# Reconstruction of Participation:

# Some implications to Social Studies Education from a

# Comparative Study on Youth Participation of Sweden and Japan

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**Abstract**

This research attempts to reconstruct youth participation in postmodern context and tries to extract some implications from the comparative study of Sweden and Japan to social studies education. The beginning of paper provides a brief summary of the definition of youth participation and theories of youth participation such as Roger Hart's ladder of participation with a critical view with the post-structuralist viewpoint. The second part of the paper will showcase findings of an empirical study conducted by Morozumi (2017) that examined how youth participation policy and practice had evolved in the historical development of youth policy in Sweden and Japan. With these findings, the conclusion part drew insights to social studies education in regard to youth participation.

Setting influence as a purpose of participation, introducing resource perspective for youth participation and acknowledging fluidity and diversity of participation are suggested as an implication of the study concluded from overall research.

**Keywords**: youth, participation, post-structuralist, Sweden, Japan

### Growing Concern about Youth Participation

Generations of young people have repeatedly been lamented over their recklessness throughout time. Dr. Pumpian-Mindlin (1965) had quoted the phrase by Greek poet, Hesiod from the eighth century B.C., as a typical example of the lamentations of the older generation about the youth which take place repeatedly throughout the history.

> *I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent upon the frivolous youth*
> *of today, for certainly, all youth are reckless beyond words.... When I was a boy, we were*
> *taught to be discreet and respectful of our elders, but the present youth are exceedingly*
> *wise and impatient of restraint. (PUMPIAN-MINDLIN, 1965, p. 1).:*

Though the necessity of children and young people's participation was claimed in different contexts

in different countries beforehand, it is fair to say that a universal consensus on children's participation was achieved when the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (from here and after referred to as UNCRC) was ratified in 1989 (United Nations, 1989). The consensus by the international institution vitalized civil initiatives as well as children and youth organization globally. Among other principles such as provision and protection, participation is regarded as one of the most fundamentals principle of the convention as supported by the following statements:

> *States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight (United Nations, 1989, p. 4).*

UNCRC was adopted in 196 countries including Sweden and Japan, which had a tremendous impact on many aspects of child and youth policy in local policy and practice. It is worth mentioning that awareness of children's participation arose in the context of education for sustainable development (ESD). In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) put emphasis on the participation of children in the context of education for sustainable development (ESD) as Harber (2014) claimed:

> *Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues ... It is critical for archiving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behavior consistent with sustainable development and for effective participation in decision-making ( Manteaw, 2012, p. 373).*

The resolution to implement ESD was adopted at The World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002, which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa (United Nations, 2002). At the same year's United Nations General Assembly, The Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) 2005-2014 (proposed by Japan and Sweden) submit proposal – was adopted, citing education as an indispensable part of sustainable development. The reason why ESD requires participation is that ESD cannot be accomplished without the "holistic approach", where humanity is seen as not separated from nature but rather in the context that all life on the planet are interconnected and interdependent (Harber, 2014, p. 134).

Yet, participation is an ongoing subject of youth policy that the most of countries have to prioritize as Ban Ki-moon -- the UN Secretary General – demanded: "all governments to help young people participate more fully in civic and public life, and in making decisions that will build a better world" (Ban Ki-moon, 2014). This means that the idea of youth participation still has room to develop and needs to be contextualized to suit in a modern time.

## Aims and Organization of the Paper

Based on the research concerns discussed above, this research will attempt to redesign youth participation in postmodern context and try to extract some implications from empirical study of social studies

education. The beginning of the paper provides a brief exegesis of the definition of youth participation, and some of the rigid theory of youth participation such as Roger Hart's ladder of participation. This section will also attempt to provide a critical view of Hart's ladder of participation and develop it using the post-structuralist view point, which later will be referenced to consolidate the basis of a theory of youth participation. The second part of the paper will showcase findings of an empirical study conducted by Morozumi (2017) that examined how youth participation policy and practice evolved in the historical development of youth policy in Sweden and Japan. With these findings, the last sections will try to get some insight into social studies education with regards to youth participation.

## Concept of Youth Participation

Despite an enormous amount of inconclusive debate about the definition of youth participation, one can trace back its original meaning by dating back to the Latin language as Loncle and Muniglia (2008) advocated that the word "participation" meant to take part in and take part of something, being involved and sharing something. The concept of participation had been discussed in different arenas such as international development studies as well as in educational contexts such as rights of children, youth work, and education for sustainable development. In relation to the child and youth participation, it is worth quoting the United Nations' Conventions of the Rights of the Child (hereinafter: UNCRC), which was adopted in 1989, known as one of the most fundamental provisions in the field of child and youth participation (United Nations, 1989). Children's Provision, Protection, and Participation (what are called the "3Ps") are regarded as one of the most important aspects of the conventions, which stems from the statements following stipulations in the UNCRC about children's rights to express their own views in all matters affecting children (United Nations, 1989, p. 4).

