

Youth Policy in the Hands of Whom?: A Comparative Study of Japanese Youth Policy in the Eyes of Europe

Tatsuhei Morozumi*

This study attempts to clarify Japanese youth participation policies' characteristics by analyzing four national youth policy documents in the 2000s. Compared with European youth policy, the article will investigate the challenges Japanese youth policy faces.

Though recent Japanese national youth policy sees young people as active agents for society, Japan's youth participation policies mostly employ educational and volunteering approaches. Today's youth policy has reconsidered the inclination to promote voting behavior; however, the documents seldom cover new forms of the youth-led political movement and structural changes in youth policy governance. The reflection of young people's voices has recurrently been considered important over the decades. Yet Japanese youth participation policies only listen to youth via the Internet and roundtables. On the other hand, the Council of Europe's co-management system enables young people to influence the European youth policy decision-making process. Failing to conduct structural changes may lead to youth policy without young people.

Keywords: Youth Policy; Youth Participation; Youth Work; Youth Education; Europe; Japan

1. Background: Youth Participation in the History of Japanese Youth Education and Youth Work

According to Haruhiko Tanaka, Japan's youth movement has its origins in local-bond based youth organizations (*Wakamonogumi* or *Wakashugumi*) and children's organizations (*Kodomogumi* and *Kodomorenchu*) in village communities, dating back to the Edo period (Tanaka, 2015, p. 63). In the subsequent modernization of Japanese society, the former became *Seinendan* through *Seinenkai*. The latter became *Shonendan* under the influence of the Boy Scout movement from England. Apart from this, Western youth movements such as the

* Research Center for Youth Education at the National Institution for Youth Education
e-mail: ta.morozumi@niye.go.jp

YMCA and the YWCA were also imported into Japan. During World War II, these genuine Japanese youth movements were tragically abused for military purposes.

In the 1970s, youth participation (*seishonen no shakai sanku*)¹ became a policy issue in the history of post-war youth education and youth work². In a 1972 report by the Council on Youth Issues entitled *Fundamental Ideas on Governmental Policy for Youth*, “the promotion of youth ‘participation’ in all social situations”(translated by the author) was stated and regarded as the essence of youth education and youth policy, stressed by Haruo Matsubara (Matsubara, 1978, pp. 211–215). Later, the focus on youth participation remained in the 1979 Council on Youth Issues report, *Youth and Participation*. In the report, young people’s involvement was defined as “the process of voluntary choice by young people through carrying out their roles willingly, coming to recognize the group and society as their own. Furthermore, it is a process of creating a new society of young people’s own accord”(translated by the author).

The statement reflected many aspects of societal changes such as rapid urbanization, industrialization, and the intensifying competition for university entrance examinations. The student movements breaking out in Europe and the United States also spread to Japan during this time. Aoyama discusses youth participation measures which simultaneously held some expectations for young people. Yet there was also a traditional view of young people as objects of supervision and education (Aoyama, 2018, p. 39).

In the late 1980s, “*ibasho* (a place or community where one feels at home)”³ began to appear in the field of youth education and youth work, though it was not until the 1990s that the term came into full use in policy documents (Tanaka, 2002, p. 15). After that, the relationship between “*ibasho*” and youth participation came under scrutiny. Araya examined the relationship between the two by dividing them into two categories: “participation in *ibasho*” and “participation from *ibasho*” (Araya, 2004, pp. 9–10). The former refers to “the participation of children and young people in the decision-making and implementation process of the foundation and operation of *ibasho*.” The latter refers to “participation in society.” Until that point, *ibasho* tended to be considered a shelter for children and youth to retreat from actual society. Araya emphasizes the need for a paradigm shift from this view to seeing *ibasho* as a platform from which participation in society could take place. He considers that this view was highly influenced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in Japan in 1994, emphasizing “participation as the child’s right.”

