CENTRE FOR GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION

Centre for Global Higher Education working paper series

Public good of higher education in Japan: The changing perceptions of three actors in the post-war era

Kiyomi Horiuchi and Futao Huang

Working paper no. 56
November 2020

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Office for Students OfS

Research England

Published by the Centre for Global Higher Education,
Department of Education, University of Oxford
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY
www.researchcghe.org

ISSN 2398-564X

The Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) is a research partnership of international universities, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Office for Students and Research England.

CGHE's research is focused on higher education and its future development and aims to inform and improve higher education policy and practice. CGHE's three research programmes integrate local, national and global perspectives, and its researchers are based in nine countries across five continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and North America.

Public good of higher education in Japan: The changing perceptions of three actors in the post-war era

Kiyomi Horiuchi and Futao Huang

Contents

Public good of higher education in Japan: The changing perceptions of three actors in the post-war era

Kiyomi Horiuchi and Futao Huang

Kiyomi Horiuchi is a Research Associate on CGHE's global higher education engagement research programme. khoriuchi@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Futao Huang is a Co-Investigator on CGHE's global higher education engagement research programme. futao@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the transformation of perceptions toward the public good of higher education in post-war Japan. We foreground the perspectives of three actors: the government, economic organisations, and associations of universities. The public good of higher education has been a vital topic of research in Western countries, and a diverse body of research and discussion has accumulated. Following neoliberalism's rise in 1980s, discussion of the public good was revived to counteract neoliberal higher education policy and reduced public expenditure. However, within Japan the "public good" has hardly been mentioned in domestic discussion. This is partly because the translated term for the public good in Japanese, "kōkyō-zai", conveys only economic definitions of the public, and thereby restricts discussion of publicness in higher education. In this study, therefore, the public good is decoded into three public functions of higher education in post-war Japan: knowledge creation, human resource development, and social contribution.

This research is based on discourse analysis of three actors' official documents. As an analytical framework, we present on a horizontal axis the timeline from the end of WWII to the present, divided into five distinct periods. On the vertical axis, we consider the three public functions of higher education. The findings of this study indicate that a long-lasting reluctance towards social contribution among national universities restricted discussion of the public good of higher education in Japan until recently. In addition, the three actors' perceptions toward the three public functions of higher education appear to have converged in the last 15 years.

Keywords: Public good · Higher education · Post-war Japan · Knowledge creation · Human resource development · Social contribution

Acknowledgment: This work was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council grants ES/M010082/1; and ES/P005292/1

Introduction

The public good of higher education has been a vital topic of research in Western countries, especially since the emergence of neoliberalism in the early 1980s, and it has had a profound influence on higher education policies in many countries across the world. It is like the tug-of-war. When one force, often the government, considers reducing higher education budgets and emphasising the private benefits individual graduates enjoy, others refute such changes on the grounds that higher education generates public benefits for society. In the case of Japan, public funding to higher education has been shrinking based on the concepts of neoliberalism and New Public Management since the Nakasone Cabinet accelerated privatisation of public agencies in the 1980s (Ohshima and Takagi, 2018). Unlike Western countries, however, debates on changes to the public funding of higher education are rarely made from the perspective of the public good. One important reason for this is that the "public good" is usually translated as "*kōkyō-zai*" in Japanese, which is a combination of "*kōkyō*" (public) and "*zai*" (goods/property/fortune). This terminology "*kōkyō-zai"* in Japanese conveys only economic definitions of the public, and makes the discussion of publicness or the public qualities of higher education unclear and difficult to understand in Japanese higher education research and policymaking. Nevertheless, as in other contexts, higher education is considered an institution with a public nature, despite the lack of explicit reference to "public goods".

The purpose of this study is to explore the transformation of perceptions of the public good of higher education in post-war Japan. We foreground the perspectives of three actors: the central government, economic organisations, and associations of universities. Since the term "public good" or "*kōkyō-zai*", is rarely found in the Japanese discourse, in this study the public good is decoded into three public functions of higher education: knowledge creation, human resource development, and social contribution. This research is based on discourse analysis of three actors' official documents. As an analytical framework, we present on a horizontal axis the timeline from the end of WWII to the present, divided into five distinct periods of 15 years. On the vertical axis, we consider the three public functions of higher education introduced above. The study begins with a literature review and a short introduction

to the Japanese context and analytical framework. After analysing actors' discourses in each stage, we then discuss how respective actors' perceptions toward public good have changed over time.

Literature Review

The Concept of Public Good

An early and influential definition of the public good was provided by Samuelson (1954) who suggests that public goods have attributes of being "non-rivalrous" and "non-excludable." That is to say, public goods are non-rivalrous when they can be consumed by any number of people without being depleted, and non-excludable when the benefits cannot be confined to an individual (Marginson, 2016, 85). Samuelson's definition is grounded in the field of public economics, and thus considers public goods in opposition to private goods, and usually expresses public "goods" in plural form. Bringing up national defense and lighthouses as examples, Samuelson locates public goods in the context of market failure and thus perceives public funding as inevitable and necessary for their provision. When strictly applying this economic definition of public goods in the context of higher education, access and participation rates appear incompatible with the requirement to be both non-excludable and non-rivalrous (Usher 2015). Several economists, however, argue that higher education still provides public goods. For instance, Stiglitz (1999, 310–311) points out that producing new knowledge such as a mathematical theorem is seen as a public good, since its benefits can be used by many people without being depleted. McMahon (2009, 55, 255) also asserts that higher education is seen as producing public goods, especially when funded directly by the state, because of "the social benefit efficiency gains and potential equity effects on opportunity and reduced inequality". Externalities, or spillover effects, are another economic term which helps to express these public contributions generated by higher education. According to the Institute for Higher Education Policy in US, benefits such as reduced crime rates, increased quality of civic life, social cohesion, and improved ability to adapt to and use technology are categorised as public goods that "spill over" from the private benefits of those directly receiving higher education (IHEP, 1998, 20).

Whereas the discussions above stem from an economic perspective, a variety of alternative perspectives have emerged, typically expressing the “public good” in the singular form. Especially in Western countries, the public good is generally defined as a benefit or contribution to the well-being of society (Collins, 2017). In previous sociological research, the public nature of higher education has been classified into three primary functions. The first of these is the creation and the dissemination of knowledge, produced by research and advanced education, which contributes to both scientific and economic development (Gumport, 2002; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Secondly, higher education is concerned with the cultivation of human resources as it is believed that those in receipt of higher education will appropriately lead and maintain democratic society as good citizens (Giroux, 2003). Thirdly, universities make social contributions to the communities in which they are located, that is, community services provided through educational practices such as service learning (Schneider, 2005).

Furthermore, Habermas’s “public sphere” is another notion that gives validity to the characterisation of higher education as a public good. Habermas (1989) defines the “public sphere” as a communicative sphere for molding public opinion, where everyone can participate in constructive discussion without the intervention of political and economic influences. Although Habermas himself does not directly cite higher education’s contributions to the public sphere, several scholars insist that the university is a primary form of the public sphere, since free speech is protected and democratic movements have been born there (Budd, 2015; Calhoun, 2006; Pusser, 2006).

Clearly, without being strictly bounded by economic definitions of public goods, much broader perspectives have developed to contribute to the discussion of higher education and the public good. As Hazelkorn and Gibson (2018) point out, “the question as to whether higher education is itself a public good or produces/contributes to ‘public benefit’ or ‘public value’ exposes fundamental tensions at the heart of this debate.” It appears that a sociological approach attaches weight to the former while an economic approach emphasises the latter. Indeed, Chambers and Gopaul (2008), who investigated people’s perception of the nexus

between higher education and the public good, stress that it is inappropriate to investigate the phrase while limiting discussion to one particular definition, as people perceive the link between higher education and the public good in highly variable ways.

Japanese Context

As mentioned earlier, the phrase “public good(s)” is usually translated as “*kōkyō-zai*” in Japanese regardless of its singular or plural form, but this term only conveys economic nuance. In consequence, earlier research into the public goods of higher education in Japan limits discussion to the perspectives of higher education economics and financing. For example, Ichikawa (2000) points out that higher education cannot accommodate those who do not pay for tuition, and also sets limitations on those who want to receive higher education via entrance examinations. Therefore, in this sense, higher education is not broadly conceived as a public good. Ichikawa adds, however, since not only university graduates but society at large consume external positive effects from those educated at higher education institutions, it is not appropriate for students and their parents to cover all the expenses for receiving higher education, and that the government should subsidise these fees. Yano (1996) also emphasises external effects on society as the grounds upon which public funding should be injected into higher education, thereby placing higher education in Japan as a quasi-public good.

