

**School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts**

**The Japanese Question: An Arendtian Analysis of Political Public Space  
in Postwar Japan**

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## Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

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Date

## Abstract

Against the tide of modern political philosophies, particularly Marxist historiography, which continue to influence the study of Japan's public space or political life, the political thought of Hannah Arendt offers an alternative analytical position for evaluating the public realm of Japan. Deriving the standards of politics from the ancient Greeks' cosmological orientation to time, Arendt proposes that human plurality, manifesting in the political activities of deliberation, discussion and judgment, cannot realise and sustain the public space alone, but need the support of what this thesis calls enduring measures of culture, tradition, ritual and authority.

Building on Arendt's work on the public space, this thesis proposes to examine what it calls *the Japanese question* – the political question of the foundation to Japan's body politic and of the borders that connect the everyday lives of Japanese citizens with this foundation and which enable the formation of a political community. By drawing a method of analysis from Arendt's phenomenology, the discussion dissects cases of collective action and social movements at specific moments in Japan's prewar and postwar history, investigates how these borders were approached, and reflects upon their political meanings.

The analysis suggests that postwar Japan's public sphere has developed in such a way that socio-political activism has neglected the Japanese question, abandoning any reassessment of the democratic relevance of the historical threads connecting the present and future of Japan's public sphere. This phenomenon contrasts with the public space in the *bakumatsu* period, in which collective actions were engaged with the concerns of the foundation: the emperor. An Arendtian analysis of postwar Japan's political life finds not an advancement of the public realm but rather its decline, to the point that the citizens' concerns for the country's sovereignty, autonomy and security have withered. The thesis thus identifies an absence of unity or the threads of history which would otherwise assure and sustain Japan's public realm, before going on to suggest constitutional amendments and a market solution as means for enabling the recovery of Japanese freedom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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This thesis is written under the spirit of my late father, Mori Hideo who lost his life at a young age. My work, although its field, origin and context are not the same as his, may be another answer to his questions in the 1970s which concerned, in the form of literary critique, a compass for Japan's postwar generations. Some of his published work, written under the pen name of Nagumo Kyōhei, is held in National Diet Library in Japan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, Japan has become a country that can be characterised as the direct democracy of a mass society. How everything is decided according to the climate of the day!  
(Kataoka 2006: 119, mt)

It is no coincidence that greater affluence has meant the Japanese people are today more concerned with quality-of-life issues than with the issues that dominated during the period of reconstruction and high economic growth following the end of the Second World War. A major accident at a Japanese reactor would see the end of Japan's nuclear power program.  
(Low, Nakayama and Yoshioka 1999: 81)

### *The 2011 Fukushima Preface*

The Fukushima nuclear accident, which followed the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, and the frustrating efforts of the Japanese government to effectively respond to the disaster in its aftermath may reflect the political quagmire that has characterised the nation for more than half a century. Five years after the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident, more than 200,000 people were still refugees, living with relatives or in public housing, temporary shelters, and hospitals (*Higashi Nihon Daishinsai, Hinan Jōhō & Shien Jōhō Saito* 2015). A month after the March 11 disaster, the amount of radioactivity released into the atmosphere convinced Japan's regulatory agency – the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) – that the Fukushima nuclear accident was a Level 7 emergency, equal in severity to the world's worst nuclear disaster in Chernobyl in 1986 (Eisler 2013: 35).

It is estimated that the clean-up of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, including decontamination and decommission work and compensation, will eventually cost around \$183 billion and take more than 40 years (Slodkowski & Saito 2013: 8). Approximately 50,000 workers have already risked their lives for the nuclear clean-up inside and outside the plant, and the Tokyo Electric Power Co (Tepco) – a gigantic power utility which operates the Fukushima nuclear reactor – will need a further 12,000 people to undertake decommission work until 2015 (Slodkowski & Saito 2013: 3-4). Sensors near the Fukushima nuclear plant showed a sudden spike in the radiation levels of wastewater in February 2015, up to 70 times higher than usual, highlighting the contamination resulting from the escape of radioactive water to the Pacific Ocean

(‘Fukushima radiation spikes 7,000 % as contaminated water pours into the ocean’, 26 February 2015). The event recalls an incident from two years earlier, in which Japan’s nuclear watchdog announced an ‘emergency’ in the struggle to halt highly radioactive water leaking into the Pacific Ocean (‘Japan government: Fukushima plant leaks 300 tpd of contaminated water into sea’, 7 August 2013). Regarding the incident, a Japanese government official commented that ‘an estimated 300 tons of contaminated water is leaking [from the paralysed Fukushima reactor] into the ocean each day’ (‘Japan government: Fukushima plant leaks 300 tpd of contaminated water into sea’, 7 August 2013).

The 9.0 magnitude earthquake and resultant tsunami, which were responsible for the Fukushima accident, left 15,892 people dead and 2,574 missing, with a further 3,331 quake-related deaths having occurred since the incident (*Higashi Nihon Daishinsai, Hinan Jōhō & Shien Jōhō Saito* 2015). But the tragedy and hardships suffered by Japanese citizens do not end here. The cost associated with the tsunami damage is expected to climb to \$16.9 billion (Oguma 2013: n.p.). Worse still, Japan’s existing public debt is already the highest among OECD countries.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the long-term effects on human health, including cancer and leukemia, of radiation released into the ocean, air and soil are incalculable. Koide Hiroaki, nuclear scientist at Kyoto University Reactor Research Institute, states that although the amount of radiation exposure in the vicinity and leeward of leading nuclear power plants is certainly higher, there is fundamentally no safe level when it comes to the human body’s exposure to radiation (2012: 123). In fact, not only was the level of radiation in milk and vegetables in the Fukushima region found to exceed legal limits a week after the accident, but also a small amount of radiation was detected in the tap water of Tokyo (Eisler 2013: 32). In an interview, Hosokawa Kōmei, a member of one of the civil advocacy groups in Kyoto, suggest that the survival of Japan’s first industry, agriculture, is in doubt:

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<sup>1</sup> Japan’s public debt has been ballooning with the recent Finance Ministry forecast estimating that it may ‘reach around 8,150 trillion yen in fiscal 2060, about four times as large as gross domestic product, if the government fails to restore its fiscal health after fiscal 2020’ (‘Japan’s public debt may reach around 8,150 trillion yen in FY 2060’, 28 April 2014): ‘The figures were calculated under a scenario in which Japan’s economy expands by 3 percent in nominal terms and GDP stands at around 2,053 trillion yen in fiscal 2060’.