In 2012 edited book, *Ibasho for Young People and Participation: Youth Work to Build a New Society*, Tanaka referred to the debate on voting rates in national elections, lowering the voting age and the age of majority to 18⁴, stating that “setting 18 years of age as adulthood could be one way to promote the participation of young people in various political, social, and cultural fields. We can expect that young people’s political participation may revitalize Japanese society (p.12)” (translated by the author). In 2015, the legal voting age was revised following the Public Office Election Law amendment, making the right to vote from age eighteen a reality. That same year, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereafter MEXT) partially lifted the previous restrictions on political activities for high school students, albeit only off-campus. MEXT and MIC⁵ published a sub-textbook for political education, hoping to raise youth political participation (MIC & MEXT, 2015).

However, since 2015, even when voting at eighteen years old came into effect, the voter turnout among the younger generation has been sluggish, with the 2019 Lower House elec-

tion recording the second-lowest turnout in the post-war era at 48.8%, while turnout among voters in their teens and twenties remained at 32.28% and 30.96% respectively. In addition to voter turnout, Japan's young people have a low sense of political effectiveness and willingness to take part in society. According to an international survey conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2014, only 44 percent of young Japanese answered yes or somewhat to the question "I want to take part in society to create a better society." Meanwhile, the same question was answered positively by 76.2% of young Germans, 64.3% of young Americans, and 52.9% of young Swedes (Cabinet Office, 2014).

What causes Japanese youth's low level of political participation? In this paper, the author casts doubt on whether Japan's youth policy has sufficiently implemented youth participation policy. What kind of measures have they taken over the decades? What are the challenges and actions they should take to promote Japanese youth participation? This article analyzes the recent youth participation policies at a national level in Japan and in European youth policies.

2. "European Standards" of Youth Policies for Youth Participation

As mentioned above, the debate on youth participation in Japan has evolved in various ways. However, it cannot be said that there is a clear consensus on the concept of youth participation in youth education and youth work in Japan compared to European youth policy. This is because, compared to Japan, youth policies have a long history of development in Europe, accumulating discussions and youth policies regarding youth participation. Considering that this paper is one of the few articles on *ibasho* and youth participation to be published in an international journal, it makes sense to employ the "European standard" of youth policy in regard to youth participation as a scope to contextualize Japan's youth policies to international trends.

So, what is the "European standard" of youth policy in terms of youth participation? The formation of youth policy at the European level began in the 1970s, when all sorts of social structural changes, including demographic changes, led to the increasing social exclusion of young people (Miyamoto, 2005, p.74). Against this background, the Council of Europe formed an international youth policy review mechanism in 1997, which later came to play a significant role in consolidating the 'European standards' of youth policy at the European level (Denstad et al., 2009, p. 27) In 2001, the European Union produced the White Paper on Young People (European Commission, 2001), which is regarded as the foundation for today's pan-European youth policy. This White Paper was referred to in the Japanese context when its first national law on youth policy, the Act on the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People, was established in 2009.

To examine Pan-European level consensus on youth participation in youth policy, one starting point is the "Glossary on youth"⁶ prepared by the European Knowledge Center for Youth Policy, a partnership project between the Council of Europe and the European Union. The section on "Youth Participation" in the Glossary quotes the following text from the Council of Europe's Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life.

“participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.” (Council of Europe, 2003, p. 11).

The Glossary distinguishes between two types of participation: (1) direct participation and (2) indirect participation. Furthermore, the reference on which the Glossary is based, “What does participation mean?”, which points out the challenges of youth participation policy in Europe today, offers a glimpse of the youth participation situation of which European youth policy is aware (Pleyers & Karbach, 2014). To summarize the analytical paper, in Europe, the traditional space of youth participation has been presupposed to be “public life,” that is, participation in politics, with an emphasis on voting and candidacy. According to the analytical paper, however, the following characteristics can be seen in participation policies for young people in Europe in recent years.

- Diversification of political and civic participation channels other than exercising suffrage (e.g., representative democratic youth councils, lowering the age of voting, participatory and deliberative democratic counter-democracy movements, etc.)
- To overcome the divide between public space and everyday life, positioning learning through experience, practice, and participation in society close to everyday life, including critical consumption behavior, as a process of empowerment.
- Investing resources to enable participation in the decision-making process using online and electronic technologies. (Pleyers & Karbach, 2014, p. 3)

In summary, in European youth policy, based on the definition of the 2003 European Charter, youth participation means the right, means, space, opportunity, and support in the hands of young people, both individually and collectively, to participate in and influence decision-making, either directly or indirectly, and to build society. This paper sets this account of youth participation as a framework for the analysis of Japanese youth policy.

