

An Encouragement to be a Middleman —A Note on ‘Useful’ Sociology (1)—

ABSTRACT

Paul F. Lazarsfeld once proposed a notion of ‘Middleman,’ a person who is supposed to play a role of mediating between the academics and the authorities, that is, translating clients’ problems into sociological problems to overcome the knowing-doing gap between social scientists and clients coming from administrative settings. Postwar Japanese sociology has refrained from being a policy-oriented field of study, probably because of over-commitment to either Karl Marx’s praxis or Max Weber’s value-free sociology. The present paper, after having reviewed Japanese sociology of the past, attempts to explicate and elaborate the Lazarsfeld notion of Middleman in contemporary terms.

Key Words : middleman, policy-oriented, uses of sociology