

# 教育のミソロジー：教育における政治的社会化の新しい理論

## Mythologies of Education: A New Theory for Political Socialization in Education

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### ABSTRACT

Over 50 years have passed since the American Occupation's efforts to democratize the education system and wider Japanese society, although there has been little study of political socialization in Japanese schools. This paper based on field work conducted in a Japanese middle school attempts to present a new theory to explain teachers' approaches to guidance in student government activities and the resulting processes of political socialization in the Japanese middle school as a political microcosm. A Foucauldian analysis of findings centered around "governmentality" combined with the concepts of "Imagined Communities" (Benedict Anderson) and "mythologies" (Roland Barthes) was utilized to attempt to explain the contradictions present in an effort to produce the autonomous citizens of a modern democracy by way of compulsory political education activities groups. The result is a new theory of political socialization in schools titled "mythologies of education" which attempts to address weaknesses in functionalist explanations of socialization by emphasizing the agency of the subject/student who is the recipient of the political ideologies embedded in student government activities.

アメリカ占領時代に試みられた日本における教育制度の民主化から半世紀以上が経過したが、日本の学校現場における政治的民主化は殆ど問われていない。本論では日本の中学校を対象に行われたフィールドワークに基づいた理論研究であり、特別活動における教師の指導と学校という政治的縮図における

政治的社会的関係の説明する新しい理論を提示することを試みる。理論的枠組みとして、フーコーの「統治性」やベネディクト・アンダーソンの「想像の共同体」及びロラン・バルトの「神話作用」などを用いて、義務づけられた特別活動によって民主主義社会における自律的市民を育成するという矛盾を問い直す。特別活動に埋め込まれている政治的イデオロギーの受け手である学生の役割を強調することによって、機能主義的なアプローチの弱点に焦点をあて、「教育の神話作用」という新しい理論を提示する。

## 1 Introduction

In an era characterized by neoliberal economic freedom, personal liberty, and anomie, there are increasing calls for education systems to reconstruct the ties which bind together citizens in a society based on the democratic social contract. Primarily spurred by educational crises decried by the Japanese media, in recent years the educational establishment in Japan has become more interested in the potential for schools to foster civic responsibility. My own research in Japan represents an attempt to learn more of political socialization processes within Japanese schools. Previously I examined the Japanese civic education curriculum through my masters thesis which was a textual analysis of the Civic Education textbooks used in the ninth grade; however, in the study which informed this article I sought to learn more of the “practice” of democracy in Japanese schools through the student government activities called “*tokubetsu katsudou*” in Japanese schools as the focus of my doctoral dissertation. Thus, I focused my study on political socialization at the level of the classroom as political microcosm. The results of that study have spurred me to formulate a new theory explaining the interaction between educational objectives, the political socialization of democratic citizens, and the mediation of that process by the students and teachers themselves. In doing so, I will attempt to counter arguments from the school of critical theorists who dominated

the discourse on politics and education in the latter quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and neoinstitutionalists who describe processes of globalization in education (For Neoinstitutionalist treatments of education see Ramirez & Meyer, 2002; Baker & LeTendre, 2005). My theory is grounded in the political nature of participants negotiating meaning and transferring ideology through educational networks and borrows from post-structuralist and systems theory (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

## 2 Methodology: Caveats and Detours

My research focused on Classroom Climate and Political Efficacy, theoretical constructs which I borrowed from a well-established body of research on political socialization in schools, the most recent example of which is the IEA Study of Civic Education of 1998-2001 in which I participated as a research assistant (Blankenship, 1990; Ehman, 1980; Hahn, 1998; Long and Long, 1975; Ponder and Button, 1975; Siegel, 1977; Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975; Torney-Purta et al, 2001). I modeled my study on this research which is fundamentally based in the structural-functionalist tradition, but in the course of my field work and subsequent data analysis I discovered that post-structuralist models might prove more effective in interpreting the data. The interpretation naturally resulted in my need to outline a new theory of political socialization in schools which I have called “mythologies of

education.” Before explicating my theory I must say more of the methods which guided my field research.

