

The Internationalization of Japanese Higher Education: Policy Debates and Realities

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<Abstract>

Globally, the internationalization of higher education has assumed a key position on domestic policy agendas, not only for educational and scientific reasons, but also increasingly due to socio-economic considerations. National contexts, however, are still influential in the actual process of internationalization. In the case of Japan, adding to a strong identity based on an advanced higher education system, and continuous development of neighboring countries in terms of their science and technology sectors as well as their industrial and service economies is having a significant impact on policy direction and the actual internationalization process.

Using the case of Japan, this article emphasizes the need for autonomous initiatives on the part of universities and academics themselves for the internationalization of higher education. The Japanese government and the nation's higher education institutions are still in the process discovering their identities amidst rapidly changing regional circumstances. Consequently, the direction of national and institutional strategies has often been observed to be unsettled and inconsistent.

In order to sustain a continuous internationalization process, dynamic initiatives by academics and universities to enhance knowledge creation and exchange are indispensable.

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1. Introduction

Globalization and the knowledge economy are principal issues facing almost every country around the world. In many East Asian countries (e.g., Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan), governments tend to introduce strong initiatives in the process of forming strategic responses of higher education to the challenges of globalization. One typical example would be policies for fostering ‘world class’ universities, whereby governments tend to concentrate public investment to a limited number of flagship research oriented universities for augmenting their status worldwide (Altbach and Balan, 2007). Project-based funds for enhancing globally competitive research at flagship universities (e.g., the ‘211’ and ‘985’ projects in China, the ‘Brain Korea 21’ project in Korea and the ‘21st Century Center of Excellence’ in Japan) have been introduced and are further evolving since the 1990s (Yonezawa, 2007). The Korean BK21 project entered its second phase in 2006, and in 2007 the Japanese government replaced the former COE21 project with the ‘Global Center of Excellence’ program. The governments of these countries clearly apply pressure on their higher education systems to serve as tools for the development of the knowledge economy by enhancing national capacities in research and development.

At the same time, higher education systems in these countries (with the exception of China) have been relying heavily on financial contributions by students and their parents in the form of tuition fees (Umakoshi, 2004). In Japan, 73.5% of four year university students, including those enrolled in graduate programs are studying at private institutions as of 2008 (the share of students in private institutions is higher in junior colleges and other types of post secondary education institutions). The largely-private higher and post-secondary education systems of Japan and Korea have already achieved universal access and are now facing over-supply conditions under the younger population’s demographic decline. Here the competitiveness, or attractiveness, in international student markets is becoming crucial, both for attracting talented post graduate students to sustain research capacities, and for compensating the shrinking market of

domestic students mainly at the undergraduate level.

Naturally, higher education institutions in these countries tend to face strong pressure both from governments and student markets. The question here is what would reflect realistic strategies and a solid future vision of higher education in these countries for the autonomous development of higher education and associated academic activities.

Japan, a non-English speaking country with a relatively large population (128 million in 2007) is basically disadvantaged in attracting international academics and students, as Marginson and van der Wende (2007) pointed out the underrepresentation of world class institutions in relation to its economic power. The lack of systemic regional level frameworks like the EU or ASEAN, and the rapid development of neighboring countries are frequently regarded as ‘threats’ to Japan in maintaining a distinguished position. While the emphasis of competitiveness appears reasonable as a national strategy, an overemphasis on competitiveness risks isolation from the regional and international communities.

Using the case of Japan, this article examines policy proposals and realities in the process of internationalizing higher education. First, this article establishes a framework for understanding the relationship between state/government, academics/universities and students/market, referring to the ‘glonacal agency heuristic’ model (Marginson and Rhodes, 2002). Then, the author analyses the strategies for approaching globalization presented by these three actors. As a conclusion, this article calls for a realistic approach towards mutual collaboration in the Asia Pacific region in the face of simultaneous calls for increased ‘national competitiveness’.

2. Theoretical Framework

To understand the complexity of the situation now facing Japan, the ‘glonacal agency heuristic’ model proposed by Marginson and Rhodes (2002) is quite useful. Their basic argument is for the necessity of a new model to understand the relationship between state, market and professional-collegial control, which are the main actors of Clark’s ‘triangle

model' (Clark, 1983) and may be reasonably expected to act as agents at the local, national and global levels. However, in the case of a country like Japan, it should not be taken for granted that these three main actors can achieve consensus on any single vision or work together as a united agency.

