) by others (Blommaert 2005:

206). Institutions are able to create identities and, because of preferential access to the media, they have more opportunities to prescribe behaviour patterns and ways of thinking for the in-group. Through this, the parameters for who belongs to the group and who is an outsider can be set. For example, self-responsibility is represented as belonging to the identities of all Japanese, and for that reason, all subjects who are said to lack self-responsibility are identified as non-Japanese. Self-responsibility is a norm belonging to a group, and in this connection the group has the task of casting out, limiting, etc. and of defining what is normal through establishing what is not normal.

As mentioned above, discourses are closely linked to social change. Furthermore, the restructuring of hegemonies within the order of discourses, as stated in Fairclough's theory of 'technologization of discourse', is a 'part of a struggle on the part of dominant social forces to modify existing institutional discursive practices (as one dimension of the engineering of social...change)' (Fairclough 1995b: 87).

Concerning the self-responsibility discussion, it can be said that it plays into the hegemonic struggle that aims to make existing conventions visible to society and to replace them with another naturalised ideology or common sense. Furthermore, anti-hegemonical practices are often denied and punished, because they do not correspond with this naturalised norm. Therefore the criticism faced by the hostages and their families can be seen as due to their behaviour, which accorded with the former valid norm that 'the government has to protect Japanese citizens under all circumstances', and which now contradicted the new discursive norm of 'no concessions to terrorists'⁶ (Yomiuri 2004a: 3).

Selection of data base

When it comes to selecting data, choosing the method already determines the choice and collection of research material. Furthermore, the research topic and question are all along constructed by the researcher. This sort of scope is necessary to localise the level of discourse, genre, participants, etc.

Asahi Shinbun, *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (Nikkei日経) were used for this discourse analysis. This choice resulted from the fact that all three newspapers are part of a media conglomerate which distributes information mainly through press clubs restricted to these elite media, and vertically to other media (Westney 1996: 52). Furthermore, newspapers are seen as a more reliable news source than television or radio (Fujitake 2005: 72). Thus, the credibility accorded by readers and the newspapers' influential power over other media were fundamental criteria. The period for analysis developed according to the research subject and is

6 'Tero ni wa kusshinai' テロには屈しない.

outlined following the micro-events on the hostage crisis and the self-responsibility discussion. The starting point is the first report on the hostage case on 9 April 2004 and the collection of data ended with 30 April 2004, since the media coverage dropped after the release of the hostages in the second case on 20 April. The media interest decreased sharply within *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri*, and only *Asahi* continued scattered reporting on the cases till the end of April 2004.

Altogether 377 articles were analysed. The articles were chosen by deciding who the relevant and major discursive agents were. The hostages, their families and also government and opposition representatives were identified as the major such agents. The criterion for selection was the relationship to the discourse on self-responsibility. As this discourse is related to the change in the social structure, which defines the relationship between state and citizen, the discursive agents had to represent the opposing parties. So the families with their call for the release of the hostages at all costs, the hostages with their actions, and the representatives of the agent of government with their requirements for the citizens of Japan, are indicative of the two contradicting and competing parties.

Japanese hostage crises before and after April 2004

In order to connect the hostage crisis of April 2004 to the macro-context of events, this part is dedicated to a brief discussion of the history of Japan's handling of hostage crises in the past and Japan's foreign and security policy.

The April 2004 abduction cases of Japanese people were neither the first nor the last. Beginning in the 1970s, the Japanese Red Army (Nihon Sekigun 日本赤軍) carried out a series of abductions, such as the hostage-taking of 52 people at the American and Swedish embassies in Kuala Lumpur in 1975 (Asahi Chronicle 2000:7-8), and the hijacking of a Japan Airline flight over India in 1977, known as the Dhakar case (Asahi Chronicle 2000: 9-10). In both hostage cases the abductors demanded the release of imprisoned Red Army comrades from the Japanese government and a ransom, which Japan met to free the hostages. During the 1977 aircraft hijacking the former prime minister, Fukuda Takeo 福田赳夫, announced acceptance of the hijackers' demands on the principle that 'human life outweighs the earth': a stance that was supported by the public majority (Leheny 2006: 132). The general stance on dealing with abductions of Japanese citizens up to the 1990s was relatively unaffected by international criticism about the 'weakness of Japan' in giving in to hijackers' demands and about an inward-looking Japanese government. Also the public held on to the position that Japanese citizens had to be protected at any price (Leheny 2006: 132).

But with the end of the Cold War the world order changed, and Japan had to re-define its role in the international community (Weiß 2001: 86). Dealing with terror-

ism also gained more international attention, as seen in UN declarations and G7 and G8 summits, and in 1997 Japan joined in half-heartedly by declaring that the first priority during an act of terrorism was to maintain the international legal order (Gaimushō 1997: 117). Concerning Japanese hostage crises in the second half of the 1990s, such as the case in Peru in 1996, where Peruvian rebels attacked the residence of the Japanese ambassador during celebrations for the Japanese emperor's birthday (Gaimushō 1997: 152), or the case in Kyrgyzstan in 1999, where four geologists from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) were taken hostage by the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, the Japanese government found a way to keep up the facade of supporting the stance of 'no concessions to terrorists', while safely getting Japanese hostages home (Gaimushō 2000: 110). But rumours had it that the Japanese government secretly paid a ransom in both cases (Leheny 2006: 134-135).

For the Japanese government a problematic conflict evolved, as on the one hand 'the war against terrorism got absolute priority in the international community' (Gaimushō 1997: 117) and therefore the principle of 'no negotiations, no concessions' should be exercised, but on the other hand, the predominating local norm still had it that to protect and safely bring home Japanese citizens was the responsibility of the Japanese state (Leheny 2006: 133).