Similar to the UNCRC's statements, Chawla defines children's participation as "a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions" (Chawla, 2001). Participation Works Network (Participation Works Network, 2014) pronounced its definition with the emphasis on the influences with the citation of Treseder and Smith (1997): "Participation is a process where someone influences decisions about their lives and this leads to change." Comparing to above definition, Hart (1992) added the role of participation in relation to democracy as he defined it as follows.

> *Process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built, and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured (Hart, 1992, p. 5).*

Though definitions differ slightly by each scholar, one can summarize that youth participation is the democratic process of young people taking part in and sharing in the decision-making in all matters affecting them, which leads to change and influences their lives.

## Criticism on Ladder of Participation

Without mention, one can regard that Roger Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation as one of the

most influential frameworks when discussing how to involve children and young people in a decision-making process (Barn & Franklin, 1996). It is because the framework – originally adapted from Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) – named after "Degree of Children's Participation" (Table 1) had contributed to distinguishing levels of participation of children such as non-participation and "real" participation (Hart, 1992). The ladder consists of eight levels: the higher, the level of participation of actor is high, and vice-versa. The higher the number, the "better" children's participation takes place. At the lower rungs (from one to three) children's participation is categorized as "non-participation", where children tend to be manipulated by adults in community practice or are just being there wearing T-shirts as decoration for the movement without consulting them. From rung 4, children are given more information and, roles and opportunities to express their views, yet are limited. At the top rung, children have the full power to exercise their right to influence over the matters concerning them.

Though Malone and Hartung (2010) indicated the framework played a significant role in consolidating the foundation of studies and practice surrounding child and youth participation, critical views on Hart's model were directed to the concept of the ladder. For instance, Reddy and Ratna (2002) put more emphasis on changing adult's roles in relation to children rather than letting children step up the level of participation: hence, the term "ladder" is regarded as a misnomer. The "ladder" might have a risk of children getting paralyzing action in the project as they might feel the fear of not reaching the higher level of participation according to Roberts (Roberts, 2003). Different forms of participation in different levels (Treseder & Smith, 1997) and "child initiated or directed" as the highest level of rung (Ackermann, Feeny, Hart, & Newman, 2003; Karen & Catherine, 2010) were also claimed by other researchers. As it is hard to explore the fundamental value of youth participation just referencing criticisms against Hart's model, the following section will invite discussion on participation in a realm of international development studies to see what is necessary in order to achieve "good" participation.

Table 1: Degree of Children's Participation

| Rung | Phenomenon | Level of Participation | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Child-initiated shared decision with adults | Degree of Participation | |
| 7 | Child-initiated and directed | | ↑ |
| 6 | Adult initiated shared decision with children | | |
| 5 | Consulted and informed | | |
| 4 | Assigned but informed | | |
| 3 | Tokenism | Non-participation | |
| 2 | Decoration | | |
| 1 | Manipulation | | |

Source: Roger Hart (Hart, 1992, p. 8)

## What is the Issue of Participation? From the Scope of Participation Development

Participatory Development (hereinafter PD) is a form of approach that had been shaped in the field of international development and took root is during the 1970s as Paulo Freire championed that local inhabitants

should express their needs to achieve development (Giles, 2014). The definition of PD sounds similar to what has been discussed above.

> *Participatory development is a process through which stakeholders can influence and share control over development initiatives, and over the decisions and resources that affect themselves. (Asian Development Bank, 1996).*

In this definition, agents or actors are described as "stakeholders" and participation is deemed as to influence and share control over the decision that concerns actors. As Giles wrote, PD was insisted upon to balance out the relationships between Western communities and local inhabitants as development project typically tends to be conducted without the involvement of local experts (Giles, 2014), which sometimes is called "basic needs approach"(Jennifer A. Elliott, 2014). This approach, consequently, helps to soften the idea of Euro-centrism, positivism, and topdownism and "improve efficiency and effectiveness of formal development program"(Giles, 2014), that ultimately leads to promote mutual learning. Should local people be only invited by development agents to projects, it is deemed as an "invited space", while if locals are able to initiate in a development projects, it is regarded as "claimed space" (Giles, 2014, p.206). The classification of two spaces is somewhat identical to the purpose of Hart's ladder which distinguishes real participation and non-participation. Despite the existence of different types of forms of participation, Giles remarked that PD fundamentally is about power (Giles, 2014).

## What is Power? Youth Participation in Postmodern Contexts

In order to know the reason why power matters for good participation, one can get insight from the post-structuralist's point of view on power. To begin with, a poststructuralist sees power as "everywhere" and participation as an effect of power (Greg, 2010, p. 336). The former view stems from the post-structuralist attitude toward discourse about power as they assert "Power is everywhere." The latter view that participation is as an effect of power, is laid on the concept that power is something to be exercised and not possessed, which, in other words, is neither a disposition or capacity nor a resource or a commodity (Foucault & Ewald, 2003, p. 13). This idea allows blooming diversity and fluidity of form children's participation in the context of power. The complexity of the children's participation stems from the idea that power is not to be possessed by children or adults but rather it is "fluid, dynamic, negotiated, and contextual" (Malone & Hartung, 2010, p.26). From a practitioner's perspective, the transformation of power in the nature of the relationship between children and adults is essential. To promote participation of children, Reddy and Ratna (2002, p. 338) indicated that transformation should happen from "one of either independence or independence to one of interdependence".