Figure 1 provides a modified version of Clark's 'triangle model', representing the hypothesis that there is a gap of responsiveness in ongoing globalization trends.

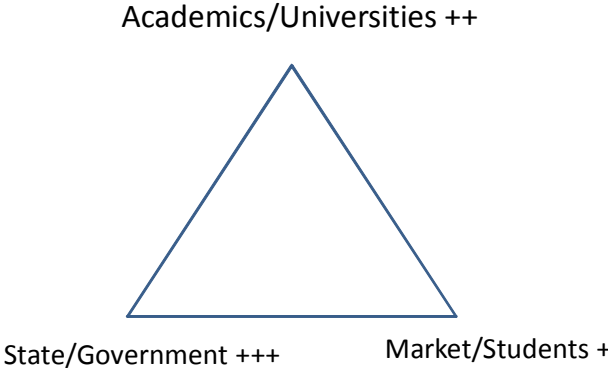


Figure 1 Clark's Triangle and Responsiveness to Globalization Trends

Firstly, a state or government tends to be highly responsive to globalization trends. A contemporary state government is always faced with circulating information regarding policy trends. Policy borrowing among nation states is accelerated under the ideologies of 'globalization', 'regional arena' and the 'knowledge economy'.

Secondly, academics and universities are generally less responsive than states and governments, but more responsive than the market and students which represent the general public. International academic exchanges are increasing, and domination of English as common academic language is already taken for granted - at least in the natural sciences and engineering fields. Development of Internet-based communication provides enormous opportunities for borderless academic communication, and

research collaboration without physical encounter is very common. The activities of academics and universities are also more decentralized in nature than those of states/governments. Therefore, it is unlikely that globalization trends will reach all of those who are locally established or satisfied with current domestic networks. At the same time, in the case of academics or universities that are dissatisfied, they can expand their activities or even proceed as independent persons without having significant influences on the local/domestic context.

Lastly, students and the market are least responsive to globalization trends. Internationally-oriented, core groups always exist, but tend to be transnational, or can transfer to higher education system at the forefront of globalization (such as those in the US or Singapore). Again, this can be accomplished without giving almost any impact to other actors if significant brain drain does not occur. The great majority, however, seems to be satisfied with local settings or much less able to adapt themselves to international settings.

This hypothesis could be applied basically to any country with a different context in internationalization or globalization. For example, in the United States, the federal government clearly applies pressure to higher education institutions and their associations to be more internationally competitive, sometimes by reforming their quality assurance systems, financial budgeting processes, and so on. On the other hand, the great majority of higher education institutions such as education oriented universities and colleges, community colleges and other post secondary education providers are mainly serving the domestic or local market. Although it is true that global university rankings are dominated by American universities, a kind of cosmopolitan attraction of human talent is basically concentrated at the post-graduate level even in those world class universities. For example, the share of international students at Harvard College in 2007 was 9.1% overall, compared with 26.4% at the post-graduate level alone (Harvard University, 2007). Having said this, there is nevertheless a great difference in the degree of responsiveness among institutions in different types of national contexts with regards to approaches to globalization.

Teichler (1999) proposed a typology for the internationalization of higher education, mainly referring to European countries, as outlined below. Here, we should examine possible applications in Asia Pacific contexts.

‘Would be internationalization’: a higher education system which hopes to be internationalized but lacks enough resources and needs external help. In the case of Asia Pacific countries, less developing countries such as Afghanistan or Laos could be examples.

‘Internationalization for survival’: a higher education system which is required to be internationalized for the survival of the nation or society. In the Asia Pacific, Singapore is a perfect example. Countries such as Malaysia, South Korea and Australia may also share principal characteristics of this model.

‘Internationalization in two arenas’: a higher education system which has two parallel orientations towards internationalization, namely, (i) an expansion of their own system toward other countries, and (ii) a transformation of learning environments for domestic students. Japan, and more recently China, could be good examples of this category. Those two countries have relatively strong national identities and influence higher education systems in other countries; on the other hand, they are trying to ‘internationalize’ their own campuses by inviting international faculty and students.