Although we can find or hear information from many sources like the government and Nōkyō about the radiation level of food products, none of them has actually given us authentic information. This means that the age we have now entered is such that the decision to eat products whose level of contamination we are sure or unsure of is totally up to each individual. Moreover, even if the products are assessed as below the accepted standards, it by no means guarantees the long-term safety of human lives. (*Fukushima genpatsu*, Koide Hiroaki, Hosokawa Kōmei shi ni kiku', Interview on 27 May 2011, mt)<sup>2</sup>

Four months after the nuclear accident, Hosokawa's apprehension was substantiated by Saeki Masakazu, who reported a recent story of his farmer friend in Shizuoka (Makinohara), around 330 km south of Fukushima (*Hōshanōosen sareru tsuchi, dōnaruyasai okome zukuri: munōyakuyasai no saibai, hangenpatsukatsudō wo tsuzuketekorareta Seki Masakazu san ni kiku'*, 15 July 2011). According to Saeki, the farmer was terribly anxious after he detected 270 becquerel of radiation from his produce, which implied that his agricultural business, which was his major income base, had not escaped the radiation horror. Throughout Japan, there are hot spots which are located in the downwind or leeward side of radioactivity release, where the density of contamination is higher (Koide 2012: 154-155). The radiation particles which had been dispersed into the atmosphere from hydrogen blasts from Fukushima until 15 March 2011 immediately crossed the Pacific Ocean, reaching California and continental Europe in less than a week (Eisler 2013: 42). In view of this, the issue of radiation contamination is not limited to the concerns of farmers around Fukushima, but extends to the nation as a whole and beyond, to encompass the earth's ecosystem, where regional and national boundaries do not count.

Although atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not dropped by the Japanese, political scientist Fujii Gemki remarks that the Fukushima disaster is equivalent to the Japanese dropping the third atomic bomb on their own land (*Datsu genpatsu nakushite taibeijiritsu nashi: kakukakusan bōshitaisei kara ridatsu seyo'*, 20 September 2011). Depicting Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster as an 'Accident of Mass Destruction' and apprehending the dispersal of radioactivity hereafter, Fujii expresses his

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<sup>2</sup> Nōkyō (農協: Japan Agricultural Cooperative) is one of the biggest agricultural organisations in Japan, coordinated by farmers.

remorse, as a citizen who loves his country, to both the emperor and the general public. In this way, the political scientist confirms the imbroglio of political life that has defined postwar Japan and which manifested in an extreme form as the Fukushima nuclear disaster. But it may be in the analysis of nuclear scientist Koide that the key connection between postwar Japan's political life and the Fukushima accident is found. Koide explains that while the consequences of nuclear accident in Fukushima have been extraordinary, the Japanese government still persists in the use of nuclear energy, including the project of a sodium-cooled fast reactor named Monju (2012: 73). He contends that the Japanese government's continuing use of nuclear power is driven by the ultimate aim of maintaining the capability to create nuclear weapons. In practice, it is possible for plutonium, which is needed for the production of nuclear arms, to be derived from used nuclear fuels even in ordinary nuclear reactors, but the nuclear-fission capacity of plutonium generated in ordinary nuclear reactors is limited. Monju, the sodium-cooled fast reactor power plant, by contrast, would produce combustible plutonium of a far higher quality – were it ever able to become operational (Koide 2012: 75-76).<sup>3</sup> In castigating the Japanese government's preservation of the technical potential to create nuclear weapons, Koide calls on the role of the church in contributing to the peace of the world (2012: 86).

It is open to question, however, as to how far his pacifist voice with an aspiration for religious peace is plausible given the realities and realism of international politics. Pointing to Article 9 of Japan's postwar Constitution, which proscribes Japan's sovereign right to war and its maintenance of a standing military force,<sup>4</sup> Koide interprets this no-

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<sup>3</sup> The Monju nuclear power plant, located in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, is a sodium-cooled fast reactor, whose construction started in 1986. The Japanese government spends 20 billion yen every year just to maintain the facility, and to date its overall cost amounts to nearly 1 trillion yen ('Time to shutter Monju', 25 February 2014). Although Monju 'has been touted as "dream" nuclear energy technology that produces more plutonium than it consumes' ('Time to shutter Monju', 25 February 2014), this fast-breeder reactor is problem-ridden with a series of accidents occurring in 1995 and 2010 (Koide 2012: 61-62). Initially, the project of the fast-breeder reactor began in the United States of America (in the 1940s), and many other countries – Britain, the Soviet Union and France – attempted similar projects. However, the attempts of all these countries have failed due to the technical difficulties, and they have given up commercialising this technology (Koide 2012: 62). Although the operation of Monju has been suspended for much of the time since 1995 in Japan, the Abe administration, as of 2014, is keeping the Monju project to commercialise fast-breeder reactor technology alive in the nation's new basic energy policy plan ('Time to shutter Monju', 25 February 2014).