Along similar lines, Greg (Greg, 2010, p. 338) developed claims about the necessity of reframing children and adult participation into relational and spatial practice. Greg's part of the argument reconsidered the foundation of a participatory process with the concept of "power with" by Hanna Arendt (Kesby, 2007, p. 337). This view does not see the individual agent as autonomous or empowered, it rather acknowledges social production of "relational agency" within intergenerational contexts, where partier's relationship process becomes more reciprocal, lateral, and associational(Greg, 2010, p. 337). Foregoing

discussion implies that alteration of power relationship lies at the heart of the discussion on children's participation.

## Place and Area of Youth Participation

Another perspective raised by post-structuralists on children's participation is: "Power is everywhere"(Greg, 2010, p. 336). Children's participation happens everywhere as UNCRC depicts that children have "rights to participate all matters that may affect themselves"(United Nations, 1989). But where exactly can they exercise their rights to participate? Where does children's participation take place? In which part of the societies can children take part in? There has been a numerous amount of studies that tried to categorize where participation happens. In order to answer the questions, Morozumi's work (2017) had tried to classify areas of youth participation. He gathered three classifications of youth participation from Loncle & Muniglia (2008), European youth policy document (COUNCIL OF EUROPE & COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, 1998), and a framework jointly developed by the UK's National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) and Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) (Ellie Brodie et al., 2009, p. 42). Combining these typologies into a spreadsheet and mapping them out by similarities, consequently, he concluded there are mainly three kinds of participation: political participation, social and civic participation, and participation in education and employment (Morozumi, 2017, p. 18). He argued that this by no means signifies that young people's participation takes place in each place nor that activities are separate without any overlaps.

## What Accelerates Youth Participation?

Criticism on Hart's ladder of participation and post-structuralists discussion on power gives some insights to rethink factors that are needed to achieve good participation of youth. Participation as a right is the first factor that one can take into account, for children and young people's participation was initially stressed in the context of a human right-based approach as it was proclaimed as the right to express views on whatever matters to children in UNCRC. This perspective can be analyzed as to whether the policy and practice declare the significance of children and young people's view are taken into consideration.

The resource for participation comes as the second factor. Just declaring the assurance of children's views does not always mean it brings actual "good" participation in reality. Hart's ladder contributed to making it possible for practitioners to differentiate non-participation and real participation. Still, "Child-initiated shared decision with adults" – which Hart suggested as the top of the degree of participation – cannot be sufficient measurement to identify true participation as some scholars proposed "child initiated or directed" as the highest level of participation (Karen & Catherine, 2010, p. 28). In order to achieve this high level of participation at global, country and community level, providing necessary resource and a supportive environment are essential as UNICEF advocates (UNICEF, 2001). What is more, to tell the highest level of participation, it is highly important to investigate what had happened after the results of "good" participation of children and young people because it is often the case in local practices without any change.

Last but not the least factor that is also related to post-structuralists' view point is a transformation of power. From their point of view, it is fair to say that one of the factors that can affect young people's participation is to transform the power structure between adults and youths. It is because this view does not see individual agents as autonomous agents, but as reciprocal, lateral and associational agents (Greg, 2010, p. 337).

One can easily imagine that in order for children and young people to completely devote themselves to an activity, it is better for adults to back off as much as they can. However, this does not mean that power should always be in the hands of children and young people because power flows between children and adults differently in time and contexts. Sometimes, adults need to hold power, whereas it would be transferred immediately to children without specific efforts. Given overall discussion, one can draw a theory of youth participation in Figure 1.
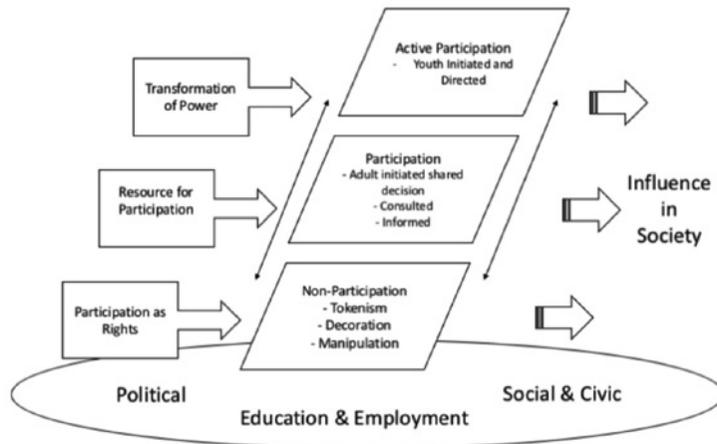


Figure 1: Theory of Youth Participation

Young people's participation is a phenomenon where young people exert influence on the process in everything that concerns them, which typically can be categorized in political participation, social and civic participation, and participation in education and employment. Good participation happens when young people themselves initiates decision-making process and bad participation happens when they are less informed and given less power over the decision by actors and the societal context surrounding them. PD and post-structuralists' views on power gave hints on what is necessary to overcome bad participation and achieve good participation. One asserts that, as participation is a phenomenon that is defined by the relational and reciprocal process that power, a transformation of power and making sure the fluidity of power is one of the essential elements of youth participation. Based on the above discussion that clarified core theory of youth participation, the following section will aim to discuss the applicability of this theory to empirical study on youth participation. The research question here is, how the theory of youth participation discussed above is applicable to the actual practice and reality of youth participation?