Finally, the September 11 attacks in 2001 on the United States led to active counterterrorism measures, called too the 'war on terrorism'. The US assumed control of the 'war against Islamic terrorism as a multilateral duty within a broadly based international alliance' (Weiß 2001: 32). The Koizumi administration decided to back this alliance and in 2004 ordered the deployment of the Self Defence Forces to Iraq in order to assist the US-led reconstruction of Iraq, basing itself on the 'Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq' (Pohl 2004: 133).

Not only did the position of the Japanese state become more and more outward-looking, but following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center the discursive meaning of the contextual environment of 'terrorism' also changed dramatically. It thus became virtually impossible for Japan's policy-making elite not to abide by 'international' principles on dealing with terrorism.

Japan's shifts in its foreign and security policy to draw level with the United States, for the purpose of becoming a normal state, are exposing Japanese citizens to new forms of risk and also demand that Japanese citizens should not rely on protection from the Japanese state, when it comes to their security abroad (Hook and Takeda 2007: 93). This runs counter to the former local principle that 'protecting the citizen at all costs' is the responsibility of the state. In 2005, the Japanese Foreign Ministry talked about the 'self-responsibility' of Japanese citizens concerning their security abroad (Gaimushō 2005: 280). According to Japan's new position as a 'global player', existing principles and moral concepts should be changed and tight-

ened to suit an internationally oriented state, and the collective knowledge base should be altered to the effect that the world outweighs human life. This shift in the relationship between a state and its citizens is also affecting social structure and discursive practice, as is obvious in the representation of the families of the first hostages as adherents of a no longer appropriate principle.

Looking at a later hostage crisis, the abduction of Kōda Shosei 香田証生 in October 2004, where the abductors also demanded the withdrawal of Japanese troops, the situation resembled the hostage crisis in the preceding April. But as the Japanese government refused to withdraw its troops, Kōda was executed by his hostage takers (Gaimushō 2004). The argument is that in the Kōda case, the Japanese government as well as public opinion no longer hesitated too much in accepting the possible death of civilians.

The 2004 hostage crises also highlight the different positions of the Japanese left and conservative parties on the questions of who should provide aid—civil or military aid—and which tasks should be left to be carried out by the state. This is better illustrated when looking at the assassination of two Japanese diplomats in Iraq in November 2003. The two were described in an article by Takashima Hatsuhiisa 高島肇久, a spokesman for the Japanese Foreign Ministry, as ‘responsible members of the international community’, who were in Iraq to support Japan in its duty to ‘fulfil its international role’ (Takashima 2004: 16). In contrast, the April 2004 abductees are, in short, represented mostly as NGO activists⁷ and freelance journalists⁸, terms that constitute a different discourse, mingling with the self-responsibility discourse. From further reading one can conclude that freelance journalists as well as NGO members are considered, according to the collective discursive knowledge, more as a problem than as a constructive gain for the state. They pose a challenge for the state, as they compete with the latter in forming national and global politics (Walter LaFeber quoted in Selden and So 2004: 14). Moreover, because they are an expression of a changing way of life in modern industrialised countries and act in pursuance of their needs and interests, reflecting a situation where leisure, enjoyment of life or self-development have an enhanced status, freelance journalists and NGO members contradict the prevalent life style, where the pursuit of material prosperity and social advancement as well as economic success and an emphasis on performance are determinant (Karrenbauer 2000: 21-23). Therefore, humanitarian aid is still, in the eyes of public opinion, a task for governments and confidence in NGOs remains low (Osa and Kumaoka 2005: 37). The identities of the hostages are as follows: Imai Noriaki, represented as a member of a non-profit organisation, who was analysing the depletion of uranium from US weaponry; Takatō Nahoko, a volunteer for NGOs abroad; Kōriyama Sōichirō, a freelance cameraman; Yasuda Junpei and

7 *Borantia katsudōka* ボランティア活動家.

8 *Furii jaanarisuto* フリージャーナリスト.

Watanabe Nobutaka, freelance journalists who reported on SDF activities for a non-profit organisation. This discursive construction of the hostages' identities includes images drawn from out of a collective knowledge and created through other discourses, but also regulates the self-responsibility discourse. The question about the abductees' self-responsibility turns into a query about their relationship to the state, whilst in the case of the Japanese diplomats their self-responsibility was not a topic, as they acted on behalf of the state.

The following discourse analysis also concentrates on the cognitive pool of symbolism, which was applied in the media coverage, to curtail the challenge posed by the hostages with their discursively determined activities.

Thematical analysis

In this section a presentation of the results from the thematic analysis will be given, divided into three major parts: the discursive meaning of the term self-responsibility, the effects on the major agents, hostages⁹ and families¹⁰, and finally the effects of the self-responsibility discourse on the handling of risk.

Discursive meaning of self-responsibility

Yomiuri is not only the newspaper with the highest circulation in Japan, but is also said to be conservative and close to the government and is sometimes even classified as 'right' in its position (Loosli 1998: 38). Therefore, in the discursively created reality of *Yomiuri*, self-responsibility is presented as a mode of conformity that can be demanded by the government, and to pass responsibility from the state on to the citizens is already seen as common sense rather than a norm employed by the political elite. It takes the government's stance that self-responsibility should be a characteristic of the Japanese.

Thus *Yomiuri* represents self-responsibility as 'something natural'¹¹ (*Yomiuri* 2004k: 3). Because the state's ability to protect its citizens abroad is limited, it has to ask the Japanese to follow the 'principle of self-responsibility'¹² (*Yomiuri* 2004m: 2). The hostage crisis only validates again this principle of self-responsibility. But compared with the two other newspapers, the way in which *Yomiuri* represents the discourse hardly mentions any particular groups of people who should carry out self-

9 Hitojichi 人質.

10 Kazoku 家族.

11 'Tōzen no koto' 当然のこと.