3. National Youth Policies in 2000s Japan

The next questions are, what are national youth policies in Japan? And in the first place, what kind of public measures does national youth policy entail? The Council of Europe, an international organization with a long history of youth policy, states in its youth policy manual that “[a] national youth policy is a government’s commitment and practice towards ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for the young population of a country” (Denstad et al., 2009, p. 13). According to the manual, the policy targets may be limited or broad, and the policy may be weak or strong in its implementation. While youth policies are not required to be enacted as law, as circumstances vary from country to country, several conditions need to be met for youth policies to be more robust and effective. For instance, the eight standards for youth policy developed by the European Youth Forum (Burrowes et al., 2017) are good examples that specify the desirable youth policy conditions.

What, then, is youth policy in the Japanese context? In Japan, it is sometimes called

”*seishonen gyosei*,” meaning child and youth administration, but more recently it has been referred to as ”*wakamono seisaku*,” which literally means youth policy. The Youth Policy Lab in Germany, which aims to build an evidence base for global youth policy, is conducting international research on youth policy worldwide. “The State of Youth Policy in 2014,” their research project, consists of a comprehensive country-by-country survey on the state of youth policy in 198 countries around the world (Youth Policy Labs, 2014a). According to the study, as of 2013, 122 (62%) of the 198 countries around the globe had a national youth policy, and 37 (19%) countries (19%) had an existing youth policy under revision (or their first youth policy was under development). The rest of the 31 states (16%) are regarded as countries with no national youth policy.

According to the study, Japan is in the group of countries where a youth policy “exists,” with references to the National Youth Development Policy (2008) and the Visions for Children and Young People (2010) as evidential documents. (Youth Policy Labs, 2014b). Though the definition of national youth policies in Japan should also come under scrutiny, this paper will focus on the following four Japanese-language youth policy documents from the 2000s on. (Table 1)

Table 1: Analyzed Youth Policy Documents

No.	Year	Name in Japanese	English Name	Issued by	Abbreviation
1	2003	青少年育成施策大綱	National Youth Development Policy	Headquarters for Youth Development	2003 NYDP
2	2008	青少年育成施策大綱	National Youth Development Policy	Headquarters for Youth Development	2008 NYDP
3	2010	子ども・若者ビジョン	Visions for Children and Young People	Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People	2010 Vision
4	2016	子供・若者育成支援推進大綱	Policy for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People ⁷	Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People	2016 Policy

In the 2000s, during the second Koizumi Cabinet of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) coalition government, the National Youth Development Policy (2003) was issued by the Headquarters for Youth Development and revised in 2008 under the Aso administration. Subsequently, under the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Vision for Children and Young People was issued by the Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (2010). It was formulated based on the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People, which was enacted in 2009. As background information, it should be noted that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is thought to be politically liberal, while the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is seen as conservative.

In 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake took place; in 2012, the third Noda Cabinet (DPJ) was dissolved, and the second Abe administration was appointed. Based on a five-year review of the national youth policy and considering the discussions at the Inspection and Evaluation Committee which was established as an external Council of Experts in 2009, the new Policy for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People (2016) was issued in February 2016 by the successor Headquarters.

All these youth policies, issued by the Headquarters consisting of the Prime Minister as Chief as well as all ministers, implement youth participation policies. The following section discusses the four youth policies that have been formulated by the Japanese government since the 2000s to examine their nature and qualitative changes. The concept of “youth participation” here is based on the European youth participation policies described in the previous section. The Act on the Promotion of Support for the Development of Children and Young People is not included in the analysis because this law’s nature differs from that of the four national youth policy documents.

4. Methodology and Limitation

This paper adopts a thematic content analysis technique for youth policy to address the research proposition. Policy analysis is considered a useful method for investigating the impact of characteristics, formation, and policies (Collins, 2005). Based on Bardach’s (2012) eight-fold framework of public policy analysis, Collins proposes the eight stages of policy analysis research: (1) define the context; (2) state the problem; (3) search for evidence; (4) consider the different policy options; (5) project the outcomes; (6) apply evaluative criteria; (7) weigh the outcomes; and (8) make the decision.

