



Title	What is the space for youth participants in affirmative action movements in China, Japan& France?
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令和4年度「学部学生による自主研究奨励事業」研究成果報告書					
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研究課題名	What is the space for youth participants in affirmative action movements in China, Japan& France?				
研究成果の概要	研究目的、研究計画、研究方法、研究経過、研究成果等について記述すること。必要に応じて用紙を追加してもよい。（先行する研究を引用する場合は、「阪大生のためのアカデミックライティング入門」に従い、盗作剽窃にならないように引用部分を明示し文末に参考文献リストをつけること。）				

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to understand the difference in the content and style of youth participants in affirmative action movements in China, Japan and France, countries with very different cultures and systems around protest actions. Also, whether they consider Internet and globalization has important affections on the movements would take into discussion. On a personal level, I hope through this study to gain insights into the future of youth affirmative action in China. At the same time, the results of the study will also highlight the possibilities and constraints of youth actions in the world.

Research Plan

In the western definition, affirmative action is a set of policies and initiatives designed to promote the inclusion of individuals from underrepresented groups in areas such as education and employment. The origins of the affirmative action movement can be traced back to the 1960s, when the federal government began implementing policies to address discrimination and promote equal opportunity with a growing recognition of the systemic barriers that disadvantaged groups. (Multicultural Keyword Encyclopaedia Editorial Board 2011) Over time, the affirmative action movement has evolved and expanded to include a broader range of underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities, veterans, and LGBTQ individuals.(Hasegawa 2020) While the specific policies and initiatives associated with affirmative action may vary depending on the context, the overall goal remains the same: to promote equal opportunity and inclusion for all members of society.

Although most of the affirmative action were government driven, it is also possible for individuals and groups to support and advocate for affirmative action movements and policies, such as joining organizations that work to promote equal opportunity and diversity, participating in advocacy campaigns and initiatives, and using their voices to raise awareness and support for affirmative action efforts. In addition to individual efforts, there are also many organizations and groups that focus specifically on advancing the cause of affirmative action. (Ibid.) These organizations often engage in a range of activities, from conducting research and public education to advocating for policy changes and legal action. By working together and collaborating with other groups, individuals and organizations can help to support and advance the goals of the affirmative action movement. (Sowell 2004)

In the context of the affirmative action movement in the Asia region, it is common to hear the phrase: Where will the affirmative action movements go? (SBS 2022) (Jianyan 2017) Existing research on movements in China has focused on the origins of affirmative action or on the analysis of a specific movements.(Bao 2018) (Gu 2022) This research will compare three countries with very different histories and forms of affirmative action, and focus on the experiences of young participants who are active in a local context but influenced by global ideas and digital network. In this research I would like to capture the differences and similarities, if any, between countries and the extent to which these differences and similarities are affected by globalization.

Methodology

The research focuses on interviews with youth from China, Japan and France. I interviewed 3 youth participants (from 15 to 32 years old) from each country who are actively involved in affirmative action/minority empowerment activities. Recruitment was mainly based on my own network, requests to some organizations and online advocacy. Some interviews in Japan was taken face to face. The interview data was transcribed and, where necessarily, translated into English. One French translator was in charge of French interviews' translation. The interviews each lasted between 35 and 75 minutes. All interviews were recorded and online interviews were videotaped. These videos as well as the audio recordings have been analyzed and compared for the summary of section provided below.

For security reasons and due to the wishes of the interviewees, only limited personal information was collected for this study.

Interviewee Information Sheet

Nation	France 1	France 2	France 3	Japan 1	Japan 2	Japan 3	China 1	China 2	China 3
Assigned Sex	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Unknown	Female	Female
Interview date	2022. 9.22	2022. 10.1	2022. 10.3	2022. 11.14	2022. 11.13	2022. 12.5	2022. 8. 27	2022. 8. 29	2022. 8. 24
Interview style	Face to face	Online	Online	Online	Online	Face to face	Online	Online	Online

Result

1. Different ease level of recruitment

The ease level of recruitment for affirmative action movements varies between China, France, and Japan. Chinese part recruitment is easy due to my personal networks of those involved in various movements and the desire of these participants to be vocal. French part recruitment is also relatively easy due to the high level of political involvement and politicization among the population. In Japan, recruitment is the most difficult. People turn down the interview invitation mainly because feeling themselves not qualified to talk about affirmative action movements or do not want to be seen as political.