12 'Jikosekinin no gensoku' 自己責任の原則.

responsibility other than civilians¹³, while it clearly identifies experts as the group that is already acting self-responsibly (*Yomiuri* 2004n: 34).

Concerning the question of who should act or is acting self-responsibly and how, two different approaches can be identified in the *Yomiuri* discourse, but nevertheless it is not unusual to see both appear in the very same issue. On the one hand, acting self-responsibly is equated with taking no risks, and on the other hand, it means that one takes over the risk completely, whatever the outcome. As a consequence, one acts in a self-responsible fashion either through ‘following the advice to return from Iraq issued by the Japanese government’¹⁴ (*Yomiuri* 2004f: 1), or through ‘not relying on help from the state and citizens if travelling to Iraq, whatever the case’¹⁵ (*Yomiuri* 2004p: 2). It can be pointed out that, according to the latter approach, if the abductees really travelled to Iraq on their own responsibility, they also have to accept that it would be at their own risk if they were killed.

Nihon Keizai Shinbun, despite being viewed as a business paper, has a conservative stance concerning political or social news. In the newspaper’s discourse representation, it is striking that self-responsibility is a behavioural norm, while the responsibility of the state is to fight terrorism.

Nikkei thus presents self-responsibility as a kind of ‘principle’ (*gensoku* 原則), through statements from, among others, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi 川口順子外相, who said that ‘self-responsibility is the sense of responsibility to take on responsibility by oneself and act accordingly’¹⁶ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004j: 1). In *Nikkei*’s discursive reality, people who are acting according to the principle of self-responsibility¹⁷ are positioning their actions in accordance with the concept of being responsible for their own security by simply following the Foreign Ministry’s travel warnings by staying out of places marked as dangerous¹⁸ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004j: 1). In almost every issue *Nikkei* mentions the high number of warnings to stay out of Iraq¹⁹ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004d: 39), which also can lead to the interpretation that to ignore the warnings is equal to ‘not acting self-responsibly’²⁰ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004d: 39).

13 *Minkanjin* 民間人.

14 ‘*Seifu ha iraku zendo no hōjin ni tettai kankoku shitekita*’ 政府はイラク全土の邦人に撤退勧告してきた.

15 ‘*Donna koto ga atte mo, kuni ya kokumin no tasuke ha issai karinai*’ どんなことがあっても、国や国民の助けは一切借りない.

16 ‘*Mizukara sekinin o mochi, mizukara no kōdō o rissuru*’ 自ら責任を持ち、自らの行動を律する.

17 *Jikosekinin no gensoku* 自己責任の原則.

18 ‘*Kawaguchi gaishō “taihi kankoku ga dete iru chiiki e no tokō wa, dono yō na mokuteki de are hikaeru”*’ 川口外相「退避勧告が出ている地域への渡航は、どのような目的であれ控える」.

19 ‘*Taihi kankoku o kei juusankai mo dashita [...] koreni shitagatte itadakitai*’ 退避勧告を計十三回も出した[...]これに従っていただきたい.

20 ‘*Jikosekinin no gensoku o jikaku shinai*’ 自己責任の原則を自覚しない.

In such headlines as ‘civilians are targeted’²¹ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004a: 3), *Nikkei* identifies civilians as those facing the highest danger when travelling to Iraq, as they are, in contrast to the SDF soldiers, a ‘soft target’²² (*Nihon Keizai* 2004a: 3). Although the terms ‘soft target’ and ‘civilians’ include, for example, business people in Iraq, it is mostly NGO members and freelance journalists who are described as those most likely to be abducted (*Nihon Keizai* 2004a: 3). This is explained by the fact as presented that NGO members are considered not to be aware of the necessity of acting in a self-responsible way, with the suggestion that NGO members forget to follow the principle of self-responsibility during their activities and that it is they who have to be reminded to observe the government’s travel warnings (*Nihon Keizai* 2004d: 39). Freelance journalists such as Yasuda or Koriyama are presented as people driven by a feeling of vocation to go to dangerous places, but lacking in a sense of watching out for their safety (*Nihon Keizai* 2004k: 35). Additionally, both groups are presented as people who are travelling illegally to Iraq and who, through their ‘hidden’²³ entry into the country, have evaded protection from the Japanese government (*Nihon Keizai* 2004h: 38). Eventually, a discursive identity is created that NGO members and freelance journalists do not abide by the rules followed by the rest of the Japanese. Ignoring travel warnings, travelling illegally and following their convictions without thinking of their safety clearly prove, according to *Nikkei*, that these groups are most likely to be taken hostage and are not acting self-responsibly.

Asahi is said to be the most liberal of the three and generally takes a more critical stance towards the government. It is therefore quite surprising that in representing the issue of self-responsibility, it shares almost the same arguments as the other two newspapers.

Hence *Asahi* observes no difference and presents the same statement as *Yomiuri* from Takeuchi Yukio 竹内行夫, a Foreign Ministry press spokesman, that he wants people to ‘keep the principle of self-responsibility in mind to protect themselves’²⁴ (*Asahi* 2004n: 13). After the hostages’ release, the newspaper also seems to utilise the phrase ‘self-responsibility’ to insult the abductees and their families, meaning generally that they are accused of ignoring the government’s security warnings about Iraq and are told that the saved hostages ‘should pay for their rescue’²⁵ (*Asahi* 2004q: 13). Both *Nikkei* as well as *Asahi* identify self-responsibility as a subject for accusation. The only major difference in the *Asahi* representation is that self-

21 ‘Nerawareta “minkanjin” 狙われて「民間人」.

22 ‘Sofutotaagetto’ ソフトターゲット.

23 ‘Hisoka ni nyūkoku suru’ ひそかに入国する.