This study does not cover all eight stages, attempting only (1), (2), (3), and (4). The study attempts to contextualize Japan’s national youth policy to European youth policy and provide an overview of youth participation policies. It emphasizes the comparison of the evolution of the policy with European contexts.

5. Analysis: Qualitative Changes in Youth Participation Policies since 2003 to 2016

Based on the above discussion, the author surveyed the four documents in the following steps.

1. The author analyzed the four target documents in Japanese, focusing on the term “participation” in each document.
2. Texts about youth participation policies were extracted as Table 1 to visualize the transition of descriptions.
3. Texts in Table 1 were translated into English by referring to the English version of the policy documents.

Due to limited space, Table 2 shows partial results of the analysis.

Table 2: Transition of Youth Participation Policies in 2000s' National Youth Policy in Japan⁸

	A) 2003 NYDP	B) 2008 NYDP	C) 2010 Visions	D) 2016 Policy
Heading of youth participation policy section	(4) Young adults	(4) Young adults and post-young adults	(2) Support for the social development and social participation of children and young people	(4) Support for participation in the formation of society
Subheading	(iv) Promotion of participation in the community	(iv) Promotion of participation in society	(i) Support for participation in the formation of society (ii) Promotion of social participation	
Youth Participation Policies	-Offer of information and awareness-raising activities on public systems -Promotion of participation in the policy-making process Social Contribution Activities -volunteer activity -international cooperation and exchange	-Supply of information and raising of awareness with regard to public systems -Promotion of participation in the policy-formation process Social Contribution Activities -volunteer activity - exchange program	-Promotion of education related to social development and social participation (citizenship education) -Securing of opportunities for children and young people to express their views and opinions -Promotion of volunteering and other social participation activities -International exchange activities	Promotion of education to develop an attitude of participation in the formation of society -Promotion of volunteering and other social participation activities
Page number (Japanese ver.)	18	20	7	12,13

6. Findings and Discussion

Based on the analysis, the last section of the paper discusses the characteristics and challenges Japanese national youth policies face through comparative analysis with European youth policies.

i. Educationalism and volunteerism in youth participation policies

Since the 2000s, Japan's youth policies have undergone some changes, including the 2010 Vision for Children and Young People, as a big push to introduce an unprecedented youth participation policy with a liberal democratic view. However, it is clear from the above comparative analysis that young people's participation in community or public life (2003) and society (2008) was already stipulated before the 2010 Vision. Those measures to engage young people in the process of shaping youth policy were already in place. Nonetheless, the 2010 Vision differs from the previous NYDP. It softens the awareness-raising aspect stipulated in the 2003 and 2008 NYDP. The 2010 Vision replaces this aspect with support for participation through citizenship education, which can be understood as a reinterpretation of children and young people as subjects of participation, rather than an object either of raising awareness or "making them participate," which has resulted in a certain paradigm shift.

In the 2016 Policy, this element of the youth participation policies was simplified to “education for fostering attitudes of participation in the formation of society,” and the emphasis on youth participation became less favorable. Although the opportunity to express children and young people’s views was integrated into other parts of the section, the policy’s emphasis has been reduced in this regard. The policies of open recruitment of committee members and public consultation via the Internet have been removed. Depending on whether “ensuring opportunities for children and young people to express their opinions” is placed under “support for their participation in the formation of society” or a policy “promotion system”, it makes a significant difference in the weighting of the philosophy of these youth participation policies.