<sup>4</sup> In effect, Japan possesses a considerable military force. The enigma is that this is not legally or constitutionally recognised as military.

war clause as the pledge of Japanese nation as a whole (2012: 82). Despite the fact that the Japanese archipelago has been surrounded by the might of super-powers such as China, Russia and the US (Japan has had territorial disputes with two of the former countries, and is within range of nuclear attack from neighbour state North Korea), Japanese citizens have maintained their adherence to prohibition on the nation's use of a military force through the postwar Constitution. Questioning the premise that Japan is a 'normal country', a phrase first popularised by Ozawa Ichirō's work *Blueprint for a New Japan* (1993), Soeya Yoshihide, Tadokoro Masayuki and David Welch hold that 'the extent to which this culture of antimilitarism has immobilized domestic politics' leads Japan beyond normalcy (2011: 3, 5).<sup>5</sup> Koide's pacifism does not take account of the fact that Japan's postwar Constitution was not, from the outset, produced by the Japanese, nor does it address the reality that the critical no-war clause which symbolises the identity of postwar Japan does not guarantee peace for Japanese citizens.

Although it is arguable that any state which uses nuclear power for electricity generation harbours the potential to produce nuclear weapons, in Japan's case, its energy agenda is critically interrelated to the problem of its defence and security. That is, a paradox of the Fukushima event is that Japan's nuclear reactors may not have increased to today's number of 54 from a few in the 1970s (Koide 2012: 143), had Japan's rearmament been restored, for rearmament would have assured the defence of the country while freeing the state from its complex dependence on the military of its ally, America. Indeed, the pathology of Japan's security dilemma perhaps represents the chronic ills of postwar Japan. Japan's impotence in defending its country has arguably expanded its ills to the other realms of politics, culture, economy and society, eating away the vitality of each realm and threatening its survival. These are the public and the private realms which together constitute a sovereign state. This dilemma raises the question: what have been the pragmatic and psychological predicaments that have dissuaded many Japanese citizens from restoring the public properties of security, sovereignty and autonomy,

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<sup>5</sup> 'In Ozawa's view, Japan ought to become a "normal country" by stepping up and shouldering its rightful international responsibilities and by cooperating with other states to build prosperous societies around the globe. The obstacles it faces, however, include an inability to make political decisions, and a military constrained in its capability and roles. Japan's "abnormalcy", in other words, lies in its *failure* to do certain things (behaviour; role) as a result of constitutional, institutional, and political constraints (status)' (Soeya, Tadokoro & Welch 2011: 4).

which most of the independent countries in the world possess as the fundamental rights of a nation? And does not the absence of such sovereignty suggest the absence of unity in the public space of that state? Moreover, what are the factors and mediums that may unite the citizenry and the polity to the extent that their existence in the public realm is characterised by the concerns of and actions for the public good?

In this thesis, I explore the extent to which social, political and economic crises facing contemporary Japan may be attributable to Japanese citizens' failure to address these and similar questions. Postwar Japan's security dilemma has been so extensive in its ramifications that it appears to add plight after plight to the life of the Japanese. The Tōhoku region which was devastated by the 2011 earthquake shows a very different picture to that of Kobe, the area that was powerfully hit by the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 (Oguma 2013: n.p.). The population shrinkage which the Tōhoku region struggles with today has been accelerating since the mid 2000s and has turned many rural regions into marginal villages. Unlike Kobe, marginalisation and aging population characterise the Tōhoku region, and the current reconstruction project of the region has been hampered by the decline of regional finances and vitality (Oguma 2013: n.p.). Oguma reports there has been a severe decline of Japan's economy since the beginning of the 1990s, because the decreased amount of tax revenue has impoverished the finances of both the central government and municipalities. As a consequence, mergers of Japan's cities, towns and villages have increasingly taken place under the new policy of the central government (see Chapter 7). It is worth noting here that this decline stems in part from the Structural Impediments Initiative agreed between the United States and Japan in the 1980s/90s:

In the 1980s, the American government, under duress from competition in exports by Japanese manufacturers, demanded that Japanese deregulate markets for farming and commerce, while increasing voluntary export restraints and expanding domestic demand. The Japanese government, in response, scrapped the restrictions on the number of franchises a large-scale business could own, a rule that had previously protected small businesses; simultaneously, it promised the US to expand domestic demand through fiscal stimulus, leading to an increase in public works. (Oguma 2013: n.p.)

Corresponding to the US trade dispute with Japan was the US accusation of the latter for its military free ride (see Chapter 7); the so-called ‘defence free-ride’ seems to have augmented the US pressure on the Japanese government so much as to prompt the latter to make such economic and trade concessions as scrapping restrictions on the number of franchises which a large-scale business could own (Oguma 2013: n.p.). When the rule which had earlier safeguarded small businesses was lifted, the erosion of local businesses and shops in the new flood of large franchises and shopping malls contributed to the ebb of regional finances and vitality. Japan’s *ad hoc* defence policy has thus aggravated the problems of ageing population, rural depopulation and even the reconstruction of the Tōhoku region.

Two weeks after the Fukushima accident, some 200,000 people marched in anti-nuclear power rallies across the four largest cities of Germany (‘Some 200,000 in Germany protest nuclear power’, 26 March 2011). By the end of May, the unrestrained public opposition led Chancellor Angela Merkel to announce a phase-out of all the country’s nuclear reactors by 2022. Germany now pioneers renewable energy technology and generation (Wittneben 2012: 2). Following this, Switzerland also witnessed vigorous anti-nuclear protest with around 20,000 people walking around the town of Doettingen and the nuclear power plant of Beznau to urge the government to cease its reliance on nuclear energy (‘Swiss move to end nuclear era’, 26 May 2011). Three months after the Fukushima accident, millions of Italians turned up at the polls to register their views on Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s move to resume the country’s nuclear power program, an action which resulted in an overwhelming vote against the possible revival of the program (‘Italy says no to nuclear power – and to Berlusconi’, 14 June 2011).