## Comparative Studies of Youth Participation Policy in Sweden and Japan

An empirical study conducted by Morozumi (Morozumi, 2017), compared youth policy in Sweden and Japan in terms of youth participation. The study investigated historical development of youth policy in each country and gave analysis on modern youth policies in regard to youth participation. Highlighting the difference

of societal and cultural background between Sweden and Japan at the beginning of the paper, the study had found some commonalities and dissimilarities in youth policies between Sweden and Japan. The following section will depict findings of a comparative study.

**Comparing Youth Policy History between Sweden and Japan**

History wise, youth policy in Sweden and Japan had developed in many different ways and different contexts as showcased in Table 2. The first common factor between Sweden and Japan is that the establishment of youth policy was founded in the modern nation-state in the urbanization process. The Swedish modern welfare system preceded Japan with the modern education system that also covers youth population. As urbanization processed, young people who are not covered by welfare policy went out in the street and became "Gang Boys" which called for the establishment of youth policy outside education with state responsibility in 1898 (Forkby, 2014). Whereas Japan's modern nation system was established in 1868 after the Meiji Restoration followed by the introduction of the first education system, which replaced the role of the traditional-organic youth group in the rural community. Nevertheless, self-organized youth groups with educational purposes had expanded mainly in the urban areas, which raised recognition of youth organizations formed by the government. What is informative at this point between the two countries is that youth policy perceives young people outside school, that is to say, both countries recognize the distinction of education and youth policy in formal and non-formal education.

Table 2: Historical development of Swedish and Japanese youth policy

| Stage | Sweden | | Japan | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Year | Context | Year | Context |
| 0 | 1898 | Articulation of state responsibility for children and youth | ~1868 | Emergence of organic local child and youth organization Introduction of education system |
| 1 | ~1940 | Youth Care Committee Young people as social problem Birkagården | 1915 ~1945 | Intervention of militarized government to young people Hitler Jugend visit Japan Integration of all youth organization |
| 2 | 1945 ~1960 | Emphasis on user participation Introduction of youth center and youth worker Open activity | 1945~ | Democratization of child and youth organization Flourish of youth organization |
| 3 | 1960~ | Young people as a resource of society Disturbance of Youth Center | 1960~ | Youth policy for juvenile delinquency and working youth Expansion of Student Riot De-politicization of education |
| 4 | 1980~ | Protection from commercialism, Subsidies to youth organization | 1980~ | Increase of school truancy pupils Alternative school movement |
| 5 | 1990~ | Ratification of UNCRC First youth policy bill Children's Ombudsman | 1990~ | Ratification of UNCRC Emergence of economically vulnerable young people Volunteer boom |
| 6 | 2000~ | Participation to influence Recognition of vulnerable youth | 2003~ | Youth policy for vulnerable youth |
| 7 | 2013~ | Political Participation of young people | 2010~ | First youth policy bills R-politicized participation of young people |

However, each countries' youth policy took different paths afterward. Despite that Swedish youth policy recognized young people as a social problem, the Youth Care Committee succeeded to promote discussion on young people's participation in the 1940s (Forkby, 2014). The discussion pondered the power relationship between young people and adults and put emphasis on user participation. In this sense, one can argue that ideological-based discussion on how to promote youth participation took place in the relatively early stage of Swedish youth policy history. On the other hand, Japan was caught by waves of World War □ that accelerated militarization of youth organizations, which was far apart from an ideological sense of youth participation. Though youth organization was expanded with the help the government's credit and support, it was because of the fact that the government utilized youth organization as a means of military training, an idea is inspired by the Boy Scout movement. In the process of democratization of the Japanese government after World War II, any kind of government relationship with youth organizations became a sensitive issue considering what had happened during the war. Without mention, it became one of the characteristics of Japanese youth policy which is somewhat different from Swedish youth policy.

In contrast, one of the unique backgrounds of Swedish youth policy that was barely seen in Japan was an emergence of immigrant policy. After the World War, Sweden welcomed labor immigrants due to the shortage of the labor force within the country. Based on the agreement, Sweden accepted immigrants from Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece during the 1940s and 1950s. Later the number of immigrants including voluntary immigration skyrocketed unexpectedly in late the 1960s. By the 1970s, the major portion of immigrant was replaced by refugees and relatives of former immigrants (Tomas, 2008). Along with the increase of immigrants, the Swedish government launched a project called Million Program in 1965, which was a housing policy to increase the number of residences in many suburbs of a large cities all over Sweden. One can assume that youth centers were beginning to be build and became an important community space for integration of diversified society in this process. This was preceded by EU's youth policy giving recognition to youth work as a means of integration of society in the 1990s.