In other words, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that there are only two measures in the 2016 Policy that are practically related to the participation of young people: education to foster an attitude of participation and volunteerism. Both efforts are indeed aimed at youth participation. In regard to volunteerism, it is fair to analyze that the expression of “civic-mindedness and sociability” can be related to the idea of citizenship. Based on this text, however, it is hard to say that the 2016 Policy envisions the impact on society of young people’s participation, which is considered a European Standard of youth participation, “contributing to or influencing public decisions that affect themselves” (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe & Council of Europe, 2003, p. 11).

ii. Less appreciation on youth-led movement and campaign

What has become clear from the comparisons is that the youth participation strategies in both Japan and Europe are inclined to political participation, especially the exercise of suffrage. Initially, Japan’s 2003 NYDP was based on the concept of youth participation in the community or public life, which seems not to limit its arena to voting behavior. Later, however, in the 2008 NYDP, there was a greater emphasis on political participation, particularly voting behavior. Subsequently, the 2010 Vision toned down its electoral awareness-raising aspect. Although education on “social formation and social participation,” such as citizenship education, was put forward, the 2016 Policy narrowed it to “education to foster attitudes of participation in social formation,” eliminating citizenship education.

On the other hand, the recent trends on the limitation of youth participation in politics have been recognized in the current European youth policy as described above. Voting is regarded as a traditional political participation channel, while there is a call for recognizing new forms of political participation such as youth-led campaigns and movements. Youth culture and counterculture are also considered one form of youth participation in European youth policy contexts (Loncle & Muniglia, 2008, p. 82). Meanwhile, Japan’s youth participation policies posit an educational approach and volunteering as a means of acquiring citizenship, while barely mentioning recently emerging youth-led movements and political campaigns. Thus, it is hard to conclude that this is a youth participation policy that attempts to embrace the new and counter-democracy element of youth political participation; rather, it addresses only the conventional forms of youth political participation through education and volunteering.

iii. Youth policy making process without youth

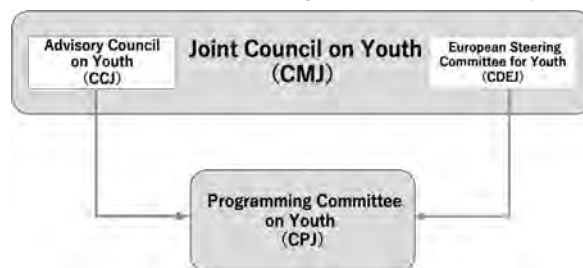
In Japanese youth policies, children and young people’s participation in the policy-mak-

ing process has been consistently present since the 2003 NYDP, despite a few minor variations in nuance. What kind of specific measures have been taken to reflect young people’s voices in the policy formation process?

At the concrete policy level, the “Youth Opinion Project” invites applications to become a “Youth Special Rapporteur.” This is a project that has been implemented since 2009, in which children and young people between the ages of 13 to 29 are appointed as rapporteurs and can post their opinions on the Cabinet Office’s website for a specific period on a topic designated by the Cabinet Office. In 2020, 500 young people were encouraged to apply for the project, which is open to anyone with Internet access and an email address. Interestingly, an incentive worth 500 yen is given for each report, although no incentive may be offered depending on the content. In 2019, the themes of the project were “blood donation,” “scientific and technological human resources for future female leaders,” and “lowering the age of legal majority.” A Youth Round Table was also held as an opportunity to exchange opinions face-to-face. Fifty Youth Special Rapporteurs took part in the round table with nine officials from the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office in 2019. Participatory workshops have been conducted to formulate opinions. In addition, under the 2010 Vision, young people are also being seated on various councils, including the appointment of two young people in their 20s to the committee that inspects and evaluates the implementation of the national youth policies.

In the eyes of European youth participation policy standards, the measures taken are far from sufficient. Reflecting “own voices” in policy is not fulfilled simply by gathering opinions online and having a face-to-face dialogue with policy-makers. By changing the governmental structure, actual power must be allocated to young people to influence the policy which affects them. One good example is the Council of Europe’s co-management structure of youth policy (Figure 1). The Council of Europe’s Joint Council of Youth (CMJ), which is responsible for decision-making on youth policy, consists of two bodies: the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) and the European Youth Steering Committee (CDEJ). The Youth Consultative Body (CCJ) represents 30 youth organizations (NGOs) and networks representing young people in Europe. They include national youth councils (e.g., the British Youth Council, the Swedish Council of Youth Organizations LSU, the Youth Council of Malta, the Serbian Youth Council) and political party youth clubs as well as scouting, student organizations, human rights defenders, and youth work organizations. These youth organizations are selected by the European Youth Forum, consisting of the national youth councils from the member states of the Council of Europe and other national youth councils, with nominations from the European Youth Forum.