‘Internationalization at home (or arm-chair in Jürgen Enders!) explanation’): a higher education system which internationalizes itself largely by inviting international academics and students. Apparently, the United States is a typical example.

Japan is a typical example of a country facing ‘internationalization in two arenas’ mainly for the following reasons. Firstly, we could assume that the gap of responsiveness towards global trends among different actors in Clark’s triangle is larger in (a) and (c), above. In a country of type (a), academics/universities and markets/students do not have the capacity to internationalize, although they may not be satisfied with current conditions. In this case, even state/government may not be

responsive because of a serious lack of resources for communication with other countries or lack of will to open up its higher education system (as is the case with North Korea). In a country of type (c), all actors basically have enough resources if they exhibit a serious will to internationalize themselves. However, relatively strong domestic social and economic power could work to discourage academics, universities and students to seriously seek efforts to be internationalized. In this case, even if the government tries to exert pressures or offer incentives for internationalization, academics, universities and students may not respond as desired. In the case of Japan, the government has provided strong incentives for the internationalization of higher education, especially since the 1980s (Horie, 2002). It is often pointed out that Japanese students and academics are not internationalized, especially from the perspectives of English speaking countries (Eades et al., 2005; Mcveigh, 2002)

Secondly, Japan could be a rare example of the consistence of geographic coverage of a national language and national border. Japan is the only country which takes Japanese as its official language, and the presence of linguistic minorities continues to be very small, at least until quite recently. At the same time, Japan is one of only a few non-English or non-Chinese speaking countries which have realized high level doctoral education and research in its own language in this region.

3. Global trends and policy responses

The history of policy responses to global trends in higher education goes back to the latter half of 19th century, namely, the beginning of modern higher education in this country. In 1877, the Japanese government established the University of Tokyo as the first modern university authorized by the modern government. This university was aimed to be a 'world class' university from the beginning, and the government concentrated its higher education budget into this single university before the second national university (Kyoto University) started 20 years later. Many foreign faculty were invited with salaries which were extraordinary higher than the national average, who were then replaced by Japanese

faculties who had been sent to study in developed countries with government scholarship.

In 1935, Japan already had 45 universities and 218 higher education institutions (Monbusho, 1990). However, only nine ‘imperial universities’ had been established by the end of World War II, including ‘Taiwan’ in Taiwan and ‘Keijo’ in the Korean Peninsula which were given a distinguished position in the higher education system of this country. Although the official distinguished status of ‘imperial universities’ was abolished, these universities have continuously been given advantageous treatment in financial allocation to the present day (Amano, 2008), and all place favorably in global university rankings.

Full-scale government endeavors to internationalize Japanese higher education started when a plan to invite 100,000 international students was established in 1983. At that time, Japan hosted only 10,480 international students while having already achieved economic prosperity through the success of the export manufacturing industry, and was trying to transform its industry based on the high technology and information industries. In the 1980s, many US universities were invited to set up branch campuses in this country. Except for the exceptional success of Temple University Japan located in downtown Tokyo and a few small sized programs, almost all those campuses, located mainly in small cities or rural areas, were closed partly because they had not been authorized as ‘universities’ under the Japanese legal framework and partly because their marketing strategies did not fit the demand of Japanese higher learners (Torii, 2008; Yonezawa, 2008). Trials for the internationalization of Japanese higher education in the 1980s resulted mainly from strong government initiatives, especially those introduced by then-Prime Minister Nakasone, who aimed to establish a leading position for Japan in Asia and the world (Hood 2001; Schoppa, 1991). International students have been absorbed at various types of higher education institutions from ‘top’ to ‘mass’, with the number of international students exceeding 100,000 in 2003, mainly due to the rapid increase in the global flow of international students from East and South East Asian countries.

Table 1. Number and Share of International Students in Japan (2006)

China	74292	63.0%
South Korea	15974	13.5%
Taiwan	4211	3.6%
Malaysia	2156	1.8%
Vietnam	2119	1.8%
United States	1790	1.5%
Thailand	1734	1.5%
Indonesia	1553	1.3%
Bangladesh	1456	1.2%
Sri Lanka	1143	1.0%
Others	11499	9.8%
Total	117927	100.0%

Source: MEXT (2007) *Outline of the Student Exchange System in Japan 2007*.