The response of the Japanese public was relatively late compared to these European countries. Yet gradually, Japan’s anti-nuclear demonstrations have mushroomed and continue to date. The character of Japanese rallies tends to be moderate rather than militaristic; a member of an anti-nuclear group, Gensuikin, which planned the protest against nuclear energy on 19 September 2011, suggested that harmony is preferred, and concerted action by the Japanese generally comes after people know all the positions on a debate (‘An anti-nuclear protest in Japan. Sayonara, nukes, but not yet’, 24 September 2011). The event attracted as many as 60,000 people in Tokyo, the number

unusually high in contrast to the quiescence of Japan's public realm in the decades since the 1960s. It was reported that people were hoping for the country's phase-out of nuclear energy, but a gradual one, because an immediate exit would cause electricity shortages and hold up people's everyday lives ('An anti-nuclear protest in Japan. Sayonara, nukes, but not yet', 24 September 2011). In May 2012, for the first time in more than 40 years, the country resorted to no nuclear power, although 50 plants around Japan were taken offline for regular maintenance soon after the Fukushima disaster. When the Noda government announced its intention to resume operation of two reactors at the Oi plant in Western Japan in June 2012, the number of anti-nuclear demonstrators swelled to as many as 150,000 people, who walked to the National Diet Building on 13 July 2012 ('Huge changes occurring in protest techniques in Japan', 19 July 2012).

Before the Fukushima accident, 30 percent of the energy in Japan came from nuclear power. Sato Junichi, executive director of Greenpeace Japan, commented that 'Japan has already survived the peak summer and winter energy demand periods once [from 2011 to 2012] with little nuclear power online', although industry and government representatives insist upon the need of nuclear energy for the country's economy ('Japan nuclear restart gets PM's approval', 16 June 2012). Sato's observation supports the analysis of Japan's energy reserves provided by Koide, who asserts that hydroelectric power and thermal power alone can meet Japan's electricity needs at any given time (2012: 129). He maintains that thermal power plant generation has been reduced by almost 50 percent of the annual standard; hence were it to resume the full operation, it could substitute for nuclear power (2012: 133).

However, Japan's suspension of nuclear energy use has increased the country's import of fossil fuels, the rocketing cost of which continues to put further stress on the country's already exhausted economy ('*Fukuramu bōeki akaji, genpatsu teishi de chōkika no kenen. Seijōgyō no kōjōkaigai shift ga urameni*', 27 January 2014). In order to cut the massive costs incurred by the imports of conventional energy sources (oil, gas and coal), the Abe government, in December 2013, flagged restarting the idle nuclear power plants when he indicated that nuclear power is the country's most important and fundamental energy source. Since the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan's dearth of energy resources has been well established. Moreover, the stability and prosperity of the Japanese

economy is subject to the safety of a sea route communication system – the route for continuous and safe import of energy supplies from abroad (Kataoka 1989: 97). In this regard, the recent territorial disputes with China over ownership of the Senkaku islands highlight the strategic importance of Japan's sea lane. And so again Japan's energy agenda runs up against its security dilemma. While the socio-political movements of postwar Japan since 2011 have centred on the issue of nuclear power use, they remain driven merely by their antagonism to the conducts of the state in this regard, thereby failing to address the extent to which Japan's hopes for the nation's energy reform may be curtailed by a postwar defence framework which many of them have supported, the framework which forbids the maintenance of a standing military force.

Symbolising this discrepancy, the 2011 Fukushima incident raises for postwar Japan the quintessential question of the foundation to its body politic – what I call throughout this discussion *the Japanese question*. In the following chapters, I argue that this question has been buried for more than half a century by many Japanese citizens, particularly, in the public realm where political activities of action and speech – the realm of democratic participation, debate and deliberation – manifest. In the postwar period, Japan's political public space has emerged, largely, in the way that it rejects and antagonises state reforms and policies that are seen to defend the borders of Japan's public space which draw upon the major thread of its history. Historically, the locus of these borders, I argue, has lain in the emperor system<sup>6</sup>, and has been constructed by the representations of this system, including culture, tradition and authority, which in a visible and practical form interact with the everyday lives of the ordinary people (see Part II). Postwar Japan's security dilemma is an area of political concern that reflects the departure of Japanese citizens – citizens whose agency dwells in the public space – from a genuine public realm which emerges, arguably, when movements are engaged with the question of these borders of Japan's public space that have endured in time, albeit with some variance in their hold on or over the affairs of the day. The 2011 Fukushima disaster, I suggest, confronts postwar Japanese citizens with the question of the

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<sup>6</sup>Initially, it was the Japan Communist Party that coined the term 'the emperor system' in advocating the need for overturning 'the entire ruling structure of the Meiji political system', including the abolition of the imperial institution. Shortly after the Second World War, however, this term began to be used by both camps: conservatives which aimed to maintain this institution, and the other which aimed to abolish it (Titus 1980: 534).

foundation to Japan's public realm, a question that casts doubt over the political adequacy of social movements in the postwar periods (see Chapters 5 and 6), the public plausibility of Japan's postwar Constitution, as well as the tenability of a defence policy that is predicated on pacifism (see Chapter 6). Taking the Fukushima incident as a prompt, this thesis proposes to reassess the concepts of politics and the public realm, and to formulate and elaborate the question of how political life in the particular geographical space of a nation might be examined, with a view to restoring in 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan an authentic public realm, which is to say, to restoring the conditions under which that nation's citizens may reassume responsibility for the autonomy, unity and security of a space which relates and separates them.

*Methodology for Analysis of the Political Public Space of Postwar Japan and Its Significance*

While the Fukushima incident provides the catalyst for formulating and elaborating the question of postwar Japan's political life, the broader themes that the following discussion develops have their antecedents in the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt and, in particular, her account of the decline of the public sphere in the modern age. Prompted by this proposition, this study explores the significance of Arendt's proposal for analysing, historicising and accounting for the condition of the public realm in postwar Japan. Arendt's conception of politics and postulation of public space's decline in the modern world are crucial, first and foremost, to the fields of scholarship which overhaul Japan's politics, society, culture and history, given that these fields have been overshadowed, especially, in the postwar period, by the Marxist and liberal narratives and standards of what constitutes politics. The dominance of these mainstream approaches has not only diminished the capacity of dialogical space – both in action and thought – to integrate alternative 'schemas of interpretation' (Williams 2014: 37), but also to a considerable extent contributed to the fall of postwar Japan's public realm, namely, the space of living political life, particularly given their maintenance and reproduction of the developmental and teleological notion of history, which severs the present from the past. This subsumption of postwar Japan's political life in and by these modern political



discourses manifests in the form of, among other things, a widespread pacifist sentiment, which potentially guides Japan to ‘collapse in the face of a threat’ (Kataoka 1980: 1).