Figure 1: Council of Europe’s Co-management Structure at youth policy sector



The European Youth Steering Committee (CDEJ) is made up of ministers from the member states of the Council of Europe and representatives of the institutions responsible for youth policy. This joint youth council (CMJ) is responsible for deciding on youth policy priorities, measures, and budgets, in consultation with the Programming Committee on Youth (CPJ). As such, the Council of Europe has adopted a co-management structure as a mechanism for young people's voices across the 47 member states. It plays a significant role in allowing young people to influence, shape, and enforce youth policies.

One of the premises making this mechanism possible is the national youth council, a representative democratic framework set up in many European countries to guarantee youth voice legitimacy. It is an association of sectors, a lobbying group, and a representative and voice for a particular population segment. Such a representative body once existed in Japan. The National Council of Youth Organizations in Japan (*Chu Seiren*) played a similar role in the context of youth education and youth work. The organization was formed in 1951 by the Boy Scouts of Japan, the Girl Scouts of Japan, the YMCA, the YWCA, *Nippon Seinenkan*, and the Youth Division of the Japanese Red Cross Society. While the number of youth organizations continued to increase until the 1970s, the membership began to decline in the 1980s, apparently because of the declining birth rate and the expansion of leisure options other than group activities (Tanaka, 2015, p. 210).

Nevertheless, as of 2006, the total number of member organizations and cooperative member organizations was 39. With as many as 11 million members, these organizations were considered to have somewhat influenced youth education on youth policies (National Council of Youth Organizations in Japan, 2006). Although authorized as a General Incorporated Association in 1990, the National Council was dissolved in 2012, and its administrative functions taken over by the Japan *Seinendan* Council (Nippon Seinenkan, 2018). The organization does not play the same role as the liaisons of youth organizations in Europe. In other words, it is no stretch to say that Japan hardly hold a representative body officially positioned as the voice for young people, which is why a survey by Youth Policy Labs points out the absence of a youth umbrella organization in Japan (Youth Policy Labs, 2014b).

7. Conclusion: Real Influential Power for Youth, Not just “Being Heard”

Despite the absence of an official body for youth, a different kind of youth movement has taken place recently. For instance, SEALDS (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy), was formed in 2015 to protest the bill for a “national defense military,” and Aequitas, formed the same year as Seals, aimed for higher minimum wages (Tor Ching Li, 2016). The Japan Youth Council collaborated with the Young Parliamentarians' Federation to take on a role modeled after Sweden's LSU as a youth organization council (Japan Youth Council, 2016). No Youth No Japan was newly established in 2019, envisioning “participatory democracy as part of the culture,” posting youth-friendly infographics on various social media platforms during the Lower House election of the same year. Their Instagram account initially drew immense attention in a short period of time, with 1.5k followers within two weeks (No Youth No Japan et al., 2020, p. 5). As of January 2021, the same account stands at 54k followers.

Though few Japanese actually participate in youth movements, one can observe the same

trends in national statistics. According to a survey conducted by the Cabinet Office, today's young Japanese are more interested in taking part in society than ever (2000-2014). The survey asked all generations whether young people have the will to do something good for society as community members. In 2002 and 2003, around 45 percent answered "yes" among young Japanese, lower than the response across age groups (approximately 60%). However, the number increased and peaked at nearly 70% in 2011, then stabilized later. Suzuki analyzes that the increase is due the changes in education, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and social media that have made young Japanese rethink the relationship between themselves and society (Suzuki, 2015, pp. 151–152).

Yet the low turnout of voting among the young remains, regardless of Japan's national youth policy's educational and volunteering approach to raising awareness in society. This educational approach and opinion gathering online (with 500-yen incentives) are the main pillars of Japanese youth participation policies. Meanwhile, reviewing the power structure and changing the allocation of resources such as finance - deemed one of the key elements of youth participation policies (Morozumi, 2018) - are yet to be observed. Hearing young people's opinions online should not be the way to make them a part of the formation process of youth policies. Opportunities to express views play a significant role in developing a citizenship mindset as well as in strengthening participatory democracy in governance and society. They also work to increase young people's trust in public life. Youth policy should be "with" young people, not "without" young people.