2. Anti-democracy movement —No in France

Prodemocracy movement —No in China

Based on figure 1, French interviewees view that it is theoretically possible for any kind of movement to take place, though some, such as anti-Semitic and racist movements, cannot be openly expressed. Also the violent style of protest, such as destroying property, is not common. Still we can see anti-democracy actions like violation to civic participation were opposed by the citizens. From Chinese interviews, the situation is very different. Social movements are heavily regulated and are not tolerated. Protesting on sensitive issues, such as Issues of territorial sovereignty, gender and sexual orientation are particularly difficult. Any form of public protest is

also unlikely to be successful. The only kind of movement that may be possible in China is one that is politically correct as defined by the government.

3. Different sensation of danger:

Based on figure 2 and 3, French interviews shows total confidence on the justification for being critical and political. While on the other hand Chinese and Japanese interviews shows their concerns on security more. In some cases, interviewees' feelings of insecure varied according to the topic and environment. Different or critical opinions and the unease to speak up are considered as dangerous for some Japanese interviewees but not the same for French and Chinese in the descriptions.

4. Special characteristics of different countries' interviews

France:

While president was hardly ever mentioned in other interviews, during the French interview, French president or his name (Emmanuel Macron) has been frequently brought up. It appears that some interviewees think that people have a tendency to protest and make fun of their president. Protests and criticism of the government are common and considered normal in French society. It also suggests that protesting and expressing political views is an integral part of French culture, particularly among young people.

The word “common”, “normal” is often used when they describe, evaluate or compare political or protests-related activities. It indicates that protesting and expressing political views is seen as a normative part of French culture.

Japan:

All Japanese interviewees have low recognition of what they are doing meets the western definition of “affirmative action movements” but more tend to use “empowerment”. This may suggest that the concept is not widely understood or accepted in Japan. Instead, the focus is on “empowerment” of minority groups. It also shows that the adoption of affirmative action measures in Japan has been slow.

China:

Based on the conversations, individuals in China are careful with their choice of words when discussing sensitive topics, such as the Communist Party. None of the interviewees mentioned the word “Communist Party” in their interview even when the question is about communist party. The government and the police was mentioned frequently in all three interviews, indicating that these institutions are safer to discuss than the Communist Party. One interviewee reacted surprised or shocked silently when being asked a question about criticizing the Communist Party. This suggests that criticism of the party is perceived as dangerous.

The use of the term “redline” (of what they can not do) is frequent, but is described as ambiguous and hard to define.

5. The level of interactions with police and government

France:

Based on conversations about protesting in France and the presence of the police, the police and government in France have a complex and multifaceted role in relation to protests and

activism. On the one hand, the government does not prohibit protests and some people feel that their concerns are being recognized by certain members of the government. Yet the police are seen as tense and present in large numbers at some protests, which can be intimidating and overwhelming for some people. There is also a sense that despite recognition by the government, there have been no significant changes in response to protests. Some people were hesitant to attend protests alone because they were afraid of the police. Overall, the conversations suggest that the police and government in France are involved in monitoring and potentially restricting protests, but also have a responsibility to ensure the safety and security of protesters.

Japan:

The police are involved in addressing complaints from residents and maintaining public order at places like soup kitchens for homeless people. Yet, citizens and organizations also have some impact when they come together and make proposals to the government. However, these organizations mentioned in the interview do not receive government support but rely on public subsidies instead. There are also concerns about job security when it comes to activism. The police and government in Japan are involved in maintaining public order and addressing concerns between residents.

China:

Based on interviews, protests are often met with heavy government surveillance and interference, and people can face consequences such as losing their jobs or being arrested. It was mentioned some organizations will register with the government and are subject to its supervision to hedge the risk. It is difficult to organize offline events due to the government's strict regulations, and even small protests can result in criminal charges. There is also government censorship of online content and communication. Activists must be careful to avoid opponents and government regulation when organizing events. Additionally, the police may use intimidating tactics, such as plainclothes officers taking pictures, and may block communication channels or evict individuals from illegal gatherings.

According to one interviewee's experience, the attitude of the police or government in official hotline in China is shown to be both indifferent and friendly. On the one hand, the initial response to questions asked on the hotline was described as "taciturn" or a "kick in the teeth," indicating a lack of concern or interest in addressing the questions. On the other hand, when the interviewee called several times and spoke to a different police officer, they received a more detailed and friendly response. This suggests that the attitude of the police or government towards the public may vary depending on the individual officer or official.

6. Globalization and affirmative action movements

French, Japanese, and Chinese interviewees all believe that the internet has a significant impact on affirmative action movements. Some interviewees believe that the internet allows for a variety of independent mediums, and allows individuals to connect with others from their own homes. The internet's importance for making connections, speaking out, and raising awareness of issues is also been implied. Some single movements like the Me Too movement can become global because of internet. Yet there are interviewees think that although the internet is a major

battleground for these movements, there are restrictions and limitations to the influence that can be exerted online.