Moreover, the triumph of modern political narratives is represented in the political developments following 1948, in which the initially conflicting parties – the Occupation, the Japanese government and the labour class – were all in all coopted into the pursuit of economic objectives (see Chapter 5; Yamada 2006: 61; Uchiyama 1982: 78; Kumazawa 1996: 70). This development is indicative both of the abortive nature of Japanese activists’ attempts, whether driven by Marxist or neo-Marxist discourses, to build and sustain the public space, as well as of their latent propensity to become a collusive partner of the government’s radical modernisation and industrialisation project in the postwar period. Such attempts failed to develop in postwar Japan the political capacity of a public space that could curb human consumption activity and utilitarian epistemology, forms of behaviour and thought which Arendt suggests are chief in precluding the sustainability of public space. Arendt’s theme of the crisis of public sphere is crudely expressed by postwar Japan’s political life, a situation bearing grave significance for those countries currently pursuing their own modernisation projects.

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan’s academia has been largely monopolised by Marxists and their historiography (Kataoka 2006: 117; Koshiro 2000: 144; Saeki 2008; Shimizu 2011: 27-28; Tokoro 2012: 3). In this Marxist perspective, until the sovereignty of the people was guaranteed in the 1946 Constitution, Japanese society is understood to have been governed by a hierarchical structure – from the emperor at the top, through the shogunate/government to the lowest ranks – that is inevitably authoritarian, feudalistic and undeveloped (see Chapter 3). For ‘progressive’ intellectuals, who aimed to lay down the new socio-political substratum of postwar Japan (Koschmann 1981: 610), and who warranted the Marxist premise of human history as ‘a universal path of development’ (Conrad 1999: 73), the progressive entity of (civil) society – the realm of private individuals capable of defying the will of political authority, represented by the state and the emperor system – finally emerged in Japan only in the postwar period (Kersten 2009: 229; Kuno 1996; Garon 1984)(see Chapter 6). In such Marxist interpretations of Japan’s politics and its polity, the freedom of citizens or civil society has been considered to be the subject of the state’s oppression. Today their

critiques of the state have reached a point where they advocate an end to Japan's national symbols, its security and its history. To that extent, Arendt's work has significance for the study of Japanese politics insofar as it offers the possibility of building an alternative or authentic public sphere, in which politics is in harmony with the living continuity of culture, ritual and tradition – the man-made measures which outlive the life-span of an individual. At the same time, Arendt's discourse and historiography – which I discuss in detail in Chapters 1 and 2 – offer an alternative analytical canon and conceptual cornerstone for assessing the state of Japan's political life. Arendt's diagnosis, which she bases on the analysis of the original political community of the ancient Greek city-state in Athens, propounds the standards, categories and constituents of political life or (political) public space, which are markedly distinct from those of modern political theories. The implications of her return to the political life of the ancient Athenian polis for this study, then, are that it may, in particular, aid the diagnosis of the crisis of 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan and contribute to the reversal of this trend, a case of which is showcased in Chapter 7.

This thesis draws its methodology from Arendt's discourse of phenomenology grounded in her notion of politics and public space. Although 'Arendt's work is resistant to any attempt to attribute it to a particular "school" of critical thought' (Swift 2009: 18), her political thought is most closely affiliated with the school of phenomenology.<sup>7</sup> Jan Patočka, an East European phenomenologist, argues that phenomenology is a science – an *episteme* – that seeks access to *meaning*, to the meaning of humanity which is revealed in the public realm (1996: 1). For Arendt, deed and word – in other words, participation, discussion and judgment – are 'the modes in which human beings appear to each other... *qua* men', yielding meanings in the space of their interactions (1958: 176). In this thesis, this phenomenological approach is a methodology of analysis to examine postwar Japan's political life, particularly highlighting the phenomena of collective actions and social movements. On Arendt's account, the original meaning of politics and public life draws upon the ancient understanding of cosmology, on the basis of which the ancient citizens aspired to immortality through the creation of a body politic – the polis – which

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<sup>7</sup> This school of thought was established by Edmund Husserl; twentieth century phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricoeur developed the school of phenomenology after him, demonstrating the new modality of thought to address the impasse of modern philosophy.

was ‘a kind of organized remembrance’ (1958: 198). To the end of attaining such immortality, the ancients required a space where human plurality was possible, but which was supported and preserved by those measures, such as culture, tradition, ritual and authority, which transcend time to a degree, given the frailty and transience of freedom resting on human plurality. Essential to the meaning of politics, then, are what I call *the enduring measures*, which hand down to future generations the memory of legendary individuals and the wisdom of a political community and a past civilisation, which thereby grants citizens of a public sphere not only the sustenance of freedom but also access to immortality.

Arendt’s account of the political public realm presupposes that each public space is original or *sui generis*, where the condition of sovereignty is inherent. In raising the notion of sovereignty in relation to the public space, however, she does not depict this space and its margin in terms of ‘nationalism’ (Maruyama 1969) or ‘racial homogeneity’ (Morris-Suzuki 1998). Nor is her argument that the public space is a space of sovereignty, because the public realm is a space of freedom which is enjoyed and experienced by ‘not one man, but men’, in contrast to the condition of sovereignty that suggests ‘the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership’ (1958: 234). But her argument is that each public space asserts ‘external sovereignty’ (Arato & Cohen 2009: 307). While the dimension or territory of *sui generis* public space is arguable, Arendt’s notion of ‘common sense’, which builds upon a history of the citizens’ ‘judicious exchange of opinion’ (1993: 223) about what their world or public space – which they collectively share – ‘is supposed to look and sound like, how it is supposed to be looked at and listened to’ (2007: 200), is important in terms of considering this territory of a public realm and the sovereignty of that public space. For Arendt, common sense is originally rooted in the private and subjective sense of taste which discriminates, but because of this root, we ‘overcome our special subjective conditions for the sake of others’ and engage with the act of reflection and imagination for the activity of judgment (1978: 265-266). However, on Arendt’s account the modern age’s project of secularisation accelerates the withdrawal of those enduring measures which inform citizens of ‘communicability’ in their common space (1978: 267). The decline of those guideposts that speak to individual and collective memories makes the operation of reflection and imagination more difficult.