Outside of this economic perspective, except for a recent study by Huang and Horiuch (2020), no comprehensive arguments about the public good of higher education have been found in Japan, despite evidence of discussion at the levels of primary and secondary education. This absence may be related to some contextual characteristics of Japanese higher education that affect how people consider the connection between higher education and the public good. These characteristics include: (1) a dual structure of public and private universities in Japan’s higher education system, (2) a conjugation of economic policy and education, and (3) people’s strong awareness of the pursuit of equity in higher education. Firstly, Japanese higher education consists of both public and private sectors. As Geiger (1986) points out, Japan is among few advanced industrial countries in which private

universities clearly outnumber public ones. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (MEXT) annual Basic School Survey in 2020, among 795 universities in Japan, 615 are private, 86 are national, and 94 are local public[1]. 74% of students in Japan are enrolled at private universities. While the government has directly funded national universities where only a limited number of students could benefit from public funding (Kaneko, 1987), it is the rapid expansion of private universities that realised the massification of, and universal access to, higher education in Japan (Huang, 2012; Pempel ,1973; Tsuchimochi, 1996). Since the majority of students have to pay very expensive tuition fees charged by private universities, the numerical dominance of private universities makes it difficult for the general public to realise the public value of higher education.

Secondly, "a conjugation of economic policy and education" is another characteristic of Japanese higher education (Hata, 1999). Although the post-war higher education system in Japan was established by learning from the US model, focusing on democratisation of higher education, the Japanese government's top priority in the post-war reconstruction era was placed on economic recovery and growth. Especially since early 1960s when the "Plan to Double the National Income" was implemented by the government, higher education policy has been subordinate to policies of economic development. Even in recent years, the domestic reputation of Japanese universities has been measured based on whether universities could satisfy demands from business sectors rather than qualities of education and research (Hawkins, 2006).

Thirdly, awareness of equity makes it hard for the general public to understand the relationship between higher education and public good. Hamanaka and Yano (2016) conducted a public opinion survey on public funding towards higher education. According to the survey, a majority of respondents thought that public funding should be directed to social systems such as medical care, rather than to higher education. They interpret the results to indicate that Japanese people have a strong sensitivity

[1] This is the number of four-year universities excluding two-year junior colleges. According to the same survey, there are 323 junior colleges in Japan of which 306 are private and 17 are local public.

to equity, so a higher education system that requires entrance examination and tuition fees is not regarded as an institution fulfilling of such an egalitarian concept.

In contrast to most European continental countries, Japanese higher education has never been free of charge, though the tuition fees of national universities are less expensive than private ones. Given the fact that the vast majority of university students pay to attend private universities, it is taken for granted that those who receive higher education should be charged tuition for their own future benefit. As such, there are several contextual reasons that discussion of the public good of higher education in Japan has not yet matured. Therefore, to develop such a discussion in Japan, it is important to further investigate how actors' views on publicness of higher education has historically changed and developed in the Japanese context.

Research methods

To explore how perceptions of the public good in higher education have changed among various actors in Japan, this study uses discourse analysis. Discourse analysis refers to the "detailed exploration of political, personal, media or academic 'talk' and 'writing' about a subject designed to reveal how knowledge is organised, carried and reproduced in particular way and through particular institutional practices" (Jupp, 2006, 76). Here we provide a detailed description of the discourse analysis methodology used in this study, beginning with the definition of actors, and the creation of a novel analytical framework based around horizontal and vertical axes.

Actors

Multiple actors are relevant to higher education, such as politicians, policy makers, institutional leaders, faculty, students and their parents, mass media, industries, local communities, and society itself. Based on Clark's (1983, 142–143) model of "the Triangle of Coordination," this study focuses on three relevant actors as the objects of discourse analysis: (1) government, (2) economic organisations, and (3) university associations. The reasons for this selection are as follows.

Firstly, in Japan, the Central Council for Education, an advisory committee for Minister of Education, plays a crucial role in deciding the direction of higher education policy. Normally, for national policy of higher education to be developed, the Council's report is released first, then the Ministry of Education begins to secure the budget and amend the current law according to policy proposals in the report. Over a long timeframe, reports have included explicit statements regarding the *raison d'etre* of higher education, therefore, those documents can provide significant insight to explore how governmental policymakers perceive the public functions of higher education, and how these perceptions have changed over time[2].

Secondly, official documents released by KEIDANREN (the Federation of Economic Organization) are fruitful for analysis. KEIDANREN, founded in 1946, is the biggest nationwide economic organisation in Japan, with a membership comprised of more than 1,400 major companies. It is considered to represent demands from Japanese industry and business, or voices from the market. As mentioned above, one of the prominent characteristics of higher education development in Japan is its close partnership with economic policies (Hata, 1999; Kaneko, 1987; Ichikawa, 1995; Hawkins, 2006). Since the 1950s, higher education policy has been strongly linked with manpower policy so as to foster economic development. Under these circumstances, Japanese economic organisations have continuously released proposals and requests for higher education so that their demands could be reflected in government policy. KEIDANREN is the most influential economic organisation affecting government policymaking, and has frequently made and published many proposals specifically relating to higher education since the 1980s. In early periods when KEIDANREN was not as active in influencing higher education policy, the study uses documents and proposals by the Japan Federation of Employers' Association to complement the analysis. There is significant commonality between these two economic organisations, as both lobby for realistic proposals based on the actual needs of employers (Iiyoshi, 2008, 10–

[2] The Central Council for Education was established in 1952 but its role and status has not been consistent. The role as advisory board was temporarily replaced by Ad Hoc Council on Education from 1984 to 1987 and following 14 years by University Council until it merged again into Central Council for Education in 2001.

14). Furthermore, the Japan Federation of Employers' Association was merged into KEIDANREN in 2002, thus the continuity of its demands could be secured.

Thirdly, university associations are defined in this study as actors representing the academy. As of June 2020, there are more than 790 universities in Japan, so it is unrealistic and unrepresentative to investigate individual universities' discourse on the public good of higher education. Instead, university associations, an aggregation of universities, summarise and represent member institutions' opinions and requests. These associations respond to the reports published by the Central Council for Education and express their standpoint, so analysing their discourse would be beneficial to disclose positions of universities, and the similarities and differences between the public and private sectors. Currently there are four university associations in Japan, two of them belong to the public sector and two represent private universities. They include the Japan Association of National Universities, the Japan Association of Public Universities, the Association of Private Universities of Japan, and the Japan Association of Private Universities and Colleges. In addition, the two private universities' associations established the umbrella organisation named Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations, to strengthen ties and increase influence over other stakeholders. This study chooses two associations for representing both public and private sectors. One is the Japan Association of National Universities, founded in 1950 and boasting all 86 national universities among its membership. Heavily funded by government, national universities are regarded as leading higher education institutions in Japan, thus, it is reasonable to choose it as a representative of the public sector. As for private sector, the Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations is chosen since it represents both private universities' associations. However, since the Federation was established in 1984 and covers only the latter period of the analysis, earlier periods are complemented by the Association of Private Universities of Japan, founded in 1946 and with a membership of approximately 400 universities.

Horizontal axis

In this study, the horizontal axis of analysis refers to the time series from post-war Japan to the present day. Various researchers have divided the period of higher education in post-war Japan into several stages (Hata, 2013; Yoshimoto, 1996; Terasaki, 1999; Yoshida, 2013, Yamamoto, 2000; 2008), and most of them agree that fundamental changes in higher education have occurred at 10 to 15 year intervals since the end of WWII. As shown in Table 1, this study employs Yamamoto's definition that suggests that higher education in Japan has had significant changes in a 15- year cycle and experienced five periods or stages in the post-war era (Yamamoto, 2008, 18). These stages are defined as follows.

The first is the "Period of Politics" (1945-1959) when Japan's new university system and related legal systems were established under the indirect rule of US-led Allied Forces. The second is called the "Period of Economy" (1960-1974) that corresponds to both Japan's rapid economic growth and baby boomers' university entrance timing. During this period, to absorb the growing demand for higher education, the number of private universities drastically increased, resulting in the quantitative expansion of universities. The third period is the "Period of State Planning" (1975-1989) when the government shifted its policy on private universities from *laissez faire* to greater control in exchange for financial aid to private institutions. In the mid-1980s, following a stream of administrative and financial reforms, Prime Minister Nakasone organised the Ad Hoc Council on Education, which proposed educational reforms based on deregulation, which characterises the period. The fourth period is the "Period of System Reform" (1990-2004) when the government initiated numerous university reforms emphasising deregulation and cultivating a competitive environment in order to reflect proposals by the Ad Hoc Council. While the population of 18-year-olds peaked in 1992 and has since declined, the total number of university students increased since the enrollment rate kept rising from 36% to almost 50% during this period. The fifth period is the "Period of Institutional Reform" (2005-2020). After the various systemic reforms of the prior period, individual universities were required to carry out their own institutional reforms, focusing on quality assurance and globalisation. The rise of the university entrance rate finally slowed down after it exceeded 50%, while the decline in

birthrate accelerated. Under these conditions and the competitive environment cultivated before, each university needs to make individual reforms in an effort to recruit sufficient students.