Another dissimilarity between Sweden and Japan in the historical development of youth policy is the depoliticization of education. The 1960s is characterized by student movements all around the globe, which took place even in Sweden and Japan. The occupation of the student building by Stockholm University student took place in 1968 in Stockholm, which was inspired by the protests of May 1968 in France. This occurred in Tokyo in 1969 at University of Tokyo. The backlash of the student movement was tremendous in Japan. The government of Japan banned high school students' political activities in 1969. A scholar argues that this prohibition hinders the political education in school, resulting in political apathy of young people today (ISOZAKI Ikuo, 2011). Sweden also struggles to cope with rough young people's situations, e.g. some young people were visiting youth centers with drug and alcohol use during the 1960s.

In and after the 1980s, Swedish and Japanese youth policy began to show clear differences gradually. The number of pupils declining to attend school increased in Japan, which triggered calling for the diversification of means of education such as providing alternative ways of learning for children. While in Sweden, national youth policy switched direction to provide subsidies to youth organizations as a means to promote youth participation to tackle the wave of consumptive society. This policy shift seems to be similar to that of Japan on the surface as Japanese government gave credits to volunteer activities in 1979 as an alternative solution for the declining number of memberships in youth organizations. The year was 1995 when Great Hanshin earthquake

took place and boosted volunteering, which thereupon was recognized as one of the main means for young people's social participation in youth policy of Japan later.

Nevertheless, active participation of volunteering was not reflected on voting turnout in the general election. Particularly, the voting turnout of young people had dropped. The voting turnout of young people aged 20 to 29 years old was 57.76% in 1990, which dropped to 47.46% in 1993 and 36.42% in 1996 (Association for Promoting Fair Election, 2014). Active involvement in volunteering but without political engagement is a symptom of lack of active citizenship among young people according to Kodama (Kodama, 2011). Kodama (2011), citing Bernard Crick's idea, stressed the importance of cultivating political literacy of young people among other strands of citizenship education: social and moral responsibility, and community involvement (Crick, 1998). According to Crick (1998), participation without political literacy would entail the risk that young people are being manipulatively utilized by community or government with a special intention. For instance, one can associate this utilization with the militarization of youth organizations during the war in Japan. In this point of view, only encouraging participation of volunteering without political literacy would not only limit young people's area of participation but also raise citizen without a critical view on politics.

## Comparing Modern Youth Policy between Sweden and Japan

Another analysis that he gave was on modern legislated youth policy based on the above comparison of the historical development of youth policy in Sweden and Japan. With the self-organized framework, he sorted youth policy established during 1993 to 2015 Sweden and Japan in and their main efforts for youth participation, which is summarized in Table 3. Each countries' national youth policy partly includes some of the essence in its own context and is implemented on different levels according to the situation of young people. Some of the elements are shared between the two countries and some are not. Based on Table 3, characteristics and commonalities between the two countries' youth policy from 1993 to 2015 are described in Figure 2.
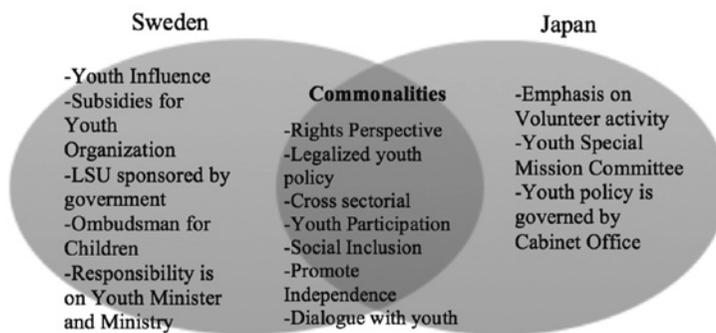


Figure 2: Differences and Commonalities of Swedish and Japanese modern youth policy

## Differences and Commonalities of Swedish and Japanese Youth Participation Policy

A clear difference can be observed between the two-nations' youth policies from the empirical point of view. For example, the purpose of Swedish youth policy for participation clearly proclaims extending young

people's influence to society, while Japanese youth policy remains to educate young people as an independent members of society who actively engage in society with appropriate exercise of right and taking responsibility (Headquoter of development and support for children and youth, 2016). Swedish youth policy not only assures that young people actually feel that they can have an influence in society but also rearranges the political system to involve young people in policy-making processes with many different measures. For instance, investigations on the age discrimination in 2009 and review of age composition of municipal decision-making bodies in 2004 were conducted as efforts of Swedish youth policy. One of the deviant policies of Sweden is subsidies to the youth organization, which was initiated in 1993's youth policy. In 2017, 212 million Swedish kronor from government subsidies were allocated to 110 children and youth organizations (MUCF, 2017). One can analyze that this initiative is conducted, for Swedish youth policy regard providing a resource to youth organization as an important essence of youth participation. In contrast, Japanese youth policy emphasizes volunteering rather than giving a financial resource to youth organizations.

Considering area and place of the youth participation described in the former chapter, the overemphasis on volunteering would limit the diversity of youth participation. Plus, as Tanaka (1988) pointed out there might be a chance that volunteer activity without actual change in society, contradicts the fundamental aim of youth participation.

