日本青年の公共及び政治活動への従事に関する一考察
Civic and Political Engagement in Japanese Youth

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ABSTRACT

　1990年代のバブル経済崩壊により，日本は中流社会から格差社会へと移行し，さらに社会グループの急増により，多文化社会に突入した。この傾向は社会公正の論争を牽引しているが，責任ある市民の期待を担う青年の多数は公共問題に無関心で，公共，政治活動に従事していない。2015年6月，政府は政策を一新しようと，被選挙権年齢を20歳から18歳に引き下げた。しかし未だ単一文化同一性は中央集権政府に統制され，青年は社会から疎外され，引きこもるか社会的政治的暴力に走りがちである。社会の承認，恩恵のない社会参加不可能な状況下で，個人，社会の統合はあり得ない。本研究はまず単一文化同一性，社会格差の下で，青年が直面する問題を捉える。次に心理社会学的立場から，統合の壁となる個人と社会の関係を分析する。最後に公正に影響を及ぼす文化的意味，道徳的価値を分析する。開放的，包含的社会を重視した市民社会を構築するのに，この方法は有意義であろう。

　Japan's burst bubble economy in 1990's caused its 'Middle Class' society to a 'society of disparity'. Furthermore, a drastic rise in the number of social groups reveals that Japan is faced with a multicultural society. This trend invokes a critical issue concerning equity in the society. Japanese youth are expected to be responsible future citizens, however, many of them are disinterested in civic issues and are uncommitted to civic and political participation. In June 2015, the Japanese government lowered the age of voting rights from 20 to 18 to include more fresh ideas of young people. However, mono-culture identity controlled by the centralized government and its education system in postwar Japan still hinders Japanese youth to develop critical thinking and creativity. As a result they tend to be alienated from the society and tend to be cocooned or socially, politically violence. Japanese youth are marked as underrepresented, disadvantaged group and do not have access to full participation in society due to social stratification. Under the circumstance, there

is no personal or social integration. This paper first identifies the significance of the problems that Japanese youth are faced with, in relation to mono-culture identity. Secondly, it examines the relationship between these two obstacles for personal and social integration from a psycho-sociological perspective. Thirdly, it analyzes the meaning of culture and moral values that may affect equity. Finally, it attempts to find ways to help Japanese youth increase their civic and political engagement. This approach within a specific culture would help construct a civil society that stresses openness and inclusion of everyone.

1. Problem Statement

Japan's burst bubble economy in 1990 has caused its 'Middle Class' to become 'a society of disparity', so called '*Kakusa shakai*' (Sugimoto, 2014). Furthermore, Japan is no longer a homogeneous society. Because there is a drastic rise in the number of social groups mainly from Asian countries and a surge of resident foreign workers, in addition to the historical social minorities such as *Burakumin* (outcasts), *Ainu*, *Zainichi* (resident) Koreans and Chinese. As a result, Japan is facing a future multicultural society (Sugimoto, 2014). In the meantime, today the birth rate is sharply decreasing in Japan (1.3%). This childless society creates a problem of societal aging, because there are not enough young people to take care of the increasing aged population in Japan financially and emotionally. These trends of disparity, diversity, and societal aging invoke critical issues concerning equity in a society associated with social welfare and human rights. Japanese youth are expected to be responsible future citizens. However, many of them do not have consciousness of these critical issues and their social responsibilities as future citizens. Consequently, they tend to be disinterested in civic and political issues and are uncommitted to civic and political engagement.

In June 2016, the Japanese government lowered the age of voting rights from 20 to 18 in order to include more needs and interest of Japanese youth into the government policies and practices and to reach the global level in the percentage of voting age. 90% or about 190 countries in the world have currently adopted 18 years- old as the voting age.