Table 1 Classification of higher education periods in post-war Japan

Period	Years	Period of:	University entrance rate	Backgrounds
1st	1945-1959	Politics	Below 10%	Post-war framework construction New university system
2nd	1960-1974	Economy	10 to 38%	Rapid massification Expansion of private universities
3rd	1975-1989	State Planning	35 to 36%	Financial aid to private universities Higher education planning
4th	1990-2004	System Reform	36 to 49%	Deregulation policy Incorporation of national universities
5th	2005-2020	Institutional Reform	50 to 55%	International quality assurance Diversification of universities

Source: Authors based on Yamamoto, 2008, 18

Vertical axis

While the above chronology order forms the horizontal axis, functions of higher education relating to public good are placed on the vertical axis. As described above, the “public good” has been understood as an equivocal term that could be construed through a variety of lenses, such as economic, political, and social. Especially through a social lens, common understandings of the public nature of higher education have emerged: (1) knowledge creation and dissemination, (2) human resource cultivation, and (3) social and community contribution. In this study, these three are understood as constituent elements that mediate actors’ perceptions of the public good in higher education. The concept of the vertical axis of analysis is shown in Figure 1.

In each period of the post-war era, by extracting, comparing, and analysing discourse about three public functions of higher education from actors' official documents, this study investigates how the perceptions of higher education's relationship to the public good have been changed in post-war Japan.

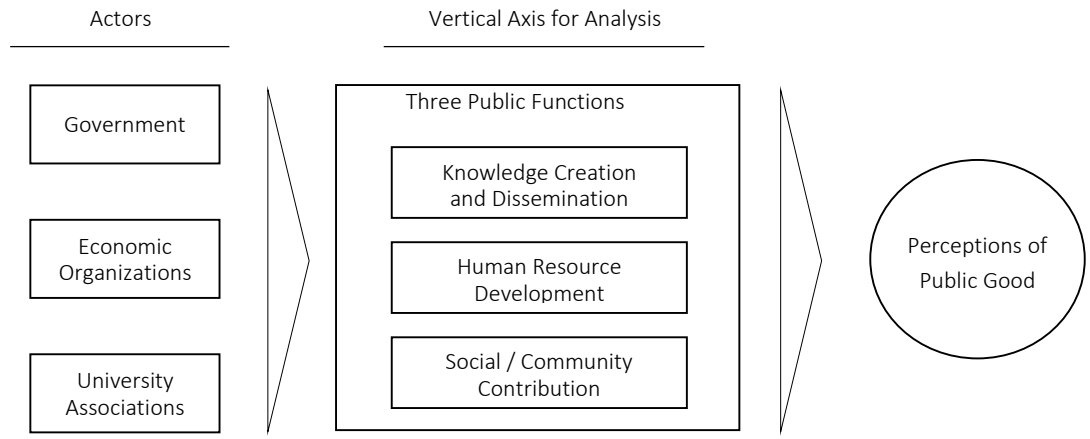

Figure 1: Analytical framework

Discourse Analysis

The first period: 1945-1959

Background

As discussed earlier, the first period refers to the time of post-war reconstruction, including the indirect rule by US-led Allied Forces which continued until 1952. In pre-war Japan, higher education was a multiple-track system, including Imperial Universities, Old-System Universities, National Colleges, Teachers Colleges, and Vocational Schools etc., but they were integrated into the new form of a single-track system influenced by the US system. Representing the viewpoint of government, two legal documents are selected, the Fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law, both enacted in March 1947. Unlike in later periods, the Central Council for Education, organised in 1952, was not yet ready to release a report on long-term perspectives on higher education during this period. As for economic organisations, the "Request for Revision of New Education System" by the Japan Federation of Employers' Association, issued in October 1952, is chosen since this is

known as the oldest proposal on higher education by Japanese economic organisations. Turning to university associations, although the Association of Private Universities of Japan and the Japan Association of National Universities were established in 1948 and 1950 respectively, their proposals and statements issued during this period were mostly occupied by the demands for improvement of faculty's working conditions and additional subsidies for necessary school equipment. These documents convey the fact that newly established universities were financially troubled, but hardly mention their perception regarding the public functions of higher education. Thus, documents of university associations were excluded from the first period. Selected documents for the first period are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Selected documents for the first period

Actor	Entity	Name of official document
Government	Government	Fundamental Law of Education (Mar. 1947) School Education Law (Mar. 1947)
Economic Organization	JFEA*	Request for Revision of New Education System (Oct. 1952)

*JFEA: Japan Federation of Employers' Association

Knowledge Creation

The Fundamental Law of Education (1947) states that:

> Article 2. Educational Principle
> The aims of education shall be realized on all occasions and in all places. In order to achieve the aims, we shall endeavor to contribute to the creation and development of culture by mutual esteem and co-operation, respecting academic freedom, having a regard for actual life and cultivating a spontaneous spirit.

Since this principle is written for all education including primary and secondary schools, it does not mention terms such as knowledge creation, but the phrase "contribute to the creation and development of culture" could be interpreted as sharing a similar intention. On the other hand, the School Education Law (1947) mentions the aims of universities specifically:

> Article 52.
> A university shall be aimed at conducting in-depth teaching and research in specialized arts and sciences, as well as providing students with broad knowledge, as a center of learning, and thus at helping students develop their intellectual, moral and practical abilities.

Here, the idea of the Humboldtian university, emphasising teaching and research as their fundamental function, and which was deeply rooted in pre-war Japanese universities, was usurped. These functions are directly concerned with knowledge creation and dissemination, so it could be observed that the government saw it as the primary public function of newly established universities. Any description of knowledge creation was not confirmed in the documents of economic organisations.

Human Resource Development

In the Fundamental Law of Education, Article 1 states the aims of education in relation to human resource development:

> Article 1. Aims of Education
> Education shall aim at the full development of personality, striving to nurture the citizens, sound in mind and body, who shall love truth and justice, esteem individual value, respect labor and have a deep sense of responsibility, and be imbued with the independent spirit, as builders of the peaceful state and society. (Fundamental Law of Education, 1947)

Expressed as terms such as “the full development of personality” and “builders of the peaceful state and society,” in the government’s perception, the aims of education seem to relate to human development. Prior to reforms to the educational system, the Report of the US Education Mission to Japan was issued in March 1946, pointing out that “recognition of the right of access to higher learning must be made clearer to the people as the prerogative” and “special advantages of the few are relaxed and redefined for the many” (pp. 61-62). It also recommended that “education should prepare the individual to become a responsible and cooperating member of society”

(US Education Mission to Japan, 1946, 9). Therefore, it appears that Western values of education, such as nurturing a democratic citizenry, strongly influenced the idea of new educational system in Japan.

However, the Japan Federation of Employers' Association, displayed strong discontent against the new education system in its document to the government:

> From the standpoint of industry, the new educational system heavily emphasized liberal education, and as a result, vocational education, that must be similarly important, was wholly disregarded. This is the significant point that the government should reexamine in the system … There are opinions within industry that the old education system which divided academic universities and vocational schools distinctly is more favorable. (Japan Federation of Employers' Association, 1952, 249–250)

Adopting the US model of a four-year undergraduate, including two years' general education became compulsory under the new educational system. Consequently, the amount of time allocated in specialised and vocational education was reduced. Such a major shift made economic organisations unhappy. The industrial actors who recruited graduates demanded of university education the development of human resources who could work actively at companies upon their graduation. Thus, conflicting views on human resource development were already apparent between the government and economic organisations during this early stage.

Social Contribution

No clear discourse about social contribution as a public function of higher education were found in selected documents from either the government and the economic organisations. As far as educational legal documents are concerned, it is as late as 2006 that "social contribution" was explicitly added to the aims of university, 60 years later after the Fundamental Law of Education was enacted. Since it was not legally considered as a function of higher education, discourse about social contribution as

a public function of higher education appear quite ambiguous in comparison to the previous public functions of higher education.