Table 3: Comparing modern youth policy in Sweden and Japan

| Sweden | | | Japan | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Title | Main efforts for youth participation | Year | Title | Main efforts for youth participation |
| 1993 | Youth Policy | -Subsidies to youth organization<br>-Children's Ombudsman<br>-Realization of youth idea at Youth House | 2008 | National Youth Development Policy | Raise public awareness for voting, public safety<br>Support program of leadership of next generation and successor of tradition<br>International exchange program |
| 1998 | On Terms of Youth : Youth Policy for Democracy | - LSU officially receive government fund<br>-Local board with student majority<br>-Youth Delegation | 2009 | Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People | Youth special mission report committee |
| 2004 | The Power to Decide - The Right to Welfare | -Forums for youth<br>-international cooperation<br>-Prevention for youth in risk | 2010 | Vision for Children and Young People | Promotion of education related to social development and social participation (citizenship education)<br>Securing of opportunities for children and young people to express their views and opinions<br>Promotion of volunteering and other social participation activities |
| 2009 | Strategy for Youth Policy | School Election 2010<br>Dialogue for common values<br>Training of local youth coordinator<br>Youth perspective in the Countryside Program Sweden, 2007-2013 | 2015 | Vision for Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People | Support for social participation (Education on attitude for participation in society)<br>Promotion of volunteering and other social participation activities.<br>Reflect opinion of children and young people, the membership of relevant council and round table should be carefully considered if the subject requires intergenerational agreement.<br>Checking and evaluation of implementing this child and youth policy will be conducted with hearing opinions from experts or children and young people. |
| 2013 | With a Focus on Youth - A Policy of good living conditions, power and influence | Dialogue with children and youth<br>· Support material for teachers on political information at school<br>· Project to increase turnout in the national elections and in elections 2014<br>Preventing that individuals adhere to violent extremist groups and support the defection<br>· Support for municipalities and county councils working on innovative ways to strengthen youth participation in local democracy | | | |

Young people's participation in policy decision making is covered in both youth policies in Sweden and Japan. However, its methodology differs significantly. In Sweden, the Swedish Youth Organization Council; LSU, is regarded as an official representative body of all youth organization in Sweden. It is comprised of representatives of the national youth organization, which normally have regional chapters at municipal levels. As such, the voice of young people is reflected through youth organization to the national government by offering dialogue opportunities with Youth Ministers. There exists an obligatory system that the government needs to get feedback from stakeholders of youth organizations when the new bill is drafted, which is called the Referral System. What is remarkable here is that the list of youth organizations regarded as stakeholders is selected by Swedish Youth Organization Council; LSU.

On the other hand, in Japan, initiatives of young people's participation in policy-making process are realized by the Youth Special Mission Committee, of which methodology is limited in its number of participants as well as the representation of young people's opinions. Since there is no official youth representative body that works like LSU in Japan, it is highly recommended to diversify means of young people's participation in the policy-making process. However, given the past experience of Japanese youth organizations being integrated and militarized by the national government, it is understandable how hard it is to establish an integrated youth representative body.

## Some Implications from Comparative Studies on Swedish and Japanese Youth Policy

In Japan, the participation of young people had been strongly emphasized and many practices were vitalized in and after the 1990s when United Nation's Convention on the Rights of a Child was ratified, and Education for Sustainable Development came onto the scene. Still, low voting turnout among Japanese youth had become common and less young people felt that they could change society. The aftermath of the Tōhoku earthquake in 2011 had brought a huge impact on Japanese society. The year 1999 (when the Great Hanshin earthquake occurred) is called "the year of NPO" as many non-profit organizations were organized to help out people in the devastated area. Likewise, people's minds begun to change after Tohoku earthquake in 2011. In fact, the number of people who took part in volunteering skyrocketed during this time. Just before the State Secrecy Law was established in October 2013, the youth political organization called SEALDs was organized and got into a spot as they were protesting against the law with their own "youthful" term. As voting age was finally lowered to 18 years old in 2016, a recommendation by Minister of Education that prohibited student's political activity in upper secondary high school was banished. Thereupon, more attention is paid to how to grow political literacy and involve children and young people than ever before.

Without mention, one of the core principles of citizenship education is participation, which Bearnard Crick calls community involvement among other strands: political literacy, social and moral responsibility (Crick, 1998). Then, how can we promote children and young people's participation? What is the factor or issue that triggers or hinders participation of children and youth? This paper was drafted with such research questions in mind. Based on the discussion on the theory of youth participation and findings from a comparative study on youth participation policy in Sweden and Japan in the former chapter, the following section will demonstrate some implications that can be applicable to the realm of social studies education.