24 ‘Jikosekinin no gensoku o jikaku site, mizukara mamoru koto o kangaete moraitai’ 自己責任の原則を自覚して、自らを守ることを考えてもらいたい.

25 ‘Seifu no taihi kankoku o mushi shite, [...] kyūshutsu hiyō ha karera ni harawasero’ 政府の退避勧告を無視して、救出費用は彼らに払わせろ.

responsibility is also described as a basic rule for NGO activities²⁶—however only in statements from experts such as the representative of the International Volunteer Centre (*Asahi* 2004p: 26).

In the *Asahi* discourse, as in the *Nikkei*, protecting oneself also means following the travel warnings issued by the government. Although the main point presented by *Asahi* is that the government, once the crisis had occurred, had already done everything possible to protect the Japanese citizens and that the state's duty had been fulfilled, it continues to blame the government for its deployment of the SDF. 'The foreign ministry', it says in its first issue on the hostage crisis, 'has warned the Japanese from colliding with military violence and from getting embroiled in a case such as this one, and ever since the first recommendation to leave Iraq was issued it has been renewed every three months'²⁷ (*Asahi* 2004a: 2). But as the discourse proceeds, this 'recommendation'²⁸ changes into a 'law that prohibits travel to Iraq'²⁹, in an attempt to end travel to the country (*Asahi* 2004p: 26), especially after the release of the five hostages. The argument is that it seems like an attempt to show that the state still fulfils what was formerly commonly acknowledged as its duty: to protect its citizens. But because 'warnings' and 'recommendations' are not laws that prohibit travelling abroad, the government can also not be held responsible in case something happens outside of Japan. In short, the discursive reality in *Asahi* also reads that one has to assume the risk for oneself even when in danger of getting killed and one cannot blame others (*Asahi* 2004r: 3). In this it is quite close to the *Yomiuri* representation, but the discursive world of *Asahi* is one step ahead, as it already includes some criticism of the so-called self-responsibility discussion (*jikosekinin ron* 自己責任論) (*Asahi* 2004n: 13). Since *Asahi*'s discursive representation of the hostage crisis is strongly connected to its stance against deployment of the SDF, the SDF discourse takes up an important part. It is therefore no surprise that it is critical of the government's wish to distract from the fact that through deployment of the SDF the risk to Japanese citizens of becoming targets of terrorist attacks has increased. At some point in the discussion *Asahi* maintains that the government holds responsibility if something should happen to the hostages, but at the same time it helps to consolidate the norm that to act self-responsibly means to assume the risk completely and to avoid blaming others.

At first glance, *Asahi* does not make any exception in identifying civilians and especially NGO members and freelance journalists as potential hostages (*Asahi*

26 *NGO katsudō no gensoku* NGO活動の原則.

27 'Gaimushō ha [...] hōjin ga buryokushōtotsu ya naniraka no jiken ni makikomareru koto o keikaishi, iraku zendo o taishō ni hōjin taihikankoku o dashite irai, 3 kagetsu goto ni kōshin shitekita' 外務省は [...] 邦人が武力衝突や何らかの事件に巻き込まれることを警戒し、イラク全土を対象に邦人退避勧告を出して以来、3ヵ月ごとに更新してきた.

28 'Kankoku' 勧告.

29 'Tokō o kinshi suru hōritu' 渡航を禁止する法律.

2004i: 3). In its representation it creates a discursive identity for NGO members and freelance journalists as ‘private persons from whom a crisis management of “self-responsibility” should also be demanded’³⁰ (*Asahi* 2004b: 3). This implies that they are identified as people who lack awareness of self-responsibility, which in this discourse is seen as common sense. But in contrast, the discourse of experts as represented by *Asahi* identifies NGO members and freelance journalists as those who are acting self-responsibly, since they are described as ‘calculating the risk and value of their aid activities’³¹ (*Asahi* 2004p: 26) or as considering the risk carefully before they decide to go and assume or avoid the risk.

Consequences of self-responsibility for the discursive agents

The following discussion is concerned with the consequences the self-responsibility discourse had on the representation of the major discursive agents, hostages and families. Concentrating on *Yomiuri* first, the five abductees were represented quite differently at the beginning of the media attention, when they were described simply as ‘hostages’, ‘Japanese abroad’ (*hōjin* 邦人), and later even as ‘victims’ (*higaisha* 被害者) and ‘innocent civilians’ (*muko no minkanjin* 無辜の民間人) (*Yomiuri* 2004f: 1). After their release the stance changed considerably, and they were called ‘a shield for armed groups’³² (*Yomiuri* 2004n: 34), ‘guests’³³ of their abductors, and ‘ambassadors for armed groups’³⁴ (*Yomiuri* 2004o: 2). This gave them an identity as accomplices of terrorists. And even a week after the release of the second hostages, the parliamentary defence secretary, Kashimura Takeaki 柏村武昭 of the LDP, had a statement published that the five people were ‘anti-Japanese elements’ (*han-nichiteki bunshi* 反日的分子) as they were ‘overtly against the deployment of the SDF’³⁵ (*Yomiuri* 2004s: 34). There is no difference in the development of identity building in the representation found in *Nikkei*, as it gradually shifts from neutral terms such as ‘Japanese abroad’, ‘the hostages’, or terms that express their profession such as ‘NGO member’ or ‘freelance journalist’, to the harsher description of the five as ‘criminals’ (*zainin* 罪人) or ‘idiots’ (*baka* 馬鹿), especially after their return to Japan. Although *Asahi* is more interested in the activities of the abductees and concerned to identify them with neutral terms, the *Asahi* representation is similar to the other two newspapers. Their role as ‘victims’ (*Asahi* 2004g: 11) also is removed in favour of describing them as ‘anti-Japanese elements’ or as ‘people who