With an introduction from my research advisor, Dr. Hidenori Fujita, I conducted my fieldwork over a six-month period in a middle school in Yokohama City. After administering my survey which revealed the homerooms with the highest and lowest classroom climate I focused my observations on those two homerooms which were Mr. Suzuki’s homeroom and Ms. Honda’s homeroom respectively (Names have been changed). By classroom climate I am referring to a measurement of the degree of freedom of expression in the classroom. Although my field work was limited to a single middle school in Yokohama, that is not to say that I have only examined the political culture created by teachers and students in a single isolated site. All teachers in that school, throughout the same district, and all over Japan are transferred to a different school every three years. Therefore, one cannot conclude that any teacher is the product of a single school culture. My intent was to examine teachers’ guidance for student government activities with the level of comparison focused on a comparison of teachers.

### 3 Findings: Mistaken First Impressions

I organized my findings from this data according to my two framing questions for the research as stated below:

1. What role does the teacher play in creating classroom climate?
2. What role do the students play in creating classroom climate?

The first question related to how much

authority the teacher maintained or vested in his/her students. With the second question, I then sought to explain how students responded to this transference of authority, or lack thereof, with their participation in activities. In short, I found that there were two general approaches to guidance of student government activities by teachers.

After administering my survey and observing classes I chose two seventh-grade homerooms for comparison with the intention of choosing classrooms at opposite ends of the spectrum based on openness of expression, i.e. classroom climate. The results from the classroom climate data contradicted my initial impression of teachers’ guidance. My initial impression was that Ms. Honda was a very dedicated teacher who promoted active homeroom activities. In contrast, I found Mr. Suzuki to be aloof and disinterested in homeroom activities. After further observation I discovered that Ms. Honda’s homeroom had the most difficulty managing homeroom discussions and promoting participation of all students, while Mr. Suzuki’s homeroom accomplished these tasks with virtually no guidance from the teacher or interference from students. Before discussing the behavior of students during activities, I must outline the educational objectives as they were stated for those activities.

#### 3.1 Educational Objectives

The language regarding goals for socialization in the school was rife with idealistic values which often related to democratic society as well as traditional Japanese values, creating, in effect, an amalgamation of values which adequately express the complexity of present-day Japanese culture and society. The school slogan for the middle school was “Autonomy, Conviviality, Cooperative Learning.” Immediately one is struck by the conflict between the first term with the second

two. In fact, these goals with their tone reflecting the most basic democratic values of freedom and equality make up the primary “mythologies” which I discovered in my study: The Mythology of Freedom and The Mythology of Equality. The teachers often expressed a desire for their students to act “autonomously” in student government activities. And in participating in group activities they referred to the importance of maintaining “respect” for classmates and preventing coercive practices.

I am using the term “mythology” as it was coined by Roland Barthes (1957) in stating that a mythology is a politically-loaded sign, from a Semiotics perspective, which is communicated by pedagogical artifice. Barthes uses the example of a sentence from a Latin grammar book with the word “leo” (Latin for “lion”) incorporated into the sentence. The example sentence is a political sign in that it represents an effort to teach Latin grammar, with all the cultural connotations therein, to the French lycee student. The choice of “lion” as the subject of the sentence is the aspect of pedagogical artifice which entralls or captures the attention of the subject/student. In a similar way the ubiquitous education “objectives” (*mokuhyo*) in a Japanese school represent the mythologies of socialization which the Japanese educational establishment seeks to impart to its subjects. These mythologies can represent both indigenous Japanese values or Western values imported from abroad during the turbulent periods of educational reform in Japan during the Early Meiji Period and the American Occupation (1945-1952). The pedagogical artifice used to transmit those values to students depends on the guidance style of teachers with important results for students’ attitudes.

It is important that I distinguish my approach from that of the functionalist and critical pedagogy schools which view the educational

subject as being void of agency. Critical pedagogues propagated the concept of a “hidden curriculum” which sought to create a sense of “false consciousness” in students, making them complicit in their own disempowerment (Apple, 1983; Giroux, 1988; McLaren & Lankshear, 1994). In contrast, I propose that students as well as other actors in educational settings do retain a critical consciousness which they use to either to demystify mythologies presented to them or to embrace mythologies and incorporate them into their own value system. There is, of course, variance in the degree to which subjects divorce the sign from the technique, i.e. artifice. However, I must emphasize that in contrast to structural-functionalist thinkers in both camps of critical pedagogy and neoinstitutionalism, I feel that agency and power lies with the subjects who encounter these mythologies and not with the perpetrators or the ideas themselves. Therein lies the fulcrum point of power which determines the outcomes for educational socialization. In the next section, I must say more about the mythologies I discovered in my examination of student government activities in a Japanese middle school.