As a result, 2.4 million Japanese youth who are 18 and 19 years-old were added to the voting population in 2016 (Asahi Newspaper, 2017). It is clear that this government measure is a response to changes in Japan's social structure. However, in the 2016 election for the House of Councilors (upper house), the total participation was 54.7%, but for 18 years-old, 51.28%, and 19 years-old, 42.30%. In the 2014 election of the House of Representatives (lower house), there was a generation gap between the 20's (32.6%) and the older generations such as 30's (42.1%) and 40's (50.0%) (Saiki, 2015). The results show that young voters of 20's are disinterested in political engagement. Recent BBC news (2018) indicates, "Older people are more likely to vote than young people – something that has always been the case in Britain and other countries" (p.3). This trend implies that voices of the older people seem to be greater than the youth, so-called 'silver democracy'. In order to tackle this trend, a new word, 'youthquake' was created and added to the Oxford English Dictionary. That means a political awakening among millennial voters – the 'word of the year' signaling the youth mobilization (BBC News, 2018). Furthermore, it mentioned that in the general election of June 2017, British youth voters supported Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, who attracted British young voters by meeting their needs and interest; as a result, they won great support in the election. However, such youth mobilization by British politicians and news media has not yet emerged in Japan.

Due to Japan's continued recession, the relative poverty rate in Japan shown in the OECD data

(2011a) was 15.7%. In fact, Japanese youth tend to be alienated from the society such as Freeter (Temporary worker without benefits), NEETO (Not in Education, Employment, or Training Opportunities) and/or to be cocooned, so called,'*hikikomori*' (anti-social behavior or social withdrawal), or socially, politically violent as seen in '*gakkyuu houkai*' (the classroom breakdown) and crimes in the society. These problems derive from a general social defect rather than personal defect of Japanese youth. Under these circumstances, there is no personal or social integration.

2. The Purpose of the Paper

This paper first identifies and clarifies the problems that Japanese youth are facing, which are associated with mono-culture identity formation and social stratification. Secondly, it examines the relationship between these obstacles to personal and social integration from a psycho-sociological perspective, and further analyzes the emerging struggle between globalization and nationalism in relations to identity and citizenship. Thirdly, it examines moral and civic values associated with dynamics of culture that may affect political, economic, and social order from a philosophical perspective. Finally, it will attempt to find ways to help Japanese youth increase their civic and political engagement. This approach within a specific culture could help construct a civil society that stresses openness and the inclusion of everyone.

3. The Clarification of the Problems of Japanese Youth

Today a drastic social change of increased disparity, diversity, and societal aging in Japan has created the issue of equity, especially in relations with social justice and human rights. There is a need for taking moral and social responsibilities to build a civil society where people are not left out and their needs are taken care of. Thus, the civic and political disengagement of Japanese youth who are future citizens is becoming a critical issue. The key question is why Japanese youth are disinterested in civic and political engagement. Furthermore, what are their status and roles in society and how should they respond to the current social and political situations and unknown, unpredictable future?

3.1 Formation of Mono-culture Identity

The problem of disinterest and disengagement of Japanese youth lies in the mono-culture identity controlled by the centralized government and its education system in postwar Japan. The new democratic education system was based on that of the United States and adopted in Japan. It stressed Western cultural values, but without losing centralized government control. Today the goal of Japanese education is to develop a whole person by creating a balance among body, mind, and morality (spirit). Before 1945, the moral concept derived from Shintoism that stressed the divinity of the emperor and loyalty to him as the sovereign of the state. However, Japan significantly shifted from a military state to a democratic country after 1945. Under the new constitution and new Basic Law of Education, the Japanese moral concepts changed to become more democratic. Yet, today the individualism, the essence of Western values is still overlooked in Japan due to the emphasis on group conformity under central authority. Befu (1997) criticizes the weakness of the Japanese mentality, focusing on three points: emphasis on mere hierarchical human relations that stressed obedience, tendency of placing the interest of the nation-state above the interest of the individual, and lack of knowledge of freedom and respect for the individual as opposed to Western values. Today Japanese students are like '*bonsai*' (stunted trees), in other words, they do not act freely but they tend to follow the authoritarian teacher by memorization of the facts and conveying of knowledge. There is little

room for them to develop communication skills, a global perspective, or creativity. In such a rigid education system, it is hard for Japanese youth to discover and develop themselves into mature individuals.