The second period: 1960-1974

Background

The selected document from the government, “Report on Basic Guidelines for an Overall Reform of School Education” (1971), is known as the first comprehensive policy on school education that encompassed all levels from preschool to higher education, and the policy was issued after four-years of careful discussion by the Central Council for Education. Contextually, the first baby boom generation had reached the age of university entrance and demand for higher education skyrocketed, which resulted in an increase in the university entrance rate from around 10% to 38% during this period. At the end of the 1960s, student movements spread to universities throughout Japan where students demanded that university authorities provide a better educational environment. Compounded by political protests, campus conflicts frequently grew violent. Since university authorities could not quell such conflicts by their own force, and refused intervention by police and state authorities, the insularity and deficiencies of student management within universities became apparent to wider society, which cast a stern eye toward universities thereafter. The government report was meant to resolve this critical social situation. Selected documents for the second period are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Selected documents for the second period

Actor	Entity	Name of official document
Government	CCE*	Report on Basic Guidelines for an Overall Reform of School Education (Jun. 1971)
Economic Organization	JFEA	Industry’s Opinion on Fundamental Problems of Education (Sep. 1969)
University Associations	JANU**	Research Report on University Problems (Jun. 1971)
	APUJ***	Opinion on Important Issues of Higher Education Reform (Jun. 1971)

*CCE: Central Council for Education
**JANU: The Japan Association of National Universities
***APUJ: The Association of Private Universities of Japan

Knowledge Creation

The government's report scarcely mentions knowledge creation, except for the few words below:

> Up until now, university's supreme mission has been the contribution to succession, criticism, and creation of culture through advanced academic research and education. At the same time, it is essential that university fosters human resources who possess rich culture based on the dignity of human being as well as advanced knowledge and skills, so those people could contribute to the national development and the human well-being. Furthermore, nowadays, for responding to requests from the people and the times, university is expected to commit multiple functions based on educational perspectives. (Central Council for Education, 1971)

While the report continues to suggest that advanced research and education for knowledge creation is the supreme mission of the university, its primary point appears to be expressed in the latter sentences. We see an emerging discourse that universities are required to play multiple functions beyond research and education. Fostering human resources who can contribute national and social development is particularly emphasised.

No discourse around knowledge creation was found in the documents of the Economic Organisations, whereas the two university associations expressed different views. Firstly, the national universities' association emphasised that:

> It cannot help but say that the intrinsic nature of university is pursuing truth by research, and education based on it and even if a university commits to foster students' human development, it should be limited to an independence of mind, creativity, comprehensive discernment, critical spirit, and attitude of generosity, that are all gained through the study of research. (The Japan Association of National Universities, 1971, 76–77)

Here, it appears that they view research and education as the absolute function of university. They avoid directly denying the necessity of fostering human resources based on social demands but rather position it as a by-product of research activities. On the other hand, the Association of Private Universities of Japan (1971) recognises that “the purpose of new university system transformed into fostering good citizens instead of seeking the depth of academics and nurturing social leaders under old-university system” (p. 779). Subsequently, they express anxiety that the function of graduate schools had shrunk in post-war system, and suggested that academic research function should concentrate on graduate education, since undergraduate education alone could not fulfill the multiple functions which government expected. As for the aims and functions of universities, private universities showed a more adaptive attitudes toward their system transformation than national universities that were strongly affected by the pre-war tradition.

Human Resource Development

As suggested below, the government’s report indicates two types of human resources that universities should foster. One is well-matured citizens based on liberal arts education. The other is persons with advanced skills that would make them successful in their future careers:

> For fulfilling life as a good citizen, building a foundation of culture that is cultivating his/her sense of values is indispensable. With massification of higher education, the majority of students expect not only the academic training for being a researcher, but advanced skills that are necessary for their future occupation. (Central Council for Education, 1971)

The report repeatedly mentions that the university is not an institution only for a handful of elites. It states that universities should relinquish old ideas from pre-war times, accept the reality of massification, and adopt to the changing social needs.

Demands from economic organisations for increased vocational education also softened, influenced by nationwide campus strife:

> A distinguished ill effect appearing among the young who receive post-war education is that they have an enhanced awareness of rights while abandoning recognition of ethnic tradition. It is problematic that post-war education has born a new generation who behaves by intrinsic affirmation and loses a mind of self-inhibition.
>
> In regard to university education… it is necessary to cultivate a mind of morality and appropriately build sound human character through the whole curriculum. (Japan Federation of Employers' Association, 1969, 84–85)

Industry bodies showed uneasiness towards the young who, in their eyes, twisted the essence of democracy and asked only for their own individual rights, and requested that university education put further importance on character building.

The two university associations' standpoints were different. The National Universities' Association articulated that "the social responsibility university education ought to take is not the fostering of white-collar workers but the transmission of knowledge and its annexed development of mental competence" (Japan Association for National Universities, 1971, 96). Furthermore, they criticised that early recruitment activities by companies "markedly distort university's planned curriculum" (p. 97). In contrast, the private universities' association reiterated that fostering good citizen became the primary purpose of university under the post-war new university system.

> The new university system pursued institutions that transform ordinary youngsters into human beings with knowledge and advanced skills, and the ability to fulfill social responsibilities. (The Association of Private Universities of Japan, 1971, 778)

Thus, while national universities still clung to the research-oriented university system and was resistant to the claims of economic organisations, private universities were more responsive to the status quo, partly because many qualified to confer academic degrees only after WWII.

Social contribution

The government's report questions universities' closed nature toward society and urges higher education to be more conscious of its social responsibilities, as a sector with public attributes. More precisely, the report says that universities should be open to the wider people, not only for those of a certain age or those with certain academic record, and function as life-long learning institutions for society (Central Council for Education, 1971). Economic organisations also mention the closed nature of universities and demand they provide a more flexible curriculum so that working people also can go to university to acquire necessary knowledge and skills (Japan Federation of Employers' Association, 1969, 86). In calling for universities to be more open to the wider public, the government and economic organisations appear to be on the same page.

National and private university associations, on the other hand, are not in agreement. The private universities' association states that "it is a responsibility of universities to respond to massification of higher education and changing social needs resulting from the baby boom, economic growth, industrial expansion, and the development of mass consumption" (The Association of Private Universities of Japan, 1971, 779). In addition, they emphasise that private universities had better responded to changing social needs and, as a result, nearly 80% of university students studied in private institutions. On the basis of this evidence, in 1975[3] private universities succeeded in acquiring government subsidies covering partial operating expenditures, which continues to this day. This legally-backed public funding shifted the government's attitude towards private universities from a position of "no support, no control" to "support but control", and consequently more strict regulations and control were imposed on private universities (Osaki, 1999). On the other hand, the national universities' association articulates that the "social responsibility of university is not accepting all requests from society unquestioningly, but pursuing truth and contributing to healthy social development by returning research profits to society" (The Japan Association of National Universities, 1971, 77).

[3] At its peak in 1980, government funding covered nearly 30% of operating expenditure of individual private universities, which shrank to approximately 10% since the 1990s.

In summary, reflecting Japan's changing social context the government and industry actors placed new expectations on the social roles of universities. In an era of economic growth and massification of higher education, private universities actively responded to such requests, rapidly expanding to absorb social demand, while national universities kept a distance from other actors and stuck firmly to the academic model of the pre-war system. The extreme difference of position between national and private universities is one factor that hinders consensus-building regarding the social contribution function of higher education in Japan.

The third period: 1975-1989

Background

The Ad Hoc Council on Education was established in 1984 as an advisory council to Prime Minister Nakasone, in order to respond to rising concerns about the quality of education and emerging social problems such as school bullying. The Council dealt with all levels of education, from primary school to university, and issued four comprehensive reports between 1985 to 1987. For the Nakasone Cabinet, the major task during this period was promoting fundamental administrative and financial reforms that synchronised with the tide of neoliberalism in Western countries. Educational reforms began to be strongly influenced by the principles of competition based on economic liberalisation, marketisation, and deregulation. Selected documents for the period are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Selected documents for the third period

Actor	Entity	Name of official document
Government	AHCE*	Report on Educational Reform (Jun. 1985–Aug. 1987)
Economic Organization	KEIDANREN	Issues on Employment and Fostering Personnel for Adjusting to The New Development of Industrial Structure (Jun. 1989)
University Associations	JANU	The Role of National Universities and Future Issues (Nov. 1986)
	FJPCUA**	Proposals on Overall Educational Reform (Feb. 1985)

*AHCE: Ad Hoc Council on Education
**FJPCUA: Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations

Knowledge Creation

"Response to internationalisation" emerged as the new buzzword in knowledge creation found in the government's discourse. The government states that, while Japan has grown to be one of the greatest economic powers in the world, "only a few Japanese universities enjoy an international reputation in scientific research," thus, Japanese universities were required to "enhance the levels of its education and research" (Ad Hoc Council on Education, 1985, 63, 72). Such advocates continue to insist that Japan should fulfill its responsibility to international society through contributing to the development of basic sciences, in addition to applied sciences and technologies in which Japan has traditionally been strong.

The national universities' association rebutted these requests. The association's document says that "national universities have continuously played a leading role in advancing academic research" and as a result, especially in the field of basic research, "nowadays national universities have reached the point [that they can] maintain high academic standards no inferior to that of Western countries" (The Japan Association of National Universities, 1986, 2). There appears a gap in recognition of advancement of academic research between the government and national universities. No description about knowledge creation was found from selected documents of economic organisations or the private universities' association in this period.