### 3.2 Findings from Interviews and Observations of Homerooms

In both classes at the center of my study there was a discussion of the equal participation and autonomous action on the part of students. However, the way in which the teachers effected or conveyed these mythologies was quite different. In a homeroom like Ms. Honda’s where the teacher tries to become a counselor and model, the students typically exhibited some form of resistance. Ms. Honda’s approach to student guidance can be termed “pastoral education” in the sense that she had individual counseling sessions with students and placed herself in a superior position as a model

for student behavior in calling on the students to be active in student activities. Nevertheless, there was often little group cohesiveness, coercion by students, and actions of resistance directed toward the teacher. Ms. Honda's students verbalized their distrust of her by saying, "Teacher, you're terrible" when she came to class late. They showed a lack of respect for her as well by refusing to do activities-related work and making fun of her in class. In short, she had not gained the trust of the students thus undermining her attempts to serve as their model.

In Ms. Honda's class, students resisted participation by prolonging activities as I will relate from the following incident. At the end of a homeroom period, students come to attention and bow before bringing the activities to a close. On one occasion at the end of the homeroom period, Ms. Honda was waiting for the students to settle down before they bow without much success. Finally, Ms. Honda said, "Everyone is coming to attention..." to try to make them settle down. In response one of the boys yelled, "Bow!" but only one boy bowed. Apparently the teacher was not satisfied with the way the students bowed and she called on them to do it again. Once again the boy said, "Attention. Bow!" but this time only a few girls bowed and none of the boys bowed. This ritual is done in virtually every classroom in public schools in Japan. More strict teachers will make a class re-do this ritual repeatedly until it is done properly.

In contrast, there were homerooms like Mr. Suzuki's where the students were entrusted with partial autonomy tempered by a consciousness of collective responsibility. This type of education I have termed "Governmentalization" which refers to the fact that this guidance leads the students to be self-governing subjects in a self-governing collective. The students described their activities as "free-like" and to explicate this difference I

would like to present a very similar situation in Mr. Suzuki's homeroom. At the end of the homeroom period the students and the teacher all stood up and looked around to see if everyone really had come to attention and was ready to bow. On this particular day, they paused before they bowed because a student who I have renamed Junichi was putting on his jacket. Students were not supposed to put on their outer jackets until after bowing. His classmates admonished him for not following the rules and he begrudgingly put his jacket down on his desk allowing the class to bow in unison and end homeroom activities. The contrast with Ms. Honda's class was clear in that the class acted as a group in disciplining one of its members in order to proceed with Student Government Activities thus displaying qualities of self-government or "governmentality."

Mr. Suzuki's students trusted their teacher more and were thus more interested in activities. They stated that he allowed them to conduct homeroom activities without his interference. When I asked them what Mr. Suzuki did during homeroom activities, they told me, "He doesn't do anything. He is just watching" and qualified that "Sometimes when we cannot reach a consensus he will intervene."

Students in Ms. Honda's class told me in interviews that they could not find consensus in group discussions and that was the norm for their homeroom. They felt little group cohesion because their class was divided into "those who did the activities and those who did not." In contrast, in Mr. Suzuki's class the students made comments which indicated strong feelings of political empowerment. The following is an excerpt from my focus group interview with Mr. Suzuki's students.

Question: By taking part in homeroom activities, do you think you can change school rules?

Student #1: I think we could if we wanted to.

Student #2: I guess we could do it if we cooperated...

The students evidently felt that through cooperation facilitated by the group cohesiveness of this self-governing homeroom, they could be efficacious in shaping the political spaces within their school. Clearly, the students have embraced some of the “Educational Objectives” of the school such as “cooperative learning” and “conviviality.” The homeroom representative in Mr. Suzuki’s class expressed these feelings of efficacy when I asked him if he thought they could change school rules.

“Yes, we can do it. All we have to do is bring it to the student council. We brought the idea to bring beverages in plastic bottles to school to the student assembly and got permission to bring plastic bottles to school.”

In Mr. Suzuki’s class the students, both male and female, spoke proudly of their cooperation during the ball sports festival and other homeroom-based school activities. In contrast, there was a dynamic in Ms. Honda’s class which was clearly a result of gender consciousness on the part of students. Based on my observations of Student Government Activities there was a tendency for girls to distance themselves from political spaces as a result of the coercive influences of their male classmates. One girl from Ms. Honda’s class explained this phenomenon:

The boys do not let the girls speak out in class. If the girls try to say something they say, “Your voice is too small! Speak in a louder voice!” Then if we speak in a louder voice they say, “You are speaking too loud!”