3.2 Social Stratification

Gifford, C., A. Mycock, J. and Murakami (2014) describe youth population as 'citizens of becoming' in his research on British and Japanese youth. They are marked as an underrepresented, disadvantage group who do not have access to full participation in society due to social stratification. There is a huge gap between 'citizens of being' and 'citizens of becoming'. In fact, young people have a disadvantage of being part of the society due to a lack of financial status and a lack of life experience. Especially Japanese youth financially and emotionally tend to depend upon their parents until getting married or even after that. Hart (2009) points out that "young people are excluded from government conceptions of citizenship, while at the same time being demonized for their behavior and 'failure' to act as responsible citizens" (p.645). Harts sees these phenomena as a negative effect on young people's citizenship mediations. Gifford et.al. (2014) support her points that "Issues of social disadvantage and inequity experienced by young people in Japan and the UK are fundamentally problems of citizenship" (p.89). They further state that "Citizenship is by definition relational and the narrowing of the citizen community has significant implications for those who are included" (p.89). This issue of power of the older generation is critical in such a hierarchical society like Japan. Because of that, Japanese youth have limitations and failure as their 'citizens of becoming' and will face a crisis as 'citizens of being' as they become part of a society of disparity and the aged population. Furthermore, they can no longer keep their mono-culture identity in an emerging multicultural society.

4. The Obstacles to Personal and Social Integration

Mono-culture identity and social stratification may hinder personal and social integration of Japanese youth. It is important to create a balance among mind, body, and spirit (moral) in order to become a whole person. However, Japan's education system, especially at the high school level, overstresses the cognitive component in a conventional way such as memorization of facts and conveying knowledge, while it tends to overlook the affective component including feelings, care, and responsibilities. Today due to the advancement of technology, scientific knowledge is becoming more important than arts and humanities. Consequently, there is a tendency of declining moral education in the society.

4.1 Collective Identity and the State

Japanese mono-culture identity was a collective identity such as loyalty to the company and the government during 1960's through 1970's when the strong central government set forth its political and economic measures and actions. Moral foundations were utilized for the maintenance of social order and it was a great national pride among Japanese people who followed the traditional moral values as their anchor. Thus, one could say that Japanese collective identity was aligned with the purpose of the state until a surge of economic globalization occurred in 1980's. However, from the individual's perspective, people were oppressed by the authority; their voices were not fully heard. Consequently, the strict social order in Japan started declining and the amount of social violence and crimes increased since 1960's. This became even worse after the economic bubble burst in Japan in 1990's. Kingston (2013) identifies this phenomenon 'the lost decade' of Japan, stating that "People came to understand that the bureaucrats who guided the economic miracle

made a series of colossal mistakes leading to the Lost Decade and in dealing with its consequences" (p.23). Japanese people started questioning if their collective identity is still working well in a rapidly changing diverse world. Furthermore, they wondered what it means to be Japanese. The question became how the Japanese should fill the gap between the individual possessing collective identity and the global society requiring the integration of Western values that stresses individualism, equality, and freedom requiring for democracy.

4.2 The Struggles between Globalization and Nationalism

The traditional concept of citizenship is based on affiliation with the state you belong to, or nationality. However, due to the rise of economic globalization, Falk (2000) argues, "The erosion of state autonomy and the emergence of areas of decision and power beyond the control of the state have been weakening traditional bonds of identity between individuals and the state" (abstract). This implies that the notion of citizenship as 'nationality' is declined and that a new type of citizenship with multiple identities, values, and loyalties is emerging. It also implies that the notion of nationalism keeps changing resulting in confusion and internal power struggles as globalization permeates the world politically, economically, and even culturally.

5. Moral Values and the Meaning of Culture

There is no doubt that mono-culture identity as collective identity formed by the centralized government has lessened social stratification and lifted Japanese nationalism. However, today a surge of nationalism by the Abe right-wing administration is continuously struggling with western-style economic globalization and the human rights of Japanese citizens. There is a struggle between the individual and the state and between the state and the world which is beyond the government's

control. Consequently, not only Japanese youth but also the entire Japanese people are losing their future direction. One must conceptualize Japanese traditional moral values and the meaning of culture associated with the problem of civic and political disengagement in Japanese youth and globalization.