The rapid progress of globalization at the turn of the century created significant pressure for Japanese policies towards the further internationalization of Japanese higher education. In the 1990s, the Japanese economy experienced a continuous state of economic recession also known as ‘the ten lost years’ under the severe trials of transforming locally oriented management and governance customs into globally competitive ones. However, compared to the New Economic Industries in East and South East Asia, the damage of the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis was considerably small. In order to support the development of human resource capacities in ASEAN, the Japanese government started to support the AUN-SEED network, a project to develop doctorate programs in the field of engineering at flagship universities in ASEAN countries through exchanges with Japanese universities (Umemiya and Tsutsumi, 2008).

On the other hand, flagship universities in Singapore, China and South Korea certainly showed themselves to be strong competitors for Japan in global research rankings. At the same time, Australia started to clarify the strategic usage of their higher education system as an exporting industry, and, at the same time, strengthened performance assessment and

financial linkages in research activities.

Under these environmental changes, Japanese higher education policy became one of the core economic and social issues, to be dealt with in a wider policy context at the Prime Minister level, rather than as part of education policy dealt with by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). For example, the Koizumi cabinet (April 2001 to September 2006) supported the idea of the 21st Century COE plan based on an idea to foster around 30 world class universities in 2001 (Yonezawa, 2003). The following administrations of Prime Ministers Abe (September 2006 to September 2007) and Fukuda (September 2007 to September 2008) also stressed initiatives in educational reform, and strongly argued the importance of the internationalization of higher education.

In January 2008, Fukuda declared a plan to invite 300,000 international students to Japan by 2020. In July 2008, six ministries including MEXT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) released its basic framework together. The figure 300,000 is considered to have been requested to maintain the current share of Japanese higher education in the international student market, while the achievement of this target appears to be very difficult. The Fukuda cabinet also revealed its idea to support around 30 universities as core universities for the internationalization of Japanese higher education (also known as the 'Global 30' plan).

At the same time, the quality assurance system of Japanese higher education has also been strengthened. In Japan, the quality assurance of higher education basically relied for many years on the Standard for the Establishment of Universities, which is the legal standard utilized for the authorization of newly established universities by governmental committees. An American-type accreditation system was introduced in 1947 under the supervision of the occupying command; however, it had been characterized by voluntary participation. From 2004, all universities and colleges were requested to accept a regularly-based quality assurance review called a 'certified evaluation' by external evaluation organizations (Higher Education Bureau, MEXT, 2006). Representative external

evaluation organizations such as the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) and the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) are full members of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies. The Japanese government also established a professional post graduate school system in order to meet the advanced skills and knowledge needed in professions by distinguishing them from traditional academic oriented post graduate programs.

Finally, it should be mentioned that there is an underlying transformation of labor and immigration policies underway in this country. The first baby boomers born just after the Second World War are now retiring, and a declining youth population cannot sustain the continuous development of human resources. The Cabinet's core policy document, *Economic and Fiscal Reform 2008: Basic Policies*, subtitled 'a country welcoming the world, growth by and for all, harmony with environment', clarified Japan's idea of expanding the acceptance of skilled foreign workers. Naturally, policies for the internationalization of higher education should be linked with this policy and need to attract globally competitive human resources from around the world. However, Japan has a long history of utilizing foreign workers as a buffer against economic fluctuations, and it is hard to know whether this is a genuine turning point for the internationalization of the labor force in this country.

4. Responses by Universities / Academics and Students/ Markets

The responses towards globalization trends by universities, academics and students are much slower and highly varied. At the same time, at least financially, both universities and students are relying heavily on governmental initiatives.

As for academics and universities, there are two main directions to take in responding to global trends. The first approach is to strengthen research capacities to internationally competitive levels. Although the representation of Japanese higher education system as a whole in global ranking is not high, top Japanese national universities are ranked consi-

derably high when taking into account the disadvantage of linguistic isolation. This is mainly due to the active research performance in natural sciences and the long and stable history of engineering. Although it is common to write articles in English in these fields, the absolute majority of classes and daily conversation are conducted in the Japanese language even at top-ranked research institutes. In 2007, the Japanese government started to support only five selected key research institutes (World Premier International Research Center Initiative, or WPI). This is the first trial whereby the government requests the official language of research institutes to be English, and suggests that world class research does not always require a cosmopolitan environment. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly common that international reviewers are involved in the selection of large research projects funded by governmental grants. Quite different from the situation of European researchers, however, it is rare that Japanese researchers apply for international research grants directly, partly because of the lack of a regional or international research grant system with at least some linkage with Japanese funds representing the largest economy in the region.