Human Resource Development

The government presents the "principle of individuality-oriented development" as a foundational idea for human resource development in all levels of education.

> The most important thing in this reform is breaking down the deep-rooted malady accumulated in our country's education such as uniformity, rigidity, insularity, and non-internationality, and then establishing the principle of individuality-oriented that attaches weight to individual dignity, respect for individuality, freedom, autonomy, and self-responsibility. (Ad Hoc Council on Education, 1985, 68)

Furthermore, the government asks higher education institutions to nurture personnel based on society's needs and provide lifelong education, arguing that "people's voracious appetite for learning is the driving force of our country's development" (Ad Hoc Council on Education, 1986, 155).

Economic organisations stress the necessity for nurturing personnel who are prepared for internationalisation, informatisation, and advanced technology.

> As the need for human resources comfortable with information technology and an international sense has grown rapidly, the shortage of such personnel seems to be bottleneck for transforming advanced economic structure. … For re-educating working adults, it is expected that universities provide short-term programs and courses held either in the evening or on weekends. (KEIDANREN, 1989, 1–2)

Underlying this discourse is the premise that "Japan's current economic prosperity is the result of heavy investment in human resource development" (KEIDANREN, 1989, 1). Therefore, for economic organisations, nurturing human resources who can respond to the requirements of industry is equivalent to "social need", and further economic development will be achieved if universities respond to such demands.

The national universities' association displayed a cautious attitude towards such discourses, saying that "education and research at university should not be easily affected by social trend of the times" and "it is reasonable that higher education keeps a moderate distance from society" (The Japan Association of National Universities 1986, 2). In contrast, the private universities' association showed a cooperative attitude to the government and industry's requests by stating "it is necessary to respond to social demands and provide highly-skilled vocational education and life-long learning" (Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations, 1985, 1).

Social Contribution

The government report emphasises the importance of life-long education and claims that universities should be the center of providing such opportunities in local communities:

> University should cooperate with local communities and be open to the public in a number of ways such as enhancing citizen's life and culture, enlarging opportunities to receive life-long learning, promoting regional planning, activating local industries. Especially, the expectation to the role of university in life-long learning is crucial. It is requested that university positively commits to those activities as providing extension lectures to citizens, opening facilities such as library and gymnasium to the public, accepting part-time working adults both at undergraduate and graduate school. (Ad Hoc Council on Education 1987, 260, 267)

In contrast with the private universities' association, that continuously showed a willingness to shoulder the responsibility of social contribution, the national universities' association had not been proactive in this regard. However, a subtle change appeared in their discourse:

> We should not forget that with the development of sciences and technologies and its accompanying change in industrial structure, the expectation from local society to national universities has been rapidly swallowing. In particular, national universities residing at local areas are expected to play a role in both further creation of new industry and revitalization of current ones. Sharing a responsibility for providing the recurrent education in various subjects are also requested. (The Japan Association of National Universities, 1986, 2)

The discourse above indicates a recognition of the current social situation, but does not yet lead to an expression of positive commitment to local communities. However, in light of the government's repeated requests for further social contributions by universities, it seems that national universities could not help but soften their attitude.

The fourth period: 1990-2004

Background

The fourth period is the time when various proposal or reports by the Ad Hoc Council on Education from the last period were implemented in legislation. The Amendment to the Standards for the Establishment of Universities in 1991 deregulated university curriculum development so each university did not have to follow the predetermined rules of general education. In the same year, the self-check and evaluation system was introduced to individual universities, which became mandatory in 1999. As a further development, in 2004, a Certified Evaluation System was launched, requiring all universities to undergo periodic evaluations (every seven years) by an evaluation organisation certified by MEXT. The incorporation of national universities in 2004 represents another major transformation of the higher education system. Through this reform, national universities became autonomous institutions with managing boards, while the government continued to provide financial support their operation.

This period also marks a significant demographic change. The 18-year-old population peaked and began to decrease in 1992, when the second baby boom generation entered university. Measures to deal with the falling birthrate became a central concern for higher education policy in Japan. Under the competitive environment of student recruitment, there was a quick diversification of university education. Selected documents for the fourth period are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Selected documents for the fourth period

Actor	Entity	Name of official document
Government	UC*	Council Report: A Vision of Universities in the 21st Century – to be distinctive universities in a competitive environment– (Oct. 1998)
Economic Organization	KEIDANREN	Toward Nurturing Human Resources with Creativity: Necessary Educational Reform and Corporate Behavior (Mar. 1996)
University Associations	JANU	Opinion on “How Fundamental Law of Education and Basic Plan for Promoting Education should be in New Era (interim report)” (Dec. 2002)
	FJPCUA	Opinion on Council Report “A Vision of Universities in the 21st Century (interim report)” (Aug. 1998)

*UC: University Council

Knowledge Creation

The government report “A Vision of Universities in the 21st Century” declares that the new century requires “reconstruction of knowledge.” After defining universities as a leading entity to promote social development through intellectual activities, it argues:

> The promotion of academic research and the development of science and technology are of significance, thus we must free ourselves from conventional idea of catching-up with the West, and for building a nation that is truly creative in science and technology, the university is required to create ingenious intellectual properties, cultivate new scientific frontiers, and contribute to the development of human society itself. (University Council, 1998)

This discourse recognises that further enhancement of universities’ academic research function will lead to the development of both domestic society and the welfare of all human beings. Thus, the reason for the enhancement of scientific research became more comprehensive in comparison to the somewhat narrow emphasis on international competitiveness that marked the previous period.

Both national and private universities’ associations responded positively. The national universities’ association appraises that “it is of importance to clarify the social significance of universities that generate intellectual contributions to the humankind” and shares the view that “the promotion of ingenious pure scientific research leads to the sound development of higher education” (The Japan Association of National Universities, 2002, 1). While the private universities’ association also agrees with strengthening creativity in science and technology, they emphasise the necessity for further financial support for its realisation (Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations, 1998, 2).

Human Resource Development

The government report insists that human resources with “problem-seeking ability” should be fundamental for the new century.

> Vision of desired human resources:
> Our country’s system must convert from the conventional type of catching-up with the West into the type of creating new epoch as a front-runner in the world. In light of such our country’s situation, amid rapidly changing times, higher education is recommended to cultivate students’ abilities to correspond to changes independently, to explore future problems by their own, and to evaluate those problems flexibly and comprehensively with the broad perspectives (problem-seeking ability). (University Council, 1998)

When viewed in light of earlier discourse of economic organisations, the government’s concept is found to be closely linked with views from industry. The following is taken from KEIDANREN’s proposal document called “Toward Nurturing Human Resources with Creativity: Necessary Educational Reform and Corporate Behavior” released two years earlier than the government report:

> The conventional system of catching-up with the West, that sustained our country’s development, reached a dead end and now we are facing a transitional period. Considering the coming 21st century, the basic direction we should pursue is to establish, by way of deregulation, an affluent and vigorous civil society led by the private sector. In such society, human resources with creativity who could play active roles in various fields are desired, therefore, nurturing such personnel is an urgent issue. For that purpose, it is necessary to fundamentally revise the educational system and the corporate behavioural culture that are impeding the development of individual creativity. The Japanese educational system has traditionally prioritised fostering human resources with cooperativity and homogeneity. This type of education was designed to achieve swift restoration and efficient economic growth in the post-war period, but its ill effects are not negligible today. (KEIDANREN, 1996)

Japan was experiencing its longest recession following the collapse of the bubble economy in the early 1990s, and industry attributed these challenges to an unchanging national mentality that prioritised cooperativity and obedience, even though it had been the national strength during the period of economic growth. The discourses outlined above by the economic organisations indicate their belief that human resources with creativity and initiative were indispensable to overcome the long-lasting recession and revive Japan's economic power, and therefore, Japan's educational system needs to be redesigned for that particular purpose. These strong demands by industry appear to be reflected in the government report.

Both the national and private universities' associations agree with the necessity for nurturing highly creative personnel. But national universities appear to continue to distance themselves from economic concerns by saying "it is necessary for universities to nurture highly creative personnel who can lead the knowledge-based century for the sake of preservation of our vigorous society" (The Japan Association of National Universities, 2002, 1). For national universities, the creativity to be fostered in higher education means competences to enhance academic quality specifically, and they carefully avoid linking this effort with economic purposes.

Social Contribution

Though the selected documents of both national and private universities' associations rarely mention social contribution, the government report stressed the importance of strengthening partnerships between universities and their local community:

> In the early 21st century, the value of intellectual activity will be accelerated at every regional society. For universities to preserve their significance as a center for intellectual activity, it is mandatory to promote cooperation and strengthen ties with regional society. (University Council, 1998)

Economic organisations, in the meantime, called for cooperation between universities and industry:

> Though educational institutions are liable to be insular, it will become increasingly necessary to extend contact points with outside society. Particularly, universities are requested to cultivate relationships with various social and research institutions in order to provide life-long education programs, enhance the quality of teaching and research by strengthening ties with industries, and reform faculty's rigid awareness. (KEIDANREN, 1996)

The government and economic organisations thus share the perception that universities should be more open and cooperate with outer society, and contribute in tackling regional issues.