Miyanaga (2011) argues that "Japanese collective identity is blocked, so called 'iconic bloc', in a global society in which the concept of democracy, highly abstract and universal, should be expressed in concrete social organization consisting of individuals who achieve self-realization through one another" (p.163). She conceptualizes that an iconic action uses as a Japanese style solution to an 'iconic bloc', by explaining that the global or cosmic should be harmonized with the self. It is interesting to recognize how the Japanese utilize the harmonious relationship between the self and the nature in Shintoism as a cosmic-scale philosophical solution to an iconic bloc. Can this strategy be used as a solution to other conflicts between the self and local community, and the state as well?

5.1 Value Clarification and Moral Reasoning

Japanese traditional moral values such as cooperation, harmony, and diligence have been cultivated and crystalized in the political, economic, and socio-cultural transformation throughout Japan's history. For that reason, one could recognize that the Japan's education system has had a positive effect on today's prosperity in Japan.

However, today the decline of morals in society causes to a lack of care for others and a lack of a sense of community. Japanese youth tend to cocoon, relying on only social media to connect with their friends. They do not develop moral and social responsibilities to take care of people who need help in society. Furthermore, they do not have consciousness of what is happening in Japan and the world. Traditional moral values are fading away as individuality or isolation is accelerating among Japanese youth. What

it means to be Japanese is hard to identify, because self-identity is becoming multiple as Japanese youth accept diverse cultural values and add to their own. In that sense, one could recognize that Japanese culture is changing according to globalization and that Miyanaga's 'iconic action' as a solution to an 'iconic bloc' may not work in the 21st century.

In order to overcome this problem, Japanese youth should develop critical thinking or metacognitive skills such as value clarification and moral reasoning while forming their self-identity. Overseas experience through study abroad may help broaden their perspective and acceptance of various cultural values. Japanese youth may suffer from a gap between their identity as they feel it and their identity as seen by others. However, this process of self-identity formation within a global context is significant for them. They need to find ways of becoming responsible global citizens. Thus, internationalization of Japanese youth is critical to both their personal and social integration.

5.2 Moral and Social Responsibilities and the Meaning of Culture

A new educational agenda in a global society should be to prepare Japanese youth as responsible global citizens who strive to achieve both self and social integration. Today there is a need for citizenship education to enhance young people's moral and social responsibility in society as future citizens. The premise lies in the concept of citizenship determined by Marshall (1992) who classifies citizenship into three parts: Civic, political, and social dimensions. His definition of citizenship goes beyond the concept of citizenship as 'membership in the state'. Today the social dimension of citizenship, which includes various rights of living as civilized citizens based on the standard of social welfare and safety, is the most important part. Furthermore, civil society is understood as autonomous and free public space where everyone has moral and social responsibilities.

The British government under the Blair Laborer Administration formally added citizenship education to the British national curriculum in 2000. The Advisory Group for Citizenship outlines citizenship education, emphasizing the concept of 'community'. Crick, the leader of the Advisory Group, attempts to mobilize British citizens toward the unity of the state through direct, active participation in local communities. British citizenship education, in the premise of its parliamentary democracy, consists of three pillars: moral and social responsibilities, participation in local community, and political literacy. British citizenship education is possible on the premise such that education must foster future citizens who comprehend the differences between law and justice, and that citizens must be equipped with political skills to change the existing laws in a peaceful, responsible fashion. The idea can apply to Japan's case.

6. Civic and Political Engagement in Japanese Youth

An emphasis of community in civic education implies the importance of the individuals who have both human rights and moral and social responsibility for those who need help in the community as well as society. Individual citizens must stand out beyond the nation in spite of merely acting as members of the nation and being obedient to it. Furthermore, a new type of citizenship should have multiple identities and cultural values.

6.1 The Theory of 'Civil Sphere' and Civil Society holding its Values and System

It is interesting to note that Kaneko (2014) explains the differences between Habermas and Alexander in their theories of 'Civil Sphere'. Habermas originally "defined it from a macro perspective as the sphere of public opinion making" (p.373). He attempts to link citizen's decision-making with macro-level political processes. While Alexander "defined basic communication in the civil sphere as

"performance" which is a particular social process whereby actors seek recognition from their audiences in the form of emotional sympathy for comprehending a social situation together"(p.373). Kaneko points out a lack of communication in the civil sphere in the argument of Habermas and supports Alexander who stresses the relationship between the public sphere and the integration of democratic society through communication. Kaneko affirms Alexander's point that it is critical to form solidarity while raising a sense of ownership and social consciousness.