The recession of the enduring measures affects the activity of judgment, an essential political faculty which a citizen must possess in his or her participation in the issues and affairs of a public space.

A further significance of Arendt's work on the political public space lies in her argument that the continuity of a public space depends upon the interdependence and interaction between the ephemeral and the immortal – a notion deriving from the ancient's cosmological orientation to time, and which is unfamiliar to the modern understanding of history and thus offers an alternative gauge to evaluate the existence and sustainability of the public space. Importantly, it is this conceptual matrix that develops the key notion of this thesis – *the Japanese question* – and foregrounds my contention that the sustainability of postwar Japan's public sphere is at stake, given the diffusion of this notion and perception from postwar Japan's political life. In 1992, Kenneth Pyle published a book titled *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*. Pyle formulates the phrase 'the Japanese question' in the wake of debates and concerns surrounding *the German question* and identifies a correlation between them: he points out that both questions encompass a common belief in the twentieth-century history of these countries which reflects 'traits of national character that require special precautions and arrangements' (1992: 6). In a large part, Pyle's usage of the Japanese question concerns the questions and misgivings resting on the part of international communities, especially, the United States of America and Japan's geographical neighbours – their perceptions and attitudes towards a resurgent Japan armed with its mammoth economy in the 1980s and early 1990s. Embodied in the phrase the Japanese question are, firstly, the international communities' abiding fear and suspicion of the Japanese national character as being irrational, unpredictable and militant (Pyle 1992: 8, 12); and, secondly, a paradox is that the rise of a new regional and international environment with the end of the Cold War is seen to benefit from Japan's more active role in collective security arrangements, while the concomitant rearmament and remilitarisation of Japan remain 'a deeply unsettling prospect' for the US leaders, regional countries as well as the Japanese themselves (Pyle 1992: 13, 15). Dissecting postwar Japan's political life from an alternative measurement and standpoint concerning the nature of politics and the public space, this thesis positions 'the Japanese question' in

altogether different context from Pyle's. The Japanese question which I form denotes the political question of the foundation to Japan's body politic and of the borders – that is, the enduring measures – which connect the everyday lives of Japanese citizens with this foundation and which enable the formation of a political community. As with the German question and the Jewish question, the concerns of which have been harboured for more than a century in the minds of European nations (see Hoffmann 1990; Rabinbach 1988), it is this feature of persistence or endurance across time that provokes in this researcher the notion of 'the Japanese question', with the hope that it be an enduring and continuing question for Japan's public in the twenty-first century, as distinct from its public in the past, which distanced itself from this question.

Given Arendt's conception of the political public realm and each public space's possession of external sovereignty, this thesis refrains, for the most part, from using the terms "nationalism" and "democracy" which are often deployed when political life of modern Japan is debated. These terms tend to appear frequently when the issues of defence, the emperor or the Constitution are discussed, together, particularly, with ideological assumptions or preconceptions: for example, nationalism as a political doctrine or movement driven by fundamentalism, that which celebrates national glory, the military and a particular ethnicity. The Arendtian analysis presented here should not be confused for a depiction of politics and public space in these terms. Nor does that analysis depend upon or promote a notion of public space as defined by an ethnic purity. While the discussion here follows Arendt in seeing the experience of freedom and the category of citizenship as circumscribed by a geography typically identified in terms of a nation, the public space proper to that region owes its commonality to the borders set by the enduring measures of tradition, authority and culture, rather than to the 'essence' of an ethnic community. Ethnic minorities in Japan, including the people of Ainu and Okinawa, as well as naturalised Japanese, are equally constituents of Japan's public sphere on the basis of their citizenship.

The critical attitude of this thesis to the notion of nationalism, is equally applied to prevailing notions of democracy. Although Arendt by no means disapproves entirely of the components of modern democracy such as individual rights, and systems and institutions through which people's voices are represented, she hesitates to define these

components as the sole features that make a particular political community or state authentically public or democratic. Indeed, ‘democracy’ remains a contested notion. Thus, this thesis challenges the popular notion that the postwar Constitution gave Japan democratic conditions for the first time in its history, or that the rise of social movements defying government policies is in and of itself indicative of the extent to which Japan’s democracy has developed. An objective of this thesis is, in fact, to challenge such uncritical appeals to a notion of democracy, to reassess them, and to attempt to propose an alternative conception of and perspective on democracy and sovereignty, which can be comprehended as authentic politics or genuine political public space. A question underlying the proposal of such an alternative conception concerns whether democracy – the indispensable right arm of modernity – necessarily entails the development or progress of a country by way of a break from its past – its tradition.