The fifth period: 2005-present

Background

In 2009, the university-entrance rate among high school graduates exceeded 50% for the first time. However, while universal access to higher education continued, a perceived decline in college students' academic ability was problematised and, as a result, improving the quality of university education emerged as an important policy issue. In Japanese society as a whole, the "knowledge-based society" and "globalisation" were two key terms that drew social attention, and are now viewed as indispensable for the future development of the country.

The government's viewpoint is expressed in the Central Council for Education's report "A Vision for the Country's Higher Education System" (2005), which conveys their vision for how Japan's higher education should progress until 2020. For economic organisations, KEIDANREN's "Proposal for Development of Global Human Resources" (2011) is chosen because the development of global human resources ("*gurōbaru jinzai*" in Japanese) was industry's strongest demand for higher education in this period. Both the national and private universities' associations released a document named "Action Plan", in 2015 and 2013 respectively. Selected documents for the fifth period are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Selected documents for the fifth period

Actor	Entity	Name of official document
Government	CCE	Council Report: A Vision for the Country's Higher Education System (Jan. 2005)
Economic Organisation	KEIDANREN	Proposal for Development of Global Human Resources (Jun. 2011)
University Associations	JANU	Action Plan for Future Vision of National Universities (Sep. 2015)
	FJPCUA	Action Plan for Private Universities and Colleges (July. 2013)

Knowledge Creation

The government report emphasises the important role of universities in the knowledge-based society where the creation, succession, and utilisation of new knowledge become a basis for social development. It says that “universities, regardless of being public or private institutions, should be more conscious of their social responsibilities in the context of their public function being creating knowledge regarded as vitally important in society” and places knowledge creation as the central function of universities (Central Council for Education, 2005, 27). The report also recognises that the creation of new knowledge would maintain and enhance the nation’s international competitiveness since “knowledge has no borders, and globalisation seems to be further progressed” (p. 3).

Economic organisations expressed a similar view in relation to human resource development:

> For fostering internationally reputable researchers and highly skilled personnel in growing fields, it is significant to cultivate master and doctoral students who could synthesize several fields of specialization and create new added value through innovation. (KEIDANREN, 2011, 14)

Discourses of both the government and economic organisations reflect the perception that, under the conditions of ongoing globalisation, enhancing the knowledge creation function of higher education has an immediate impact on strengthening the national economy and Japan’s international competitiveness.

University associations, especially that representing national universities, reflect on the international question as follows:

> As international competition in creating innovation has intensified, it is especially important and imperative for our country to promote world leading research including new interdisciplinary fields… National universities should lure industrial research investment and constitute a joint research system between industry and universities from which both sides benefit… Universities should not only preserve ongoing academic research efforts, but also comprehend global-scale issues, current problems the country and regions face, and social and industrial needs, and commit with designated willingness to promote the technological developments which society expects from universities. (The Japan Association of National Universities 2015, 3, 11)

National universities present a surprisingly positive attitude toward collaborative research with industry, and a willingness to engage with regional issues which had rarely been seen in previous periods. After the incorporation of national universities in 2004, securing diverse sources of revenue and acquiring external funds became urgent issues for all national universities, therefore, this structural change seems to have softened their attitude. National universities' discourses often conflicted with other actors until the fourth period, however, a convergence of perception regarding knowledge creation emerged for the first time in the fifth period.

Human Resource Development

For sustainable development of a vigorous society, the government report insists "21st century-type citizens" are indispensable. Such citizens are defined as those who "would not only acquire academic specialty in their respective field, but also gain a broad range of knowledge from other subjects, maintain high public spirit and morality, and possess the ability to improve society in keeping with changes of the times" (Central Council for Education, 2005, 4). The government also expresses the link between the function of human resource development in higher education and

benefits for the society as a whole, stating “we should make sure that the beneficiary of higher education is the society itself exceeding individuals who receive education, and thus it is imperative to build a sound relationship in which society would positively support higher education” (Central Council for Education, 2005, 5).

Economic organisations stress the necessity of nurturing personnel who can play an active role in globalised society. They define “global human resources” as “the personnel who have the competence to maintain a challenging spirit without being stuck in stereotypes, gain command of foreign languages for communicating with colleagues, customers, or clients with different cultural backgrounds, and have the ability to respond flexibly with continuing interests in foreign cultures and values” (KEIDANREN, 2011, 3). Driven by rapid globalisation, not only big companies but small and medium-sized enterprises cannot avoid being involved in borderless economic activities, therefore, economic organisations insist that “nurturing and utilising global human resources are the most urgent issues that society as a whole should tackle, and, it is imperative for industries, universities, and the government to play an appropriate role and cooperate with one another strategically” (KEIDANREN, 2011, 2).

Nurturing global human resources is emphasised in university associations’ discourses as well. In their Action Plan, the national universities’ association sets new goals on human resource development as follows: “fostering vigorous youngsters who play an active role in globalised society; accepting superior international students and sending domestic students abroad; contributing to local societies by luring both international and domestic students there” (The Japan Association for National Universities 2015, 3–5). The private universities’ association shows the same positive attitude to the development of global human resources, by setting goals such as “fostering youngsters who could be successful in the world and contribute to regional societies as globalized persons” (Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations 2013, 4).

The term “*gurōbaru jinzai*” (global human resources) was created by industry in the late 1990s but only became a vogue word around 2010, and the government

report released in 2005 did not include this specific term. However, as the government's document references "21st century-type citizens", which has similar implications, no large differences are found in all actors' perceptions of human resource development.

Social Contribution

In 2006 and 2007, the Fundamental Law of Education and School Education Law, respectively, were amended and saw the inclusion of "social contribution" as one of the purposes of universities. The selected government report was released before these amendments were legislated, but provided the foundation for their introduction, arguing that "it is the time when the role of social contribution should be regarded, so to say, 'the third mission' of universities" (Central Council for Education, 2005, 5). In regard to the relationship between universities and regional societies, the report insists that "higher education institutions located in regional areas shoulder the responsibility as a central base for knowledge and culture at each area, as well as a base for the next generation's regional vitalization" (Central Council for Education, 2005, 11).

Each university association's Action Plan, released after the amendments, includes substantial description of universities' social and regional contributions that were rarely seen up to the last period. The national universities' association expresses their active engagement with regional societies as follows:

> National universities contribute to social and industrial planning through cooperation with national and local government, as well as industry, and take strong initiative for providing necessary technological development and professional education… All national universities, even if their degree of importance might vary, are essential as a central knowledge base for accepting youngsters and supporting regional societies, therefore, the role of each national university should be augmented. (The Japan Association of National Universities, 2015, 3, 10)

The private universities' association has continuously mentioned the necessity for social contribution since the second period, but the degree of its commitment was further strengthened. According to their Action Plan, "nurturing personnel who contribute to the regional society" is included as one of future missions of private universities and several concrete measures were introduced, such as "establishment and enlargement of university-consortia based on regional societies," "building cooperative framework with local government and industry for regional development," and "strengthening ties with local communities through volunteering activities by students" (Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations, 2013, 4–5). As discussed above, no sharp discrepancy toward social contribution between national and private universities remains evident.

Discussion and concluding remarks

The purpose of this study is to explore the transformation of perspectives on the public good of higher education in post-war Japan through the lenses of three actors. At every 15-year period official documents were selected and analysed to see how their views on the public good function of higher education (knowledge creation, human resource development, and social contribution) have changed over time.

To summarise each function in turn, firstly, knowledge creation was prioritised as the most significant public function of universities by the government and the national universities' association from the earliest period in post-war era. Since the third period (1975-1989), the viewpoint of internationalisation has been added to the public function of Japan's universities. It appears that there are two reasons for this change. One is to ask Japan's universities to contribute to international cooperation as befits as one of the world's economic powers, and the other is to improve Japan's international competitiveness in various academic fields. The second point was especially emphasised after the fourth period (1990-2004) and since then both economic organisations and private universities' associations also began to stress the importance of improving Japan's international competitiveness in academic research.

Secondly, the government and economic organisations considered human resource development as a major function of higher education consistently in the post-war era. In the first period (1945-1959), their views were subtly different, as the government stressed the “development of personality” as one important quality of becoming good citizens, whereas economic organisations emphasised the importance of vocational skills. From the second period (1960-1974), coinciding with country’s rapid economic growth, however, the government shifted to add “persons with advanced skills” to the objective of human resource development and, thereafter, the ideal figure of human resources described by economic organisations has been always reflected in government discourses. As for university associations, the contrasting attitudes of the public and private sectors continued up to the fourth period, in which private universities’ associations showed a rather cooperative attitude to the requests from the government and the economic organisations, while national universities’ associations were more resistant. In national universities’ perception, human resource development in higher education ought to be realised through education, based on research activities, and this view was not compatible with industry’s demands. In the fifth period (2005-2020), however, national universities also started to insist on the necessity of nurturing global human resources that was originally proposed by industries, indicating that today all actors’ perceptions are unified.