Isin and Turner (2007) witness "the emergence of citizenship as a vital political, social and cultural issue of our age" (p.16) because of a large number of scholars' work, investigating the meaning of citizenship in its perspective and scope. Furthermore, they determine that the importance of citizenship is both as a legal institution and lived experience. In that sense, cultural experience of citizenship is playing an important role in a new type of citizenship. Thus, civic education should focus on the relationship between the individuals and civil society in its formation and participation as a lived experience.

6.2 A Model of Multicultural and Co-Living Education

Today the key question of how to act as a responsible citizen in a global society is how to identify yourself and how to coexist with others from different cultures. We must find ways to form multiple identities at global, state, and local levels. In order to lead and encourage Japanese youth to be more engaged in civic and political participation, Nakamura (2000) provides the structure of Multicultural Co-Living Education. This stresses global perspective, communication ability, and culturally rich sense and open-mindedness. He determines mutual understanding and respect for human rights as the core of multicultural and co-living education. It is interesting to note that Nakamura points out the importance of the cultural dimension rather than critical thinking. His education model consists of three qualities: "1) the quality of pursuing co-existence and co-living with various nations and ethnic groups, 2) the quality of striving to maintain peace and establish human rights and 3) the quality of thinking from a global, and humanistic point of view along with a consciousness of mutual responsibilities and of taking positive actions" (p.110). Furthermore, Nakamura identifies three components in his model: 1) geographical; 2) historical; and 3) civic field. Geographically, he divides the landscape into three areas: Japan, Asia, and world, addressing the issues associated with ethnicity and ethnic identity, independence, co-existence, co-living, respect for human rights, prejudice, and discrimination domestically and throughout Asia and the world. Furthermore, he examines these issues within a historical context in relations to Japan's modernization and war experience with Asian nations and the United States. Finally, he stresses the need for a global and humanistic approach to create a solution to these issues as stated above. This model requires a communitarian approach that integrates personal and social integration, because a solution to these issues requires cooperation, collaboration, empathy, caring for others, and harmony. This is seen in the volunteer activities by NGOs and NPOs during the triple natural disasters occurred in Japan in 2011. Japanese traditional cultural values were highly recognized as focused on the public good. This model also requires power of communities and cosmopolitan government beyond national borders.

Minoura (1997) supports this model, stressing the importance of creating globally idealistic values that may be identified as the 'internationalization of our mind'. She further emphasizes that education should aim at creating a new consciousness and ethics in the global age. Her idea of global citizens also aligns with British citizenship education

stressing 'community'. The concept of 'think globally, and act locally' is legitimated in these education models.

7. Summary

A number of researchers have conceptualized citizenship in the past decades, based on Marshall's three rights: civic, political, and social rights. Today social rights are most needed for equity and human rights. Today Japan is facing three critical issues: disparity, diversity, and societal aging. Japanese youth who are future citizens must tackle these issues. Thus, channeling Japanese youth into civic and political engagement is critical. For youth mobilization in Japan, multicultural co-living education can be utilized at school. What was missing in the past research on civic education was an inner dimension. A number of researchers have only focused on geographical (space), historical (time), and issues to be addressed, but many of them have overlooked the inner dimension (humanistic point of view). Instead, A Western approach such as critical thinking or metacognitive skills have been used for problem solving, but moral and social responsibilities were overlooked. Consequently declining morality and increasing social crimes at school and in society have become new social problems. Japanese youth lost directions to the unknown, unpredictable future and chose to be drawn into an internal world against society and their moral and social responsibilities. This trend is not a personal defect, but a social defect.

Thus, as the British Government integrated civic education into the school curriculum, Japanese education must adopt a new approach to civic education, including the concept of community and the structure of multicultural co-living education. Without losing the essence of Japanese traditional moral values, a new type of Japanese civic education would be a powerful tool for channeling

Japanese youth to be engaged in civic and political participation.

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