Despite the similarities, interviewees have mixed opinions on whether affirmative action movements abroad can have an impact inside their nations. Some of the French interviewees believe that movements abroad can raise awareness of similar issues within their own country, while others believe that there is not much impact. The Japanese interviewees believe that movements abroad can be imported and influence change within their own country, particularly in terms of gender equality. The Chinese interviewees believe that the internet has made it easier for information and ideas to flow between countries and have an impact on domestic movements. However, some Chinese interviewees also believe that the impact may be limited in terms of affecting structural change and policy.

7. Youth participants' future view towards affirmative action movements

Overall, interviewees have a sense of pessimism about the future of social movements on their own country. Based on the answers to “what do you think of the future of social movements in your nation?”, French interviewees seen the future of social movements in France as uncertain, but remaining committed to continuing with demonstrations. From Japanese interviewees, the future of social movements in Japan is seen as bleak, with a negative outlook. The Chinese interviewees has a more dire view of the future of social movements in China, with the potential for the country to be "finished" if structural changes are not made to empower citizens and promote representation.

While on the perspective from world view remains more positive. The French interviewees express concerns about the future of social movements in the world, mentioning the Ukraine War, climate change, and food and electricity shortages. Some believe that even in a dictatorship, people will continue to take to the streets to defend their rights. The Japanese interviewees believe that in the world level discussions and activism are improving, and that progress is being made on gender issues. The Chinese interviewees have mixed views on the future of social movements in the world. Some believe that equal rights will continue to improve, although there may be setbacks along the way. Others are more pessimistic, citing increasing polarisation and the potential for wars and climate disasters, feeling that the current time may be the last vestige of human civilization.

Conclusion

Based on the research, it can be concluded that the content and style of youth participation in affirmative action movements vary between China, Japan, and France. The content of movements varies based on national situation and citizen concerns. Even it is the same for all the youth participants in these three countries to bring social change, their styles of doing it varies. These difference styles of approaching can be seen as how citizens communicate or interact with their government in different countries. My assumption for the reasons of the differences are the social environments, power structures, and levels of education on citizenship and autonomy. Yet how these different factors matters and interact with each others need further research.

All the interviewed youth participants share a similar complex attitude: they were not enthusiastic about both current situation and future, yet they were little discouraged or stopped. It

looks like they are pretty much doing something that they think have a dull future and hasn't found solutions to deal with it, which touched the core value of affirmative action movements they had—there must be a reason why it is so difficult and hard to push—which is the reason why they choose to do it.

The struggles and barriers were in the blood of affirmative action movements. Most of the interviewees didn't have a particular expectation on what would be changed by the movement or activity they joint. In the interviews for the Chinese part, the deeper the involvement one was, the lower the expectations they had for the future. Yet I think this low expectation can actually help them to avoid over-discouraged and keep moving if they manage to limit it only on each small actions. In order to approach their goals steadily, they need to have a clear understanding of the current situation and not be overly optimistic, while having belief or an idealistic love on what they are doing. Uncertainty about the present and the future is both the force against the activists, and the motivation and reason of their actions.

Sources

**Figure 1. Answers to “What kind of movements are possible in the Nation?”
from French and Chinese part**

French Part	“Besides <u>the violent style</u> or destroying others property, other styles are mostly possible in France. ”
	“ Theoretically everything is possible; <u>anti-Semitic and or racist</u> can't be openly though.”
	“I think that in general we can say everything , it does not mean that we will necessarily be heard but we are lucky to be able to really express everything. ”
Chinese Part	“I think it's difficult, I think first of all the situation is already very bad, the whole regulation of public opinion and stuff is already very bad now. It's little tolerant of any kind of social movement; basically there is nothing that can be protested against ; 'gender and sexual orientation are sensitive subjects; the activities are very peripheral and don't go to the heart of the matter.”
	“There's no need to get your hopes up about what's going on in China anymore. If you want to organise something, it's obvious that it's just a more rigorous background check of the inner circle, to make sure that these people don't snitch, don't report and so on. ... There's no way to do any more public judging of things. The issue of Xinjiang or Taiwan, these things are the red line, also the rest of the matter is not that there is no price for protest. The rest of the matter is not without cost.”
	“So I think if there is any kind of affirmative action movement that is possible in China, it is probably to put it bluntly, that is, <u>to be politically correct (as defined by the government)</u> . I'm thinking about what other forms are possible, so I can't give a clear idea of what I think. It's not as if it's some kind of Western ideological infiltration, some kind of liberalism poisoning young Chinese people or something like that, for not being able to find the redline for me.”