Thirdly, actors’ perceptions of the social contribution of universities differed from the other two public functions of higher education, because it was hardly recognised by any actors during the first period of post-war reconstruction. Discourses urging universities to be more open to the wider public were first found in the documents of the government and the economic organisations in the second period, but were restricted to the provision of life-long and recurrent education. Perceptions relating to universities’ role in regional issues started to be found in the government discourse in the third period, before growing into the expectation that universities should be “a central base for knowledge and culture as well as a base for the next generation’s regional vitalization” throughout the fourth and fifth periods. Regarding university associations, private universities’ associations responded positively toward the social contribution proposed by the government and the economic organisations since the

second period. Conversely, only in the fifth and final period did national universities' associations, which had long been resistant to responding to such social demands, begin to show a positive attitude to their regional social contribution.

The findings of this study show that, among the three representative public functions of higher education, knowledge creation and human resource development were placed as the major purposes of Japan's universities from the beginning of post-war reconstruction period. However, the acceptance of the importance of social contributions did not emerge in earnest until the late 1990s, when the government's discourse pivoted towards the university's role in regional development. By investigating the historical transition of each actor's discourses, the study suggests that, a long lasting reluctance to be engaged in social issues by national universities resulted in yielding the argument of the public good of higher education in Japan. For national universities, the strong belief in the Humboldtian idea was inherited from the pre-war era and, therefore, knowledge creation or research activities in pursuit of truth was viewed as the absolute and a sole function of higher education which, they believed, leads indirectly to contributions to both human resource development and broader society. The contrasting views between the national and private universities also seem to be one factor that has made discussion of the public function of higher education vague. Under the Japanese higher education system, both national and private universities are given the equal status as universities and, from a legal standpoint, their purposes and functions are the same. While national universities take pride in having led academic research as government funded institutions, private universities outnumber them and have responded to changing social demands more flexibly. In regard to the public function of higher education, unlike national universities, private universities satisfied the demands of the government and industry partly because of their more competitive environment than national universities. It is likely that the ununified standpoints and attitudes toward the public functions between national and private universities have created a social environment in Japan in which the general public has failed to fully realise or understand the public nature of higher education.

Another revelation is the phenomenon that all the three actors' views have rapidly converged into a similar perception on every public function of higher education over the past 15 years. Each actor's discourses in the fifth period share the same key terms for respective functions: "knowledge-based society" and "innovation" for knowledge creation, "global human resources" for human resource development, and "regional partnership" and "resolving regional issues" for social contribution. Behind the shifting attitude of national universities is the structural and legal reforms. The incorporation of national universities in 2004 changed their status from entities of the national government to autonomous institutions with their own managing board. Although the large part of operating expenditures is allocated by the government, the overall budget including research expenses have been cut by one percent every year since 2004. Consequently, national universities have been forced to generate more competitive funds and external revenue by their own efforts. The amendments to the Fundamental Law of Education in 2006 and School Education Law in 2007 added social contribution as one of the purposes of Japan's universities, where only the functions of education and research had been expected before. Driven by those recent institutional changes, a paradigm shift has occurred not only in their financial and legal structure but on their perceptions of their public functions.

After exhibiting various perceptional differences in early periods, the government, the economic organisations, and the associations of both national and private universities finally share a similar perception of the public functions of Japan's higher education, a convergence that has occurred in the last 15 years. It could be said, however, that such a consensus only exists in discourses suggested in their official documents. This final synthesis of perceptions was brought by drastic changes in national universities' stated perceptions, but this change is noted only in policy-driven system reforms. There is a possibility that the discourses of the national universities' association are consciously fabricated to respond to and cope with the government's intention. Thus, while recent perceptional synthesis by certain actors, it is uncertain whether discussion of higher education as a public good is now further promoted in Japan, and whether such a recognition has infiltrated society despite a lexical unfamiliarity with the public good in the Japanese case. Nevertheless, it is important to further investigate this issue, and stimulate more awareness among

researchers and the general public, since the issue affects the future direction of how higher education in Japan, and its public functions, are accepted in society.

Acknowledgements

This study is part of international joint project on the Future of Higher Education which is led by Centre for Global Higher Education. The authors of this article want to express their thanks to the Economic and Social Research Council, the UK for allocating funding to support this research (grant reference number; ES/M010082/1: ESRC/OFSRE Center for Global Higher Education). Also, we want to show our enormous gratitude to Thomas Brotherhood from the University of Oxford, UK for proofreading the article.

References

Ad Hoc Council on Education. (1985). Kyouiku kaikaku ni kansuru dai ichiji toushin [The First Report on Educational Reform]. In Society of Research on Educational Policy. (Eds). (1987). *Chukyoushin souran [Pandect of Ad Hoc Council]*. Tokyo: Dai-ichi hoki (in Japanese).

Ad Hoc Council on Education. (1987). Kyouiku kaikaku ni kansuru dai sanji toushin [The Third Report on Educational Reform]. In Society of Research on Educational Policy. (Eds). (1987). *Chukyoushin souran [Pandect of Ad Hoc Council]*. Tokyo: Dai-ichi hoki (in Japanese).

Budd, J. M. (2015). *The public good and the public sphere. Democracy, Economics, and the Public Good* (pp. 85–122). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Calhoun, C. (2006). The university and the public good. *Thesis Eleven*, 84(1), 7–43.

Central Council for Education (1971). *Kongo niokeru gakkou kyouiku no sougouteki na kakuju seibi notameno kihonteki shisaku nitsuite [Report on Basic Guidelines for an Overall Reform of School Education].* https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chuuou/toushin/710601.htm (in Japanese).

Central Council on Education. (2005). *Wagakuni no koutou kyouiku no shouraizou [Council Report: A Vision for the Country's Higher Education System]*. https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/05013101.htm (in Japanese).

Chambers, T., & Gopaul, B. (2008). Decoding the public good of higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 12*(4), 59–90.

Clark, B. (1983). *The Higher Education System–Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspectives*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Collins, C. S. (2017). Academic public good. In C.S. Collins (Eds.), *University Community Engagement in the Asia Pacific: Public benefits beyond individual degrees*, pp. 1–10. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Association. (1985). Kyouiku kaikaku zenpan nitsuiteno Teigen [Proposals on Overall Educational Reform]. In Kyouiku kaikaku zenpan nitsuiteno Teigen (1985, March 13). *Kyouiku Gakujutsu Shinbun*, P. 1 (in Japanese).

Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Association. (1998). "21seiki no daigakuzou to kongo no kaikaku housaku nitsuite – kyousouteki kankyou no nakade kosei ga kagayaku daigaku (interim report)" ni taisuru iken [Opinion on Council Report: A vision of Universities in the 21st Century –to be distinctive universities in a competitive environment]. In Koseika kasseika no shiten kara iken [Opinion from the viewpoint of distinctiveness and vitalization] (1998, October 7). *Kyouiku Gakujutsu Shinbun*, P. 2 (in Japanese).

Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Association. (2013). *Shiritsu daigaku akushon puran [Action Plan for Private Universities and Colleges]*. https://www.shidai-rengoukai.jp/information/img/250807re_sympo09.pdf (in Japanese).

Geiger, R. L. (1986). *Private sectors in higher education: Structure, function, and change in eight countries*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Selling out higher education. *Policy Futures in Education, 1*(1), 179–200.

Gumport, P. J. (2002). Universities and knowledge: Restructuring the city of intellect. In S. Brint (Ed.), *The Future of the City of Intellect* (pp. 47–81). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger (pp. 85–92). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Hamanaka, J., & Yano, M. (2016). Yoron ni miru kyouiku retsui shakaizou [inferiority of education in public opinion]. In *Kyouiku retsui shakai [Society of Educational Inferiority]* (pp. 44–65). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers (in Japanese).

Hata, T. (1999). *Sengo daigaku kaikaku [University reform in post-war Japan]*. Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press (in Japanese).

Hata, T. (2013). Koutou kyouiku no gabanansu no henyou [transformation of higher education governance]. In T. Hirota (Eds.), *Soshiki toshite no daigaku [University as organization]* (pp. 77–106). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers (in Japanese).

Hawkins, J. N. (2006). Public Good, Commodification and Higher Education Reform: Some Trends in Japan and California. In J. N. Hawkins & D. Neubauer (Eds.), *The tensions between education as a public good and education as a private commodity: Concept paper for proposed senior seminar* (pp. 27–49). Honolulu: East West Center.