30 ‘*Minkanjin ni taishite mo “jikosekinin” ni yoru kikanri o motomeru*’ 民間人に対しても「自己責任」による危機管理を求める。

31 ‘*Risuku to enjo katsudō no kachi o tenbin ni kakeru*’ リスクと援助活動の価値をてんびんにかける。

32 ‘*Hitogichi o tate ni shita busō gurūpu*’ 人質を盾にした武装グループ。

33 ‘*Kyakujin*’ 客人。

34 ‘*Busōseiryoku no messenjā*’ 武装勢力のメッセンジャー。

35 ‘*Jieitai haken ni kōzen to hantai shiteiru*’ 自衛隊派遣に公然と反対している。

made a mistake'³⁶ (*Asahi* 2004q: 13). Nonetheless, *Asahi* also praises them as a 'big plus for Japan'³⁷, and as 'brave citizens'³⁸ (*Asahi* 2004r: 3) and does not neglect to criticise a little the treatment of the hostages, when describing the released hostages as 'prisoners of the state' or 'criminals being handed over' (*Asahi* 2004q: 13).

The self-responsibility discourse also influences the representation of the hostages' families. *Yomiuri*, for example, emphasises at first that the position of the hostages' families is questionable, as they are opposed to deployment of the SDF to Iraq because it is too dangerous, but at the same time are not able to prevent their own children from going into dangerous areas (*Yomiuri* 2004i: 4). The families' position is represented as doubtful, because they do not meet the 'self-responsibility' norm, which is already presented as 'common sense' (*jōshiki* 常識); not only do they let their children go to Iraq, they also do not take responsibility for this, as they demand withdrawal of the troops from the government in order to save their children at any cost (*Yomiuri* 2004h: 3).

The families' stance, especially that of the first three hostages' families, brings the families' discursive identity close to that of the abductors or 'terrorists' (*terorisuto* テロリスト), as they endorse terrorist attacks (*Yomiuri* 2004q: 2) by forcefully requesting the government to change important political measures that are important for Japan's national interest and the fulfilment of Japan's international responsibilities (*Yomiuri* 2004l: 4).

In *Nikkei*, the families of the first hostages are presented as holding the opinion that only a withdrawal of the SDF would save their children, but that the government, as it refuses to do so, would not want to save them (*Nihon Keizai* 2004d: 39). Not only are the families in this discursive representation described as supporting the standpoint of the terrorists (*Nihon Keizai* 2004c: 2), but also, since the leftist opposition parties as well are presented as calling for a SDF withdrawal, the hostages' families became identified with Communist demands (*Nihon Keizai* 2004e: 2). Following the hostages' release, the prevailing stress shifted to represent the families as being full of remorse and apologising for having 'caused trouble'³⁹ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004h: 38). The description of the negative consequences for Japan, should it make concessions to terrorists, is central to this discourse representation, as it made the families' behaviour appear reprehensible and irrational. In contrast to *Yomiuri*, it is quite plain in *Nikkei* that criticism of the families is due to their demanding a troop withdrawal, and that the bashing resulting from the self-responsibility discourse finally reduced them to silence over this matter. *Asahi* hardly shows any differences. The new self-responsibility norm influences the repre-

36 'Nan ni atta dōkokumin' 難にあった同国民.

37 'Nihon no ōkina purasu' 日本の大きなプラス.

38 'Yūki no aru shimin' 勇気のある市民.

39 'Gomeiwaku o okake shimashita' ご迷惑をおかけしました.

sensation in an early stage, describing the families as blaming themselves through statements such as: ‘It would have been better not to let him go’⁴⁰ (*Asahi* 2004c: 23). But *Asahi* represents the families’ demands for a withdrawal of the SDF substantially more frequently than *Nikkei* or *Yomiuri*, and shortly after the first hostage crisis became public, *Asahi* identified a position of ‘not withdrawing’⁴¹ as ‘letting down the hostages’⁴² (*Asahi* 2004d: 26). But after the hostages’ release, the families’ behaviour was called improper (*Asahi* 2004p: 26) and they were presented as apologising for ‘making trouble’⁴³ and thanking the government for its ‘effort’⁴⁴ (*Asahi* 2004k: 1). But this representation only applied to the first three hostages’ families, because the families of Yasuda and Watanabe were never identified with demands, but almost only with words of apology and gratefulness to the government (*Asahi* 2004o: 23). The demands of the families of Imai, Takato and Koriyama are presented in *Asahi* as ‘out-dated’, ‘a burden’ and ‘irrational’, while the families of Yasuda and Watanabe are identified as level-headed, as they do not make any demands.

Because of the self-responsibility discourse, that has made self-responsibility into a naturalised norm, which in turn influences the relationship between the state and its citizens, the former norms of how to behave in such a hostage crisis have changed, and the common sense that formerly said that the government has to protect and save Japanese citizens at all costs is no longer valid. Compared with hostage crises in the 1970s, the behaviour of the first hostages’ families might have worked as the common sense stance, but not so in a period after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, mainly because the war on terrorism now dominates Japan’s ties to the United States and Japan proclaims international responsibility. As a consequence, a new norm gradually became naturalised as the self-responsibility discussion went on, a norm that asks Japanese citizens not to stand in the way of governmental decisions concerning its international identity and to put their own needs last.

Effects of the ‘self-responsibility discourse’ on the handling of risks

In this final part, the focus is on the role that self-responsibility should fulfil according to the discourse representation of the hostage crisis and the influence that self-responsibility has on the handling of risk.

Let’s first take a look at the *Yomiuri* representation. Besides the basic principle of self-responsibility, two more norms, ‘the government’s duty to save the life of Japa-

40 ‘*Ikasenakereba yokatta*’ 行かせなければよかった.

41 ‘*Tettai shinai*’ 撤退しない.