**Figure 2. Answers and explanations to
“Both online and offline, is it dangerous to give critical or negative (emotional) comments
about your country/ the present ruling party/ government?”**

Feel dangerous in the situation of (Number of People)	Your nation		the present ruling party		About the government		About a specific policy	
	Online	Offline	Online	Offline	Online	Offline	Online	Offline
French Part	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Japan Part	2	1	2	1	1	0*	2**	0***
China Part	3	2	2'	2''	2.5'''	3	2	2

*1 THOUGH NOT DANGEROUS WITH CONDITIONS ATTACHED.

**2 THOUGH DANGEROUS BUT TOPIC-DEPENDS, THE REST 1 HAD NO CLEAR YES-NO ANSWER.

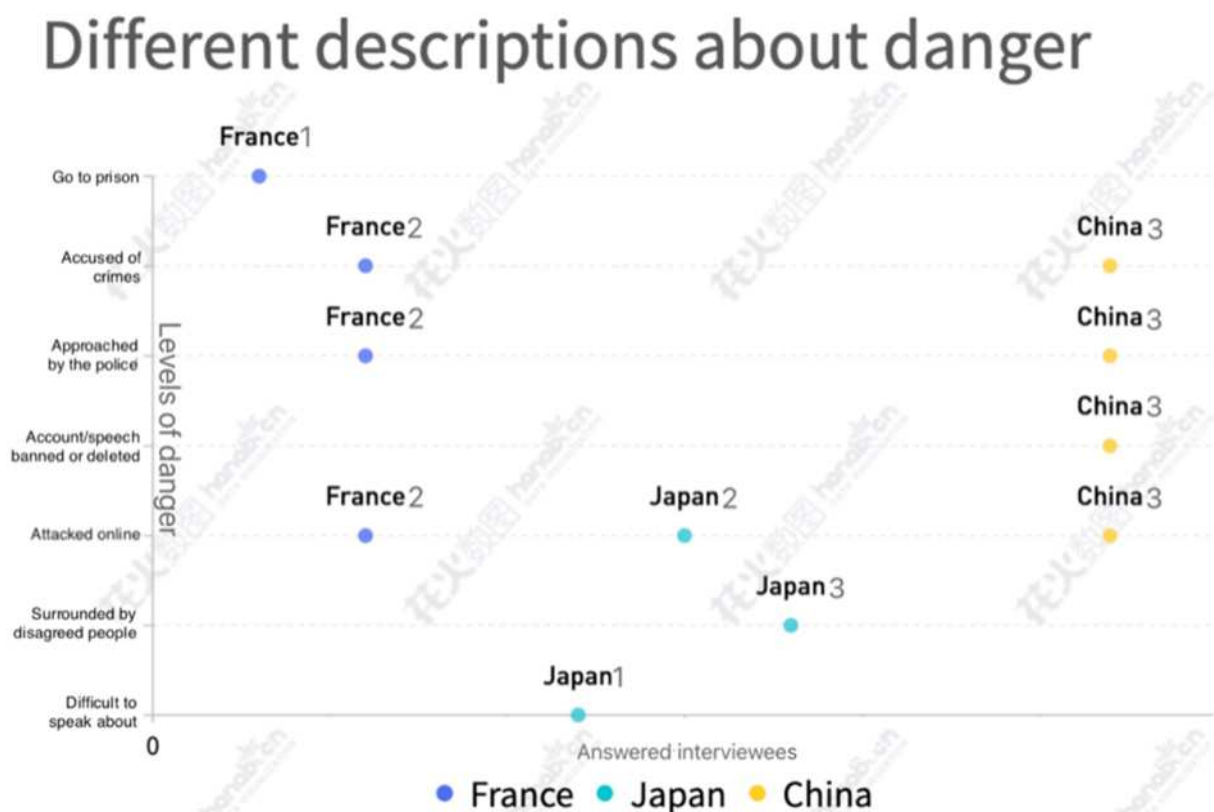
***1 THOUGH NOT DANGEROUS BUT TOPIC-DEPENDS, 1 HAD NO CLEAR YES-NO ANSWER, 1 DIDN'T GIVE ANSWER.

'1 HAD NO CLEAR YES-NO ANSWER

''1 THOUGH NOT DANGEROUS WITH CONDITIONS ATTACHED

'''1 GAVE YES AND NO RESPECTIVELY DEPENDING ON TYPES OF GOVERNMENT, COUNTED AS 0.5.

Figure 3. Different descriptions about why they feel dangerous



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