Further to these points, it is important here to clarify and stress what this thesis is *not* about, in view of the probable counterargument which situates this study in the antinomy of paradigms between essentialism and constructivism. For essentialism, the marrow of what mediates, constructs and unites inter-subjectivity and its space – e.g. ethnicity, individual identity, culture and tradition – is that which is pre-ordained or pre-given, and often, expressed as nature, a unique and unchanging essence (De Cecco 1993: 2, 5; Fischer 1999: 473; Blackwood 2008: 223). For constructivism, these marrows are that which are invented and constructed by the rational intent of specific individuals, groups or institutions for the sake of their domination, and are thus products of strategic leverage-exertion (Blackwood 2008; Fischer 1999). Recently, the leading areas in the field of sexuality, anthropology and culture, in particular, have increasingly addressed the conceptual limitations of both paradigms in respect to the understanding of these elements (De Cecco 1993; Fischer 1999). For example, an alternative approach made in the area of sexuality argues that ‘the biological and social [which constitute a person’s sexuality] are neither separable, nor antithetical, nor alternatives but complementary’ (De Cecco 1993: 7). Scholars in the field of anthropology exploring recent polemics and conflicts surrounding pan-Mayan cultural activism, which has ascended since the end of the 1980s, observe naïve and misplaced insights in the claims of Mayan scholars who ‘assert the legitimacy of an essentialist paradigm’ (Fischer 1999: 476). Yet at the same

time, this recent approach equally suspects constructivist claims, observing the latter's critique of the essentialist approach is one which reduces Mayan culture to no more than the product of 'self-interested construction' or of 'counterhegemonic resistance' (Fischer 1999: 475-476). Alternative concepts such as 'cultural logic' are put forward out of these recent scholars' frustration with the examination of *culture* based on the antithesis of two paradigms, with a view to looking 'beyond surface representations' (Fischer 1999: 478). 'Maya cultural logic', for example, maintains 'a distinctly Maya worldview', spans 'community boundaries that simultaneously conditions individual agency', and reflects 'changing consensual ethics that have emerged from practical activity in local and global contexts' (Fischer 1999: 478).

Accordingly, the pursuit of the Japanese question in this thesis, and the corresponding focus on the enduring measures of culture, tradition and authority, are not based on any endorsement of the essentialist paradigm. Likewise, the dissection of Arendt's political narrative on culture, tradition and authority, which confirms these enduring measures as human artifacts by nature should not be taken to suggest that the public phenomena of political agent's action and speech, and of culture and tradition are invariably and entirely the result of individuals' or institutions' power conflicts or strategic maneuver. Nor is the argument that the measures such as culture and tradition reflect the complementary relation of unchanging essences with human invention or construction. Precisely, the leading stresses and questions this thesis puts forward are: Is there not an essential connection between the political faculty of judgment (which is always a backward glance and manifests in the public sphere, as in action and speech) and *human memory* in which the past is stored, with its reflective function falling back upon relatively permanent artifacts or guideposts (e.g. culture, tradition and rituals) for the judgment criteria? Is there not in the case of Japan a critical relation between such enduring measures and the emperor institution or system which has been historically a wellspring of these guideposts, in a word, the foundation to a body politic? Most importantly, can a body politic be sustainable only with power? Put differently, how may

a body politic derive a source of its order (morals and ethics which protect the sphere of power and freedom) and law, without an absolute?<sup>8</sup>

Kataoka Tetsuya, whose analysis of international relations, particularly, of the domestic politics of postwar Japan and the US-Japan relationship supports Arendt's work of the political public space, wrote in 1980:

The impact of a lost war is identical in nature everywhere... People turn away from public affairs and scurry to the comfort of private lives... In interstate relations, a defeated state almost certainly becomes a nonentity; it will not recover its political will and assertiveness for a long time. On the other hand, economic activity... is perfectly compatible with a nation politically castrated in total defeat. (1980: 7)

Kataoka argued that when a country loses a war, it affects the border and life of a public and accelerates further the decline of the political public realm, the decline which for Hannah Arendt permeates many modern industrialised societies today. Observing Japan from the other side of the ocean in America, he considered postwar Japanese society to be distinct from many other societies which hold dear the uniqueness of their public realms. For him, although the egalitarian idealism of Western countries such as Britain, France and America still value the public tutelages of religion, patriotism and elitism, Japan's peculiarity lay in the extraordinary speed of the socialisation and privatisation of its public realm (see Chapters 2 and 5). He contended that Japan's defeat in the Second World War and the decline in respect for the emperor system among the Japanese contributed to the collapse of the people's sense of what is just or unjust, which is arguably fostered by the survival of enduring measures such as tradition and ritual. For Kataoka, this collapse was made manifest in events such as children becoming the victims of murder and disgrace, children killing their parents, and junior high school teachers being dismissed for having relationships with underage students (Kataoka 2006: 121-123). From Kataoka's viewpoint, it was arguable as to whether the institution of the

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<sup>8</sup> See Arendt's work *On Revolution* (1990): 'The need for an absolute manifested itself in many different ways, assumed different disguises, and found different solution' (1990: 161). This work is less about the liberal and democratic assumption and appraisal of the manifestation and development of a political sphere (power) across and after the American and French revolutions, than about a critical question of these relations, which emerges at the very beginning of a state or polity creation; power/freedom and an absolute; and a body politic and an absolute.



emperor in Japan could be reduced to the interpretations favoured by mainstream political science and history – to the symbolic matrix of authoritarianism and ultra-nationalism. In the spirit of Kataoka's observations, I recall here the archaic notion of '*kokutai*', a term which is roughly translated as a 'body politic'. The term was in popular use before the end of WWII and referred to Japan's emperor-centred polity; that was 'the synthesis of existential structures such as the notion of monarch, the ethics of people, law, political system, as well as aesthetic culture, customs, art and religion' (Inoue Kowashi cited in Ohara 1982: 29, mt). The evaporation or metamorphosis of *kokutai* in postwar Japan, through constitutional reduction of the emperor's relevance to Japan's public sphere to the symbol of the state, has seen its public realm part company with the cultural traditions and forms of authority that once gave meaning to Japan's public life. Put differently, when the thread of history incarnated in religion, traditional rituals and ethics is discontinued, the integrity of a public realm and the freedom of its citizens are threatened correspondingly, giving rise to aforementioned Kataoka's address of social ills.