42 ‘*Hitojichi wo mikorosu*’ 人質を見殺す.

43 ‘*Meiwaku o kakemashita*’ 迷惑をかけました.

44 ‘*Jinryoku*’ 尽力.

nese citizens'⁴⁵ and the 'international rule not to give in to the demands of terrorists'⁴⁶ are identified by *Yomiuri* (*Yomiuri* 2004p: 2). But whereas the latter is described as 'Japan's international responsibility'⁴⁷ and 'international common conformity'⁴⁸ (*Yomiuri* 2004k: 3), the former is interpreted as 'social pressure on the Japanese government caused by the public view that the state has to save human lives'⁴⁹ (*Yomiuri* 2004o: 2). Owing to the representation of the abduction as a 'terrorist attack'⁵⁰ and the abductors' demands as 'terrorist demands'⁵¹ or a 'challenge by international terror organisations against Japan'⁵² (*Yomiuri* 2004b: 3), withdrawing the SDF is not accepted as a possible means of rescuing the hostages, as this would be opposing 'international rules'. To underline that it is impossible to give in to the demands of the abductors, *Yomiuri* presents several consequences:

First, the newspaper reports that Japan would be criticised by the international community, as it already was for its decisions in the Dhakar and Kuala Lumpur hostage crises, because it was not maintaining law and order as it should, according to *Yomiuri* (*Yomiuri* 2004j: 4). Secondly, making concessions to terrorists in the past is the reason that Japan has become a target for terrorists in the first place. Japan is now, according to *Yomiuri*, perceived as 'weak' and an 'easy target'⁵³ (*Yomiuri* 2004c: 2). Thirdly, Japan would lose its 'international trust' (*kokusaitekina shinyō* 国際的な信用) (*Yomiuri* 2004d: 4) and its possibilities for co-operation in the international community and 'would become a laughing stock in the world'⁵⁴ (*Yomiuri* 2004e: 38). Japan would lose its good reputation and would be perceived as an unreliable partner for other countries (*Yomiuri* 2004g: 3).

In the *Nikkei* discursive reality, the principle of self-responsibility has to compensate for the limited possibilities the government has now, due to the fact that it has to stick to the international principle 'not to give in to terrorist demands'⁵⁵ (*Nihon Keizai* 2004b: 2). *Nikkei* focuses slightly more on the discussion of a possible law that would prohibit travelling to countries classified as dangerous, but this draft is judged to be ineffective for two reasons: first, NGO members and freelance journalists would travel to those countries anyway illegally and they would also benefit from such a law as they would be able to pass on the responsibility to the govern-

45 'Kokka ha kokumin no seimei o mamoru gimu ga aru' 国家は国民の生命を守る義務がある。

46 "'Tero ni kushshite ha naranai' to iu kokusaiteki kihan' 「テロに屈してはならない」という国際的規範。

47 'Nihon no kokusai sekinin' 日本の国際責任。

48 'Kokusai jōshiki' 国際常識。

49 'Nihonjin no seimei o sukue toiu shakaiteki atsuryoku' 日本人の生命を救えという社会的圧力。

50 'Tero kōgeki' テロ攻撃。

51 'Terrorisuto no yōkyū' テロリストの要求。

52 'Nihon ni taisuru kokusai tero soshiki no chōsen da' 日本に対する国際テロ組織の挑戦だ。

53 'Hitotjichi jiken ni yowai nihon ga neraiuchi ni saretā' 人質事件に弱い日本が狙い撃ちにされた。

54 'Sekai no monowarai ni naru' 世界の物笑いになる。

55 'Terrorisuto no odoshi ni kusshinai' テロリストの脅しに屈しない。

ment (*Nihon Keizai* 2004f: 2). Secondly, such a law would be unconstitutional (*Nihon Keizai* 2004i: 2). To solve and prevent hostage crises a ‘strong stance’ (*tsuyoi shisei* 強い姿勢) is required from the government and self-responsibility from the citizens (*Nihon Keizai* 2004g: 3). Also ‘Japanese public opinion’ (*nihon no seron* 日本の世論) is represented as conforming to the new stance that Japan should not be intimidated by terrorist threats.

Asahi creates a quite different discursive reality at the beginning of the discourse representation. It fully invokes an anti-SDF standpoint that mingles with the self-responsibility discourse. The *Asahi* representation sticks at first to the norm that the hostages have to be saved by giving in to the demands of the abductors. This stance becomes especially obvious through the fact that statements by the hostages’ families to withdraw the SDF and save their children are presented comparatively often (*Asahi* 2004d: 26). According to *Asahi*, if the troops stay in Iraq the five hostages are risking their lives, and the possibility of another hostage crisis would also be quite high (*Asahi* 2004d: 26). A withdrawal would save the five hostages and prevent further abductions. *Asahi* states that ‘human life should have priority over the relationship with the United States’⁵⁶ (*Asahi* 2004e: 26). *Asahi*’s liberal standpoint let it support the demands of the families at first, but in the course of the hostage crisis, the newspaper changes tack and, while keeping its anti-SDF, pro-withdrawal position, also states that ‘Japan should not obey terrorist threats’⁵⁷ (*Asahi* 2004f: 11). As soon as the hostages were released, *Asahi* did not hesitate to identify the stance that withdrawal is a way to save hostages as a position that corresponds 100 percent with that of terrorists (*Asahi* 2004i: 2). So despite the more liberal image of the *Asahi Shinbun*, its differences to the *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* or the *Yomiuri Shinbun* concerning the collective symbolism in the self-responsibility discourse are not excessive.