Hazelkorn, E., & Gibson, A. (2018). Public goods and public policy: What is public good, and who and what decides? *Higher Education*. Published online. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-018-0341-3.

Huang, F. (2012). Higher education from massification to universal access: A perspective from Japan. *Higher Education, 63*(2), 257–270.

Huang, F. & Horiuchi, K. (2020). The public good and accepting inbound international students in Japan. *Higher Education*, 79, 459-479.

Ichikawa, S. (1995). *Rinkyoushin igo no kyouiku seisaku [education policy after ad hoc council on education]*. Tokyo: Kyouikukaihatsu Kenkyusho (in Japanese).

Ichikawa, S. (2000). *Koutou kyouiku no henbou to zaisei [higher education's metamorphosis and public funding]*. Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press (in Japanese).

Iiyoshi, H. (2008). *Sengo nihon sangyoukai no daigaku kyouiku youkyu [Industris' demand for university education in post-war Japan]*. Tokyo: Toshindo (in Japanese).

Institute for Higher Education Policy. (1998). Reaping the benefits defining the public and private value of going to college. In *The new millennium project on higher education costs, pricing, and productivity* (pp. 3–26).

Japan Federation of Employers' Association. (1952). Shin kyouiku seido saikentou ni kansuru youbousho [Request for Revision of New Education System]. In Institute for Modern Education at Yokohama National University (Eds). (1983). *Chukyoushin to kyouiku kaikaku [Ad hoc council and educational reform]*. Tokyo: San-Ichi Shobo Publishing (in Japanese).

Japan Federation of Employers' Association. (1969). Kyouiku no kihon mondai nitaisuru sangyoukai no kenkai [Industry's Opinion on Fundamental Problems of Education]. In Japan Federation of Employers' Association. (1973). *Nikkeiren no ayumi [History of association]*. Tokyo: Japan Federation of Employers' Association (in Japanese).

Japanese government. (1947). *Kyouiku kihon hou [Fundamental Law of Education]*. https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/kihon/about/a001.htm (in Japanese).

Japanese government. (1947). *Gakkou kyouiku hou [School Education Law]*. http://roppou.aichi-u.ac.jp/joubun/s22-26.htm (in Japanese).

Jupp, V. (2006). *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kaneko, M. (1987). Juekisha futan shugi to “ikuei” shugi: Kokuritsu daigaku jugyouryou no shisoushi [levy on beneficiary or “promotion of merit”: An ideological history of tuition policies]. *Daigaku Ronshu*, (17), 67–88 (in Japanese).

KEIDANREN. (1989). *Keizai sangyou kouzou no aratana tenkai ni tekiou surutameno koyou jinzaiyousei mondai nitsuite [Issues on Employment and Fostering Personnel for Adjusting to The New Development of Industrial Structure]*. Tokyo: KEIDANREN (in Japanese).

KEIDANREN. (1996). Souzouteki na jinzai no ikusei ni mukete: Motomerareru kyouiku kaikaku to kigyou no koudou [Toward Nurturing Human Resources with Creativity: Necessary Educational Reform and Corporate Behavior]. https://www.keidanren.or.jp/japanese/policy/pol083/index.html (in Japanese).

KEIDANREN. (2011). *Gurobaru jinzai no ikusei ni muketa Teigen [Proposal for Development of Global Human Resources]*. https://www.keidanren.or.jp/policy/2011/062honbun.pdf (in Japanese).

Marginson, S., & Considine, M. (2000). *The enterprise university*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marginson, S. (2016). *Higher education and the common good*. Victoria: Melbourne University Publishing.

McMahon, W. W. (2009). *Higher learning, greater good: The private and social benefits of higher education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

MEXT. (2020). *Gakko Kihon Chousa [Basic School Survey]*. Tokyo: MEXT (in Japanese).

Ohshima, R. and Takagi, K. (2018). Why was the Ad Hoc Council established? : from the political situation around the Prime Minister Nakasone in January

1984. *The journal of Educational Administration Graduate School of Education, the University of Tokyo 38*, 53-69 (in Japanese).

Osaki, H. (1999). *Daigaku kaikaku 1945-1999 [university reform 1945-1999]*. Tokyo: Yuhikaku Publishing (in Japanese).

Pempel, T. J. (1973). The politics of enrollment expansion in Japanese universities. *The Journal of Asian Studies, 33*(1), 67–86.

Pusser, B. (2006). Reconsidering higher education and the public good: The role of public sphere. In W. G. Tierney (Ed.), *Governance and the public good* (pp. 11–28). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Samuelson, P. A. (1954). The pure theory of public expenditure. *The Review of Economics and Statistics, 36*(4), 387–389.

Schneider, C. G. (2005). Liberal education and the civic engagement gap. In W. G. Tierney (Ed.), *Governance and the public good* (pp. 127–145). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Stiglitz, J. (1999). Knowledge as a global public good. In I. Kaul, I. Grunberg, & M. A. Stern (Eds.), *Global public goods: International cooperation in the 21st century*. New York: The United Nations Development Programme.

Terasaki, M. (1999). *Daigaku kyouiku no souzou: Rekishi, shisutemu, karikyuramu [the creation of university education: history, system, curriculum]*. Tokyo: Toshindo (in Japanese).

The Association of Private Universities of Japan. (1971). Koutou kyouiku kaikaku no juyoujikou nikansuru honkyoukai no kenkai [Opinion on Important Issues of

Higher Education Reform]. In Editing Committee of 50-year History of Private School. (2004). *Shigaku shinkou shi: hanseiki no chousen [History of Private School's Development: Challenges in half-century]*. Tokyo: The Association of Private Universities of Japan (in Japanese).

The Japan Association of National Universities. (1971). *Daigaku mondai nikansuru chousa kenkyu houkokusho [Research Report on University Problems]*. Tokyo: University Management Committee of The Japan Association of National Universities (in Japanese).

The Japan Association of National Universities. (1986). Kokuritsu daigaku no yakuwari to kongo no kadai [The Role of National Universities and Future Issues]. In Kokuritsu daigaku no yakuwari to kongo no kadai (1986, December 3). *Kyouiku Gakujutsu Shinbun*, P. 2 (in Japanese).

The Japan Association of National Universities. (2002). *"Atarashii jidai ni fusawashii kyouikukihonhou to kyouiku shinkou kihon keikaku no arikata nitsuite (chukan houkoku)" ni taisuru iken [Opinion on "How Fundamental Law of Education and Basic Plan for Promoting Education should be in New Era (interim report)"]*. https://www.janu.jp/active/txt5/h14_12_13.html (in Japanese).

The Japan Association of National Universities. (2015). *Kokuritsu daigaku no shourai bijon nikansuru akushon puran [Action Plan for Future Vision of National Universities]*. https://www.janu.jp/news/files/20150914-wnew-actionplan1.pdf (in Japanese).

Tsuchimochi, H. G. (1996). *Shinsei daigaku no tanjou: Sengo shiritsu daigaku seisaku no tenkai [the birth of post-war university in Japan: The development of post-war educational policy on private universities]*. Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press (in Japanese).

University Council. (1998). *21seiki no daigakuzou to kongo no kaikaku housaku nitsuite – kyousouteki kankyou no nakade kosei ga kagayaku daigaku [Council*

Report: A vision of Universities in the 21st Century –to be distinctive universities in a competitive environment]. Tokyo: MEXT (in Japanese).

US Education Mission to Japan. (1946). *Report of the United States Education mission to Japan*. https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011325745

Usher, A. (2015). *Stop saying higher education is a public good*. Retrieved from: http://higheredstrategy.com/stop-saying-higher-education-is-a-public-good/

Yamamoto, S. (2000). Sengo wagakuni niokeru koutou kyouiku no jidai kubun [periodical classification of higher education in post-war Japan]. In *Monbukagaku kyouiku tsushin [educational press in education, culture, sports, science and technology]* (pp. 34–35). Tokyo: The Earth Kyoikushinsha (in Japanese).

Yamamoto, S. (2008). T*enkanki no koutou kyouiku [higher education in transitional period]*. Tokyo: The Earth Kyoikushinsha (in Japanese).

Yano, M. (1996). *Koutou kyouiku no keizai bunseki to seisaku [economic analysis and policy in higher education]*. Tokyo: Tamagawa University Press (in Japanese).

Yoshida, A. (2013). *Daigaku to kyouyou kyouiku [university and liberal arts education]*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Publishers (in Japanese).

Yoshimoto, K. (1996). Sengo koutou kyouiku no taishuka katei [the process of higher education massification in post-war Japan]. In *Gakushu shakai niokeru masu koutou kyouiku no kouzou to kinou ni kansuru kenkyu [study in structure and function of mass higher education in learning society]* (pp. 23–36). Tokyo: National Institute of Multimedia Education (in Japanese).