The second approach to meet global challenges is to improve the quality of education to meet international standards. However, for a non-English speaking country like Japan, it is very difficult to define what ‘international standards’ are. Some trials certainly exist. Professional education programs requiring transnational mobility certainly underscore the need for international viability of qualifications. Engineering is a typical example, and associations of engineers and engineering education established the Japan Accreditation Board of Engineering Education (JABEE) to implement voluntary based accreditation of engineering programs. In 2005, JABEE became an official member of the Washington Accord, the international alliance of accreditation bodies of engineering education.

Other institutions seek official recognition by foreign (mainly American) accreditation organizations. The Japanese government established a national quality assurance framework called ‘certified evaluation’, and required all universities, colleges and professional schools to accept regular based reviews by third party evaluation organizations certified by the

Japanese government (Higher Education Bureau, MEXT, 2006). Some universities actually obtain foreign accreditation. For example, Keio University and Nagoya University of Commerce and Business, both private institutions, have received accreditation of their Business schools by the Association of Advance Collegiate School of Business (AACSB). Similarly, International Christian University, a private liberal arts college, received accreditation by the American Academy for Liberal Education (AALE). These examples of foreign accreditation, however, do not necessarily mean the education programs are taught in English.

Top universities such as the University of Tokyo and Nagoya University tend to utilize benchmarking exercises to assess their education and other aspects in comparison with globally competitive foreign universities. However, main reports are primarily published in the Japanese language, which suggests the main consumers of these benchmarking results are limited to Japanese universities.

The greatest obstacle for the internationalization of Japanese universities is financial shortage. According to the result of a questionnaire survey by Tohoku University in 2008 (Yonezawa, 2008) Japanese universities are not expecting direct financial benefit from international activities (Table 2). Or, more precisely, the internationalization of Japanese universities relies almost completely on government initiatives. Figure 2 indicate that national universities tend to generate income from research funds by internationalization, and private universities expects more on governmental subsidies allocated according to the number of international students, rather than tuition fees from those international students.

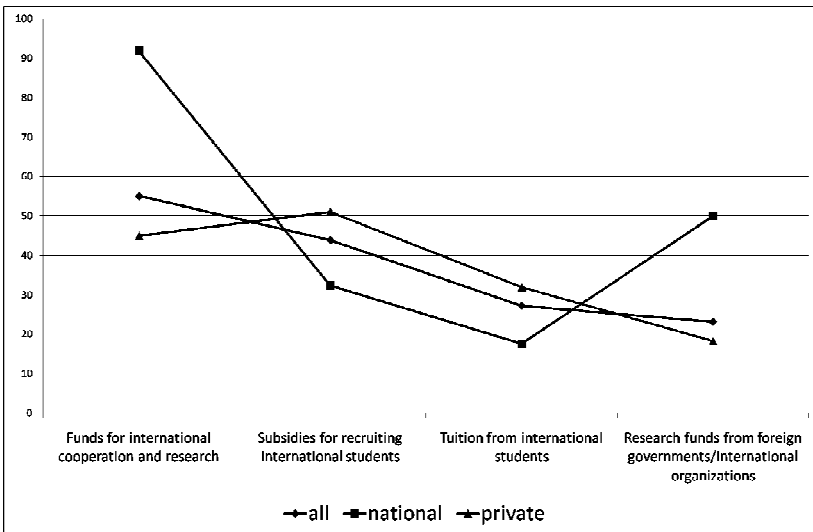
Although around 80 percent of international students studying in Japan are technically 'self-financed' students, private universities are expecting some financial incentives from governmental support for internationalization, and it is frequent that international students engage in tuition bargaining. There are various types of public support systems for international students; some provide funds to students, and others are routed directly to higher education institutions. Considering the fact that most international students in Japan come from middle income or developing countries, it could be concluded that Japanese policies for at-

tracting international students have to be supported significantly by public finance.