In conclusion, the former handling of hostage crises by the government is described as running contrary to international norms (*kokusaiteki kihan* 国際的規範) and the maintenance of law and order (*chian* 治安). The government’s past actions are also the reason for the occurrence of the April 2004 abductions and might provoke further abductions of Japanese and citizens of other countries, especially of those allied with the United States. The avoidance of international criticism and the receiving of praise for Japan’s ‘right way’ in handling the hostage crisis in the end justify the government’s refusal to withdraw the Self Defence Forces. Because a SDF withdrawal is gradually equated with ‘obeying terrorists’⁵⁸ (*Asahi* 2004j: 3), it does not count as an option in handling hostage crises. At the same time, in *Asahi*’s discursive reality, Japan is presented as a country that is restricted in its possibilities

56 ‘Amerika to no tsukiai yori, jinmei ga yūsen’ アメリカとの付き合いより、人命が優先。

57 ‘Terorisuto no odoshi ni kushshinai’ テロリストの脅しに屈しない。

58 ‘Terorisuto no omou tsubo ni naru’ テロリストの思うつぼになる。

to enforce rescue operations in foreign countries, given that the SDF lack not only the qualification but also the equipment for such operations (*Asahi* 2004j: 3). To prevent hostage crises, the expert's discourse presented in *Asahi* includes the suggestion that the government should pass a bill 'to create the legal basics to prohibit travelling abroad'⁵⁹ (*Asahi* 2004c: 23). But similar to the *Nikkei* discourse, such a law is rejected as 'unconstitutional' (*ihō* 違法), that furthermore would only give Japanese citizens the opportunity to shift all responsibilities on to the government (*Asahi* 2004m: 4). But because 'the possibilities that Japanese are becoming targets of terrorist attacks (in foreign countries) are inevitable'⁶⁰, according to *Asahi*, the government should 'persistently require a crisis management of self-responsibility'⁶¹ (*Asahi* 2004a: 2) from its citizens. They should either stay in Japan and out of Iraq (*Asahi* 2004k: 1) or take on the risk by themselves (*Asahi* 2004h: 1) and not rely on the government to save them if something happens to them.

In *Yomiuri*'s discursive world, the conclusion is that the government should demand from Japanese citizens that they stick more forcefully to the principle of self-responsibility, described as the only possible way to 'keep Japanese citizens away from terrorists'⁶² (*Yomiuri* 2004f: 1) and to prevent another hostage crisis. Additionally, self-responsibility works as a kind of punitive measure for people taking risks out of pure 'selfishness' (*dokuzen* 独善) (*Yomiuri* 2004r: 1), such as the five hostages in April 2004. Therefore, not even the government has responsibility for those people who act out of their own conviction, ignore travel warnings and make trouble. In conclusion, the discursive reality developed in *Yomiuri Shinbun* dictates that one should handle risk in compliance with a mature society. This means that Japan is required to stick to discursively given norms of behaviour, which became naturalised as common sense, in order to be on the same level as industrialised Western countries. The Japanese state therefore has to require self-responsibility from its citizens, in order to concentrate on the perpetuation of political measures.

Nikkei, as does *Yomiuri*, presents the statement that self-responsibility has to work as prevention of and a solution for hostage crises. Similarly to the *Yomiuri* discourse, *Nikkei* describes the various negative consequences for Japan, should it give in to the demands of the abductors and withdraw its troops from Iraq. In its reporting, *Nikkei* upholds the position that Japanese public opinion supports the government's stance that Japan should not give in to terrorist demands. At the same time, it discursively creates the identity of an in-group, which acts along the lines of self-

59 'Tokō kinshi dekiru yōna hōseibi o seifu ga suru' 渡航禁止できるような法整備を政府がする.

60 'Nihonjin ga tero kōgeki no hyōteki to naru kanōsei ha haijo sarenai' 日本人がテロ攻撃の標的となる可能性は排除されない.

61 'Aku made 'jikosekinin' niyuru kikikanri o motomeru' あくまで「自己責任」による危機管理を求める.

62 'Minkanjin o terrorisuto no mashu kara toozakenebanaranai' 民間人をテロリストの魔手から遠ざけねばならない.

responsibility, while the out-group, such as the hostages' families, still sticks to a collective knowledge that was valid during former hostage crises.

In summary, the discursive reality in the three newspapers does not support the idea of taking risks for whatever individual reasons, e.g., to go to places classified as 'dangerous', such as Iraq. Running risks is discouraged by the government, which makes sure that it cannot be involved in personal dramas of its citizens, who should operate according to the norm of 'self-responsibility'.

Conclusion

The discourse analysis just realised of the three newspapers *Asahi Shinbun*, *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* shows that they carry a similar collective symbolism concerning the self-responsibility discourse and that their discursively created reality underlines the above-mentioned literature. According to Takikawa's concept of three types of self-responsibility, which have been intermingled into one in the discourse representation, the principle of self-responsibility carries the meaning either that one should not take any risks at all (self-responsibility as duty), or that one should alone be blamed for the possible consequences when taking risks (self-responsibility as cause), or that one has to take on full responsibility for the outcome of one's risk-taking (self-responsibility as burden). Self-responsibility, with all its meanings, is represented as the predominant norm, while the discursive identity of the hostages is hardly regarded as acting 'self-responsibly', as their actions are represented as the main cause for the hostage crisis. Although the abductors are demanding a withdrawal of Self Defence Forces (and the deployment of the troops is, according to David Leheny, exposing Japanese to new risks outside Japan), the discourse representation is more concerned with the self-responsibility of the abductees and also the families, or the lack of it. The agents' discursive identities gradually shift and expand with the various meanings of self-responsibility. At first they are victims, but then they are also presented as the cause of the trouble the government is in, and finally are called on to assume this trouble first as a burden and in the end as punishment.