The case of European youth policy clearly shows the possibilities of building and implementing youth policy together with young people. Thus, it is now up to the authorities to reform the power structure drastically. A failure to invest in youth participation policies has the consequence of developing more feelings of distrust among young people, weakening the potential of civil society to deal with the societal challenges of our time.

Notes

- 1 It should be noted that the literal translation of *seishonen no shakai sanku* is "child and youth social participation." However, in order to avoid confusion in terminology, this paper will mainly use the term "youth participation." Although these words appear as "youth social participation" or "youth participation in society" when Japanese youth policy documents are analyzed, all refer to "youth participation" as used in this paper.
- 2 The pioneer of youth work studies of Japan Haruhiko Tanaka placed the Japanese term "youth education (*seishonen kyoiku*)" in juxtaposition to youth work in his 2015 *The History of Youth Education and Youthwork*, Toyokan
- 3 For the meaning of "*ibasho*," refer to Tanaka's discussion elsewhere in this journal.
- 4 Until 2015, the minimum voting age was twenty years old in Japan. It was lowered in 2015, yet the minimum candidacy age at a national election is 25 years old to this date.
- 5 Abbreviation for Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
- 6 Glossary on youth <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary>
- 7 As there is no official English translated document, the author has translated the title with reference to Act on the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People
- 8 The English texts were extracted from the English version of each document as they are. There is no English version of the 2016 Policy, so the English texts were translated by the author.

References

- Aoyama, T. (2018). *Seishonenkyoiku kenkyu ni okeru youth work ron no ichi* (Characteristics of youth work theory in the recent study of youth education: In the context of groups and supporters.)

- Bulletin of Human Science, 39, pp. 35–50.
<https://ci.nii.ac.jp/naid/120006537478> (Japanese)
- Araya, S. (2004). Josetsu: Ibasho Sankaku Shakai Tsunagari (Preamble: Ibasho, Participation, Society, Connection). Information Center for Children’s Participation, *Ibasho zukuri to shakai tsunagari (Creating Ibasho and Social Connection)*. Hobunsha Publishing. (Japanese)
- Bardach, E. (2012). *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving 4E*. SAGE.
- Burrowes, A., Dumbravenu, C., Dupouey, V., Ivanov, A., Kralj, K., Majamaa, V., Schipper, L., Vogt, S., & Rieux, L. (2017). *A Toolkit on Quality Standards for Youth Policy*. https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/Toolkit_Quality_Standards.pdf
- Cabinet Office. (2014). *White Paper on Children and Youth 2014*. http://www8.cao.go.jp/youth/white-paper/h26honpen/pdf_index.html
- Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. (2000-2014). *Public Opinion Surveys and Polls on Social Attitudes—Cabinet Office*. Accessed September 29, 2020 from <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/index-sha.html>
- Collins, T. (2005). Health policy analysis: A simple tool for policymakers. *Public health*, 119(3), pp. 192–196.
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe & Council of Europe. (2003). *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life: Proceedings, Krakow (Poland), 7-8 March 2002*. Council of Europe Pub.
- Denstad, F. Y., Youth Partnership (Organization) & Council of Europe. (2009). *Youth Policy Manual: How to Develop a National Youth Strategy*. Council of Europe.
- European Commission. (2001). *European Commission White Paper—A New Impetus for European Youth*. European Commission. http://eryica.org/files/EC_White%20Paper%20on%20Youth_2001_EN.pdf
- Kodomo-Wakamono Ikuseishien Suishin Honbu (Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People). (2010). *Kodomo-Wakamono Vision (Vision for Children and Young People)*. Cabinet Office. (Japanese, official English translation available)
- Kodomo-Wakamono Ikuseishien Suishin Honbu (Headquarters for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People). (2016). *Kodomo-Wakamono Ikuseishien Suishin Taiko (Policy for the Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People)*. Cabinet Office. (Japanese, official English translation available)
- Matsubara, H. (1978). *Nihon no Seishonen: Seishonen Kyoiku no Teisho (Japanese Youth: Proposal on Youth Education)*. Tokyo Shoseki. http://opac.dl.itc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/opac/opac_details/?lang=0&amode=11&bibid=2000012024 (Japanese)
- MIC & MEXT. (2015). *Watashi tachi ga hiraku nihon no mirai: shukensha toshite motomerareru chikara wo mi ni tsukeru tame ni (Future of our Japan: To acquire citizenship skills)*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB20407668> (Japanese)
- Miyamoto, M. (2005). Prolonged transitional period and policy. *Japan Labor Review*, 2(3), 73. http://eforum.jil.go.jp/english/JLR/documents/2005/JLR07_miyamoto.pdf
- Morozumi, T. (2018). Reconstruction of Participation: Some implications to Social Studies Education from a Comparative Study on Youth Participation of Sweden and Japan. *The Journal of Social Studies Education in Asia*, Vol.7, pp. 77–95. <http://jssea-issa.org/2018/09/08/the-journal-of-social-studies-education-volume-7-uploaded-on-september-8-2018/>
- National Council of Youth Organizations in Japan. (August 27 2006). *Chuseiren*. About our activity. <https://web.archive.org/web/20060827121935/http://www.chuseiren.or.jp/menu02.shtml>
- Nippon Seinenkan. (2018). *2018 Annual Report*. <https://nippon-seinenkan.or.jp/seinenkan/wp-content/uploads/30nen-nenji.pdf>
- Nihon Wakamono Kyogikai (Japan Youth Council)*. (March 22, 2016). *Wakamono Kyogikai nitsuite (About Japan Youth Council)*. Japan Youth Council. (Japanese) <https://youthconference.jp/%e6%97%a5%e6%9c%ac%e8%8b%a5%e8%80%85%e5%8d%94%e8%ad%b0%e4%bc%9a%e3%81%ab%e3%81%a4%e3%81%84%e3%81%a6/>