Table 2. Internationalization and finance (%)

	Total (N=609)	National (N=76)	Local Public (N=67)	Private (N=466)
Implement internationalization if it is financially beneficial	2.6	1.3	0.0	3.2
Implement internationalization if it is not a financial burden	18.6	10.5	19.4	19.7
Implement internationalization under the expectations of non-monetary returns such as the enhancement of global image.	45.3	53.9	28.4	46.4
Internationalization itself has significance, so there is no expectations of financial returns	32.0	34.2	50.7	29.0
Other	1.5	0.0	1.5	1.7

Based on the survey by Tohoku University 2008 (Yonezawa, 2008)



Based on a 2008 survey by Tohoku University (Yonezawa, 2008)

Figure 2 Expectation of income generation through internationalization

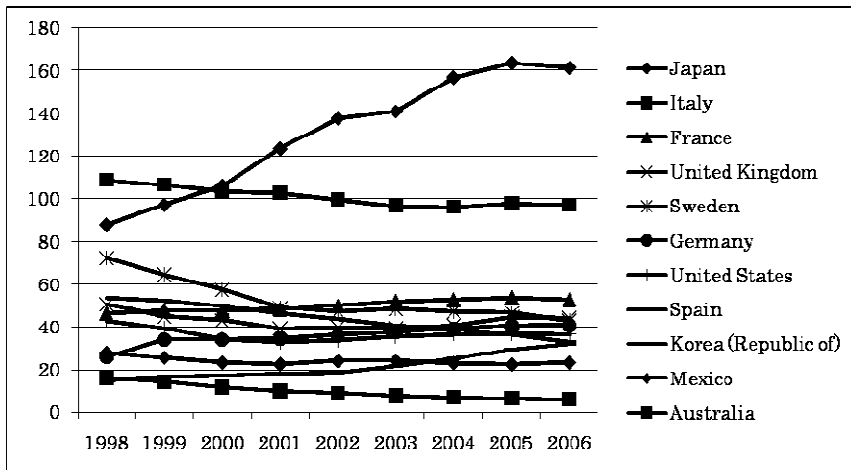
5. Government-Market Linkage: A trap for the Universities?

The observations above suggest that universities and academics are relying heavily on government or state initiatives in their internationalization processes. At the same time, the low responsiveness of the market and students work as a barrier for the internationalization of Japanese universities, especially in their being under increasing financial pressure as seen in most other higher education institutions in the world. Therefore, strong initiatives from government are always necessary for the further development or even the sustenance of current conditions. However, it does not mean that a long term commitment by the government to the internationalization process is always assured.

First of all, financial contributions to higher education in general are quite small in the Japanese case. The OECD's *Education at a Glance 2008* (OECD, 2008) revealed that the finance of higher education in Japan is relies highly on private contributions, and that government investment in education in GDP per capita, including primary and secondary education, is among the lowest among OECD countries.

Secondly, the Japanese government has been trying to cut the public budget in a climate of neo-liberalism, and under the strong pressure of its rapidly increasing governmental debt shown in Figure 3. Higher education is not an exception, with public budgeting for basic operational costs for national universities suffering minus one percent of the budgetary ceiling since 2004. As for the top universities, some increased income for competitive project funds, including 'internationalization' or 'world class research', could be expected. However, most national universities and local-public universities are suffering from continuous decreases in annual income. Private universities struggle in even more severe conditions. From the 1990s, the government has released the quantitative control of students learning at universities and junior colleges. In 2008, 47.1% of four year private universities are now facing difficulty to enroll a sufficient number of students (PMACPSJ, 2008). Some universities attempt to enroll international students to compensate for this trend, with tuition

bargaining arrangements being implemented in many cases.



Source: OECD Stats

Figure 3. Total central government debt % of GDP

Therefore, it would be a mistake to connect recent government initiatives for the internationalization of higher education with actually increases in public expenditure for Japanese higher education. Especially, the recent political instability of post-Koizumi administrations tends to accompany frequent policy changes and unrealized, shortsighted propaganda. The current ‘internationalization’ policy of Japan is highly related to the rapidly changing diplomatic context in the Asian region. Clearly, the significant increase in China’s socio-economical influence throughout the region has a strong impact on Japanese diplomacy and international policy making, including initiatives related to higher education.