## Influence as Purpose of Participation

First of all, what is the purpose of promoting participation of young people? Social studies educationalist may simply answer "to grow active citizenship" but is it truly sufficient? As Morozumi (2017) found out that the Japanese youth policy set "promoting youth participation" as one of the components of youth policy. Old-fashioned discourse among Japanese children's rights activists have been claiming the significance of children's participation just because it is the rights of the child. As showcased, however, Swedish youth policy barely stipulates the term "participation" but "influence" as a purpose of youth policy. Swedish youth policy tried to look outcomes of participation of designated actors rather than simply putting emphasis on youth participation. Participation is an act of subject, while influence is a product of the action of participation. This view coincides with what post-structuralists advocate: the exercise of power rather than just possessing it. Setting participation just as a goal might fail to exercise it. In order, not to let this happen, more importance should be put on the outcome of young people's participation, that is to say, wo what extent acts of participation have influence on actual society. Participation without influence cannot be regarded as "good participation" in light of the definition of participation by Tresder and Harts. This sounds cliché yet, it can never be overemphasized. Upgrading purpose of participation is the first stepping stone to better participation.

## Resource and Transformation of Power Structure

Second of all, what is the factor that triggers participation with actual social influence? Nowadays, more and more people are interested in gaining skill and techniques for facilitating active engagement in meeting. However, less attentions are paid to the fundamental issue when promoting participation of people such as children and young people. The above framed theory of youth participation revealed that it consists of three strands: participation as rights, the resource for participation, and transformation of power. Especially, the latter two strands cannot be overemphasized. In terms of resources for participation, one tends to regard the relevancy in giving information and competence or knowledge of individual young people. However, what we have observed from the empirical study of the Swedish case is that resources should be focused on allocating governmental finance to youth organizations so that youth organizations are able to exercise their power in society. Meanwhile, in Japan, a financial resource for youth organizations was limited because of the militarization of youth organizations during the war period. Even so, one cannot overlook the rise of the youth organizations in Japan. Limiting young people's participation to volunteering – which normally is individual based rather than organized activity, not only narrows down realm of participation of young people but also deprives opportunity to exercise rights of participation as well as to learn how democracy in real society actually works. Now is time to upscaling Japanese youth democracy by investing actual resource and support to youth organizations to grow active citizenship.

Another perspective to be underlined that accelerates youth participation is the transformation of power as Participatory Development and how post-structuralists had strongly championed the importance of power balance between agents. We have seen this fundamental viewpoint that had come under scrutiny when the Swedish Youth Care Committee pondered a question: "How and by what means do we want to influence youth in its choice of leisure activity?" (Governmental report, 1945). The question triggered a critical discussion on traditional authoritarian and paternalistic view on young people (Forkby, 2014). What is surprising here is that committee decided to give young people more space to challenge their own strength as well as the power

to influence their own activities (Open Activity) in response to the question. It is fair to say that Swedish youth policy has "balanced out" the power relationship between youth and adult at this point. On the other hand, one the Japanese education scene, power balance is seen as teacher and student or master and pupil relationship. Excessive power of teacher and adult over pupils is the default position and is barely criticized in the name of education. However, in order to facilitate the participation of pupils to grow into active citizenship, one needs to pay attention to maintaining power balance between each actor as what Greg claimed is the necessity of reframing children and adult participation into a relational and spatial practice (Greg, 2010, p. 338).

## Fluidity and Diversity of Participation

The last implication to be underlined here is the nature of participation, which might be suggestive of relational and spatial practice of participation. As Hart's ladder was criticized, youth participation does not necessarily occur like climbing a ladder. It is true that differentiation between good participation and bad participation is needed but paralyzing action because of paying too much attention to "good participation" is like putting the cart before the horse (Roberts, 2003). Participation goes up and down depending on power relationships and resources they have gained from people surrounding young people such as teachers, youth workers, and adults. Sometimes, they don't need any power but sometimes they do need power from adult or teachers. In addition, respecting the diversity of youth participation is inevitable. Participation should not only be limited to political decision-making nor participation in the labor market. Morozumi's (2017) work had concluded that the realm of youth participation can be separated into three categories: political participation, social and civic participation, and participation in education and employment. However, to break down the three categories, one can see other types of participation, which shed lights on the diverse place and area of youth participation. It is because participation is a process of decision-making on everything that concerns the actor. The three-prong typology of youth participation helps to check if the youth participation in practice or policy is inclined to one limited sphere. For instance, if one analyzes the Act on Youth Policy suggested by current government of Japan with these 3 typologies of youth participation, one can easily see the policy is inclined to promote political participation of young people apart from other realms of youth participation. In Sweden, youth policy is divided into 5 categories which includes politics as one of the priority subjects. Swedish youth participation is not limited to political participation but including participation of cultural activity by giving actual financial resource for example. The inclination has a potential risk to narrow down the aim of youth policy. In this sense, it is significant to keep the diversity of youth participation in mind.

## Suggestions for Social Studies Education in Japan

In light with suggested three points of participation; 1) Influence as purpose of participation, 2) Resource and transformation of power structure and 3) Fluidity and diversity of participation, following section will explore implication and solution to the issue that social studies in Asia recently face. Though it specifies social studies in Asia, Japanese citizenship education will be considered as primary subject.