- No Youth No Japan, Kurosumi, N. Takatsuki, Y. Takizawa, C. Nojo, M. (2020). NO YOUTH NO JAPAN vol.1. Yohakusha. (Japanese)
- Pleyers, G., & Karbach, N. (2014). *Analytical paper on Youth Participation. What do we mean by "participation"?* (UCL-Université Catholique de Louvain). Article UCL-Université Catholique de Louvain. <https://dial.uclouvain.be/pr/boreal/object/boreal:146070>
- Seishonen Ikusei Suishin Honbu (Headquarters for Youth Development). (2003). Seishonen Ikusei Shisaku Taiko (National Youth Development Policy). Cabinet Office.(Official English translation available)
- Seishonen Ikusei Suishin Honbu (Headquarters for Youth Development). (2008). Seishonen Ikusei Shisaku Taiko (National Youth Development Policy). Cabinet Office.(Official English translation available)
- Suzuki, K. (2015). Nihon no wakamono ha naze kibo wo motenai noka (Why do Japanese young people have no hope? International comparison with six different countries). Soshisha Publishing Co., Ltd. (Japanese)
- Tanaka, H. (2002). Kodomo Wakamono to Shakaikyōiku no Kadai (Issues and perspectives on 'young people and community education.'). Kodomo Wakamono to Shakaikyōiku (Community education for children and youth: a new perspective.) Studies in Adult and Community Education No.46. The Japan Society for the Study of Adult and Community Education. Toyokan Publishing. (Japanese)
- Tanaka, H. (2015). Youth Work Seishonenkyōiku no Rekishi. (The History of Youth Education and Youth Work). Toyokan Publishing. (Japanese)
- Tanaka, H. & Hagiwara, K. (2012). Wakamono no Ibasho to Sanka (Ibasho for Young People and Participation: Youth Work to Build a New Society). Toyokan. (Japanese)
- Tor Ching Li. (July 9 2016). In pursuit of Japan's young voters. *The Straits Times*. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/in-pursuit-of-japans-young-voters>
- Youth Policy Labs. (2014a). The State of Youth Policy in 2014. Youth Policy Press, Publishing House, Alt-Moabit 89, D-10559 Berlin. http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2014_State_Youth_Policy_2014_En.pdf
- Youth Policy Labs. (2014b). Japan | Factsheets | Youthpolicy.org. <https://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/japan/>