In the summer of 2008, two Japanese project teams set out to examine higher education policy from almost completely opposite directions within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. One project team aims for improve world ranking positions of Japanese universities, while not necessarily reaching the strong budgetary support extended to the top universities. For example, in April 2008, Heizo Takenaka, a professor of Keio (top

private) University and former Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication under the Koizumi Cabinet, argued for the possible privatization of the University of Tokyo to be more competitive in top university rankings, in line with the general idea of the ‘privatization of public services’²⁾. The other project team examined existing examples of waste in public expenditure³⁾. Here, many programs supported by competitive funds, such as Global COE, a program for improving internationalization of higher education, have come under criticism as ‘wasteful’ or, at least, ‘ineffective’ expenditure of public budget.

Considering the existence of a strong and long-established bureaucracy that has effectively assured consistency of Japanese governmental policy, it is unlikely that government initiatives for internationalization of Japanese higher education will suddenly cease. However, both the Liberal Democratic Party and the leading opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, are arguing to strengthen the initiatives of politicians against the conservative tendencies of bureaucracy. In cases where universities and academics are not confident in those measures taken to realize their internationalization, universities may fall into a trap whereby the government merely follows the least responsive views of the market or the general public, and suddenly terminates active commitment to the internationalization of higher education.

6. Conclusion

This examination of the process of internationalizing Japanese higher education concludes that, at least in the case of Japan, a ‘glonacal agency’ has yet to emerge, and the coordination in Clark’s triangle is ongoing in the process of internationalization. Compared to the government, universities and academics are less responsive to globalization trends, with action on the part of students and the market least likely of all.

Although it is clear that top (mainly national and some private) universities in Japan are deeply involved in global competition to achieve or maintain positions as world class research universities, the majority of Japanese institutions are not directly involved in the international market

game. Actually, ‘internationalization’ at top universities tends to be narrowly focused on cutting edge research activities, and is therefore not directly related to the international student market. In contrast, the majority of Japanese private universities define internationalization as the provision of international experiences for domestic students mainly at undergraduate level. Most universities do not expect financial benefit to arise from this, and it is unlikely that they can expect financial contribution from the students under very severe over-supply conditions in the Japanese higher education market. Universities rarely expect financial benefit directly from internationalization or their involvement with the international student market either. This suggests that universities and academics cannot expect the support of market or private funds for further internationalization and have to rely on government initiatives.

It would be overly optimistic for universities to continue to rely on current, strong government initiatives to provide the impetus for the internationalization of Japanese higher education. It is imperative that universities and academics themselves display some initiative of their own.

In order to sustain a continuous internationalization process, dynamic initiatives by academics and universities for knowledge creation and exchange are indispensable.

Notes

- 1) Based on his presentation at Changing Academic Profession Workshop by Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, 7 to 8 February, 2008.
- 2) An article of *Diamond Online*. 14 April 2008.
<http://diamond.jp/series/nippon/10002/>
- 3) The memo of the discussion of this project team is available on the website of Taro Kono.
http://www.taro.org/policy/post_3.php

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日本の高等教育の国際化

－政策論争と現実－

米澤彰純

<要旨>

高等教育の国際化は内政のアジェンダにおいて主要な位置を世界中で占めてきた。しかしながら、国家の文脈は国際化の実際のプロセスで未だ影響力を有している。日本の場合について言えば、高度な高等教育システムに基づく強いアイデンティティに加えて、科学技術セクター及び産業・サービス経済に関する隣国の継続的發展が、政策の方向性と実際の国際化プロセスに対して重要な影響を与えている。

本稿は、日本を事例として、大学及び学術関係者による高等教育の国際化に向けた自律的なイニシアティブの必要性を主張するものである。日本の政府とおよび高等教育機関は、急速に変化する地域の環境の中で自らのアイデンティティを発見する過程にある。その結果、国家や高等教育機関の戦略の方向性は、定まらず、一貫していないものとしばしば認識されてきた。

継続した国際化のプロセスを支えるために、知識の創造と交換のための学術関係者と大学によるダイナミックなイニシアティブは不可欠なのである。