Japanese educational systems conduct "Social Studies" in primary and lower secondary school as well as "Geography and History" and "Civics" in upper secondary school. According to the Fundamental laws of Education that replaces the version of 1945 under the revision in 2006, the goal of education is:

*Article 1. Education aims to complete the character of people and resolves that it must raise citizens having the necessary qualities to make up a peaceful and democratic country and society, healthy in mind and body.*

Along with this, the purpose of Social Studies and Civics is also to cultivate "competence of civics", that is to say, citizenship (MEXT, 2006a). Occupation by the U.S after the World War 2, the Japanese government set the Social Studies as a subject by implanting the American version of it. Article 14 of the fundamental law of education states the purpose of the political education as: "To cultivate citizens of good judgment, necessary political education shall be deeply respected in education". (MEXT, 2006b). Since the 1990, citizenship education had been highly prioritized in European countries, which later came in spot in Japanese educational arena as an instrument to cast a doubt on the methods of pre-existing Social Studies and Civics. In 2002, England had made the decision on installing Citizenship Education into the National Curriculum as a compulsory subject for students aged from 11 to 16. This trend brought an enormous impact on Japanese social studies education. In 2006, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) published a report named "Report - Research Group on Citizenship Education and People's Success in Economic Society" which is known as one of the impetus to raise attention to citizenship education in Japan.(METI, 2006). The incorporation of citizenship education is hindered by the new standards of learning such as "Zest for living" which is close to the competence that is required for citizenship education to some extent. Hashimoto (2013) raised a point that decentralization also helped the installation of Citizenship Education.

Despite the "declaration of the Citizenship Education" by METI, they have only taken initiatives in implementing Career Education as a basic education for adults. Multiple ministries incorporated Career Education in 2003, which is more oriented to vocational education and the student's own career by deploying Career Education Coordinator whose main task is helping young peoples' transition from school to employment. While Ministry of Education (MEXT) cooperated with METI to promote installation of Career Education into local schools, the only a few selected schools adopted its implementation. Only two elementary school in Tokyo and Kyoto that have introduced it from 2008 to 2010 (MEXT, 2012).

Jiro Hasumi (2012) states that today's Citizenship Education in Japan faces confusion of its definition and of its lack of relevance with existing Japanese education for Civics. The purpose of Japanese Social Studies and Civics is to cultivate "ko-u-mi-n-teki-shi-shi-tsu," which literally means "competence to be civic" that nearly holds the same meaning to "citizenship." Nitta (2006) cast questions on how "competence to be civic" is defined in the curriculum with analysis of its development of discourse over the civic and citizenship education in Japan. Yet, there is no clear integration between "competence to be civic" and "citizenship."

Isozaki (2011, p. 260) has argued that lack of efficiency and relevancy of Social Studies in lower secondary school and Civics in upper secondary by pointing out its cramming approach. He also mentioned the lack of educated teacher in the fields and systems regarding focus studies, that is to say, study methods are inclined towards only social components of the system but with less emphasis on practice. Another reason, which is well known in Japanese educational world, is that the Article 14 – 2 of fundamental law of education, prohibits school to either support or oppose particular political party, which might hinder teachers to teach political education in school.

In addition to these pre-existing critics on Japanese social studies education, here are some

implications and suggestions with an axis of participation in postmodern contexts that had been argued above. Today's social studies education tends to overly emphasize the necessity to promote pupils' participation during the class. Sometimes it is called, participatory learning or active learning, where students are expected to learn the subject actively. However, in light of the suggested first point – influence of participation –, one can notice that learning with active attitude is not sufficient for the sake of accomplish "true" participation. Because there is a possibility that these students might not have enough influence over society surrounding them. They might have some influence over the classroom by stating opinions or giving sophisticated presentation in front of audience. Along with the children's rights in 3Ps (Provision, Protection and Participation) in UNCRC, rights to express children's view are certainly important. Yet, as the post structuralist championed, power does not encompass power by just possessing it. The power gets real power when they are actually exercised. Students need not only to get quick response from audience during the class but also to make a decision with actual influence in where they belong such as club activity, local community, home, leisure time, part-time job, career steps etc. What we need to see is what was the outcome of impact that participation had brought. If they experience this level of participation, there certainly is an element of learning.

Fluidity and diversity of participation enlighten how much the space and place of participation in social studies education is limited despite its purpose to grow citizenship. The fact that citizens are the ones who live in community not only in schools denotes that the social studies education should not limit its implementation to class room. Besides, in postmodern world of today, it is even getting harder to say there is a "correct" substance of social studies that one can teach to students as sociologist , Ulrich Beck advocated "Cheer up, your skills and knowledge are obsolete, and no one can say what you must learn in order to be needed in the future" (Beck, 2000). In other words, distinction between teacher and students are becoming obsolete in other face of the postmodern world. Thus, transformation of power structure between teacher and student is being reconstructed by the societal changes, which is associated with the elements of Diversity and Fluidity of participation. If anything, even above-mentioned place and space of participation would be outdated sooner or later in this society filled with fluidity. In order to be acceptable to new and unpredictable innovation or ideas appear, I hope these suggested frameworks would work as reminder on how we can be prepared when conducting social studies education and pave the way towards unforeseen future of our society.

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