This statement reveals that it was often students who interfered with their classmates’

free participation in activities with negative consequences for Classroom Climate. Teachers with a similar approach to Mr. Suzuki would intervene in such cases during homeroom activities to admonish students who did not respect the rights of their classmates. For the most part they engendered their students with a strong sense of autonomy, nevertheless tempered with respect for school rules and individual rights. In short, they gained credence in the Mythology of Autonomy and made it the basis for their participation in student government activities.

#### 4 Conclusions

In my study I compared my statistical findings with similar studies on political socialization in other countries. However, I feel that this approach was limited in the degree to which it could explain the underlying pedagogical processes involved in teacher’s mentoring of student government activities. Therefore, in approaching my study within a post-structuralist theoretical framework I have examined my data based on theories articulated by post-structuralist thinkers, namely Foucault and Barthes. I was guided by my understanding of the concept of “governmentality” as it was defined by Foucault and developed by other scholars (Dean, 1999; Foucault, 1978/1991; Hunter, 1996; Rose, 1989). I feel that the concept of “mythologies” coined by Roland Barthes can be used to explain how students are engendered with governmentality (Barthes, 1972). My conceptualization of the forces at work was framed by the work of Benedict Anderson (1983) on “Imagined Communities” in that homerooms serve as the first imagined collectivities which children and adolescents experience outside the home. Within this framework I attempted to explain the contradictions present in an effort to produce the autonomous citizens of a modern democracy by

way of compulsory political education activities groups.

There appeared to be two strands within the Japanese middle school curriculum aimed toward socialization. The first is pastoral education which is characterized by a view of the classroom as a type of family led by a teacher who fulfills the role of parent or counselor and fits with recent Japanese educational trends referred to as “Education of the Heart.” I found that pre-adolescent students of from 12 to 13-years-old in a homeroom like Ms. Honda’s which fit this model were suspicious and distrustful of such pastoral efforts by teachers resulting in groups which I have termed “demystified congregations” in the sense that they have seen through the pastoral myths presented to them.

In contrast, in some homerooms, such as Mr. Suzuki’s homeroom, the teacher fostered a sense of autonomy in students which was, in effect, partial autonomy or “The Mythology of Autonomy.” These groups were “self-governing collectives” in that they were constructed by imposing collective responsibility and making the students feel that these arbitrarily constructed groups of students, i.e. imagined populations or collectives, were legitimate. The teacher allows the students to lead the groups and carry out discussions while skillfully guiding the decisions so as not to conflict with school rules and refereeing the space to prevent coercion between students which in its extreme form can be termed bullying, a “school

problem” covered ad nauseum in the Japanese media.

In short, these self-governing collectives are characterized by Foucault’s term “governmentality” in that students have a mentality conducive toward governing themselves. Governmentality and Pastoral Education are the opposing forces which represent the political and moral strands in educational socialization. The concept of Governmentality is critical in the attempt to construct individuals who are conscious of the political obligations which legitimize the liberal democratic contract. This is no easy task as the teacher faces the challenge of using pedagogical artifice to imbue students with a sense that freedom and equality are viable in democratic society. This task is only accomplished through the teacher’s efforts to communicate the “mythologies” of freedom and equality to students. Students exert their own agency in embracing or resisting these values and creating their own political communities in the school as political microcosm. In summary, I have presented Table 1 to outline the basic concepts, drawn from theory, which explain these pedagogical processes.

It is my hope that “mythologies of education” may present a new explanation of the pedagogies which are involved in the socialization of students in compulsory education with special attention toward political socialization as the process by

Table 1. “Mythologies of Education”: Roles, Values, and Attitudes

	<b>Pastoral Education</b>	<b>Governmentality</b>
<b>Classroom Climate</b>	Teacher as moral model	Semi-Autonomy
<b>Values</b>	Pastoral Myths	Governing Mythologies
<b>Group Formation (i.e., imagining population)</b>	De-mystified Congregations	Self-Governing Collectives
<b>Resulting Attitudes</b>	Anomie and Division	Governmentality for Self-Government

which children become citizens of a democracy. I have presented the methodology and findings of this study to explain how I arrived at this explanation, and I hope to place the elaboration of this theory at the center of my future studies of Japanese schooling and political socialization.

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