Unlike former hostage crises, where Japan was less concerned about its international role or about sticking to such international norms as 'no concessions to terrorists', the government could act to save the hostages at any cost. This former stance, that 'human life outweighs the world', was usually welcomed by public opinion and was perceived, in the collective knowledge, as the predominant common sense behaviour. But in the April 2004 hostage crises, the dominant discursive representation in the three newspapers analysed justified the refusal to give in to the demands of the abductors, through indicating various negative consequences that would result from obeying terrorists' demands. At the same time, the principle of self-responsibility

was implemented in the newspapers' discursive reality as the only way to deal with the hostage crisis. For that reason, self-responsibility was presented as the only possible form of crisis management that would prevent people from travelling to dangerous foreign countries and therefore would also work to circumvent other hostage crises and at the same time let Japan take on its international responsibility. By clarifying the discursively created tasks that self-responsibility has to fulfil, one can perceive it as a new norm concerning the handling of the risk of hostage crisis that should take over from the old norm. In short, this collective symbolism confirms the statement of Takeda and Hook, that risk is the object of state governance and that the self-responsibility discourse occurred for the reason that it should newly adjust the relationship between the state and its citizens concerning the danger of external risks, and in such a way that for the individual citizen it is seen as perfectly natural that, at times when normalising the state in line with other industrialised countries is the main goal, the state is no longer able to take on risks for its citizens. So the most important task for self-responsibility is to save the government from taking responsibility for the cause and the outcome of external risks such as a hostage crisis.

Finally, I conclude that concerning the handling of risk, the discursive representation has changed and the result is also a change in the social structure within the discourse, leading to new behavioural norms for the members of a society. The prevailing norms concerning the relationship between the state and its citizens are therefore subject to diversification. This change in social structure and discursive practices affects the handling of risk or the reasons for taking risks.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Asahi Shinbun</i>	朝日新聞	Japanese daily newspaper
<i>baka</i>	馬鹿	idiot
<i>borantia katsudōka</i>	ボランティア活動家	NGO activist
<i>chian</i>	治安	law and order
<i>chōsen</i>	挑戦	challenge
<i>dokuzen</i>	独善	selfishness
Fukuda Takeo	福田赳夫	Fukuda Takeo (1905–1995); former prime minister
<i>furijjanarisuto</i>	フリージャーナリスト	freelance journalist
<i>futan toshite nojikosekinin</i>	負担としての自己責任	self-responsibility as burden
Gaimushō	外務省	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
<i>genin toshite no jikosekinin</i>	原因としての自己責任	self-responsibility as cause
<i>hannichiteki bunshi</i>	反日的分子	anti-Japanese elements
<i>higaisha</i>	被害者	victim
<i>hitojichi</i>	人質	hostage
<i>hōjin</i>	邦人	Japanese abroad
<i>ihō</i>	違法	unconstitutional
Imai Noriaki	今井紀明	Imai Noriaki; one of the Japanese hostages abducted in Iraq
Iraku kara kikoku sareta 5nin o sapōto suru kai	イラクから帰国された 5 人をサポートする会	Organisation to Support the Five People Who have been Freed from Iraq
Jieitai	自衛隊	Self Defence Forces (SDF)
<i>jikosekinin</i>	自己責任	self-responsibility
<i>jikosekinin no gensoku</i>	自己責任の原則	principle of self-responsibility
<i>jikosekinin ron</i>	自己責任論	discussion about self- responsibility
<i>jinryoku</i>	尽力	effort
<i>jōshiki</i>	常識	common sense
<i>kankoku</i>	勧告	advice
Kashimura Takeaki	柏村武昭	Kashimura Takeaki; parliamen- tary defence secretary (LDP)
Kawaguchi Junko	川口順子	Kawaguchi Junko; former foreign minister
<i>kazoku</i>	家族	family
Kōda Shosei	香田証生	Kōda Shosei; Japanese hostage, killed in Iraq in October 2004
Koizumi Jun'ichirō	小泉純一郎	Koizumi Jun'ichirō (b. 1942); former prime minister
<i>kokusaiteki kihan</i>	国際的規範	international norm
<i>kokusaitekina shinyō</i>	国際的な信用	international trust

Kōriyama Sōichirō	郡山総一郎	Kōriyama Sōichirō; one of the Japanese hostages abducted in Iraq
<i>kyakujin</i>	客人	guest
<i>muko no minkanjin</i>	無辜の民間人	innocent civilians
<i>Nihon Keizai Shinbun</i>	日本経済新聞	Japanese daily newspaper
<i>nihon no seron</i>	日本の世論	Japanese public opinion
Nihon Sekigun	日本赤軍	Japanese Red Army
<i>Nikkei</i>	日経	short for the Japanese daily newspaper <i>Nihon Keizai Shinbun</i>
<i>sekimu toshite no jikosekinin</i>	責務としての自己責任	self-responsibility as one's duty
Takashima Hatsuhisa	高島 肇久	Takashima Hatsuhisa; press secretary/director general for press and public relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Takatō Nahoko	高遠菜穂子	Takatō Nahoko; one of the Japanese hostages abducted in Iraq
Takeuchi Yukio	竹内行夫	Takeuchi Yukio; Foreign Ministry press spokesman
Takikawa Hirohide	瀧川裕英	Takikawa Hirohide; assistant-professor at the University of Ōsaka
<i>terorisuto</i>	テロリスト	terrorist
<i>tōzen no koto</i>	当然のこと	a natural thing
<i>tsuyoi shisei</i>	強い姿勢	strong stance
Watanabe Nobutaka	渡辺修孝	Watanabe Nobutaka; one of the Japanese hostages abducted in Iraq
Yasuda Junpei	安田純平	Yasuda Junpei; one of the Japanese hostages abducted in Iraq
<i>Yomiuri Shinbun</i>	読売新聞	Japanese daily newspaper
<i>zainin</i>	罪人	criminal