Part I of this thesis begins by examining Arendt's work on the political public realm (1958). Chapter 1 unpacks the analytical cornerstone of Arendt's political theory, the *vita activa*, which explains the three fundamental human activities of action/speech, work/production and labour/consumption. The chapter explores the meaning of the hierarchy which ordered the *vita activa* of the ancient citizens, and argues that the political public space cannot be sustained by human plurality – the political activities of action and speech which produce the experience of freedom – alone, but requires the establishment of boundaries and limitations on the boundless nature of these political activities. Chapter 2 dissects the reversal of the *vita activa* hierarchy in the modern age, and the implication of this reversal on the public realm. The chapter recounts the importance and usefulness of an Arendtian approach, which draws the analytical standard of political life from the hierarchy of *vita activa*, by reflecting on the condition of public political debate today. The final section of this chapter introduces the key notion which this thesis sets forth – the Japanese question – as the means by which Arendt's work on the political public realm can be positioned in relation to the history and culture of Japan.

In Part II, the original forms and characteristics of Japan's political public realm are explored. The Japanese question concerns the extent to which the action and dialogue

of the political are related to and guided by the question of the foundation to a body politic. In the case of Japan the body politic rests on the symbolic role of the emperor and the emperor system as a medium for the interrelation between that figure and the public phenomena of culture, ethics and rituals which bind and unify a political community. The thesis's study of Arendt's phenomenology finds that authentic politics, which is defined by Arendt's notion of public realm, is to emerge when people's action in concert – power – *is guided by the question of how the public borders of a country are proposed, negotiated and enacted*. In this respect, I argue that the *bakumatsu* movement (1850s-1868), which Chapter 3 examines, demonstrates that despite this period predating the formation of modern state at the institutional level, Japan's public sphere of this time exhibits more vibrant political life than one which we witness in the postwar period, given the phenomenal extent in which the *bakumatsu* agents engage with the Japanese question – an essential criterion by which a movement (collective action) can be identified as political. The *bakumatsu* period and movement are selected over other cases of power manifestation, for example, the Taishō democracy (from the mid 1900s to the mid 1920s)<sup>9</sup>, precisely because of the considerable extent to which the sphere of the political, composed of the multiple power centres and their complex interactions, negotiates with the Japanese question for its survival, in the face of the crises brought about by the exogenous and endogenous factors. The chapter aims to answer a critical question as to whether political life is necessarily underdeveloped in the absence of modern political institutions and systems. Chapter 4 elaborates on the Japanese question further by examining the political life of early modern Japan under the emperor system. The studies of the traditional way in which the emperor governed Japan's public space, of the *yoriai* practice observed by anthropologist Miyamoto Tsuneichi, and of *bushidō* or samurai ethics suggest a picture of *kokutai*, illustrating the borders of Japan's public realm and the characteristics of its authentic public space – the picture which defies the dominant premise that in Japan's polity centring on the emperor system, political life or democracy is underdeveloped.

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<sup>9</sup> The definition of the period of Taishō democracy often differs according to the author, yet this specified period covers the key time of Taishō democracy. The Taishō era is from 1912 to 1926.

Part III examines the decline of the political public space in postwar Japan by investigating the social movements of the time: the labour movements in the immediate aftermath of World War II; social student movements over the revision of the US-Japan security treaty in 1960 and student radicalism of the late 1960s; and the explosive growth of Non-Profit and Non-Government Organisations since the passage of the Special Nonprofit Organisation Law in March 1998 (the NPO Law). Overall, as the chapters making up Part III demonstrate, the social movements of postwar Japan continue to neglect the Japanese question, making the re-establishment of the public realm difficult, despite the increase of political activities that are otherwise important to the political public space: participation, deliberation and judgment.

In this way, this thesis proposes to analyse the condition of political life in postwar Japan by reflecting on the question of how the polity and the people might be united in a concern for the public good, which includes the issue of state's sovereignty, autonomy and security. For Arendt, the withdrawal of enduring measures – tradition, culture and authority – which hedge and secure the world of political action, giving it meaning and protecting freedom, has pervaded the West. The tutelage of freedom – the hierarchy of *vita activa* (see Part I) – has been reversed, on her account, by the rise of modern science since the sixteenth century and the emergence of consumer society since the nineteenth century. This is to say that the modes of political being and knowing which defined the stature of a citizen and gave form to the political public sphere have been subverted by those of *homo faber* – the utilitarian – and the *animal laborans* – the consumer. As discussed in Chapter 2, the decline of the enduring measures of political community that, across time, transmitted the wisdom of the past and the memory of extraordinary individuals and grand civilisations, has coincided with the rise of the agents, *homo faber* and the *animal laborans*, the activities of whom define the nature of the *private* or pre-political space. Although today the politics of each nation-state has been fraught with transnational problems created by the expansion of the world economy and trade, the coterminous nature of financial systems, the dominance of transnational corporations, and the cross-border impacts of environmental degradation and climate change, the rise of such transnational problems can be seen as events that symbolise, to a great extent, the reversal of the *vita activa* hierarchy proposed by Arendt. In this regard,

although this thesis has its immediate significance for the fields of political science, social science, culture and history, especially those which concerns Japan, it also speaks to a set of concerns that has broader significance beyond the humanities and beyond the specific context of Japan.

*Notes on the Text*

Sections of the following discussion (particularly in Part II and Part III) make reference to sources originally written and only available in Japanese. For Japanese sources I have provided an English translation, indicating this fact by including 'mt' in the reference details for the in-text citation. Additionally, following the Japanese convention, Japanese names are written throughout with surname first and given name second.

## CHAPTER 1

### *Hannah Arendt's Political Public Space: a Realm of Interdependence between Human Plurality and Enduring Measures*

For the Greeks... it was *potential immortality* that was the highest and most profound goal of all politics, and of their very own form of political organization – the polis.  
(Arendt 2007: 191, italics added)

The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action.  
(Arendt 1993: 146)

#### *Introduction*

For Hannah Arendt, a distinguished twentieth-century political philosopher who observes much disharmony between the concept of politics proposed by the tradition of Occidental political thought and the experience of original political community in ancient Greece, it is important that the field of present and future political study goes back to the elementary questions as to the meaning of politics, prior to beginning any examination of a public space or a society. The purpose of re-visiting the meaning of politics is to examine our contemporary understanding of political life with critical questions: whether the notion of politics has transformed in the course of history, and if it has changed, what the implications of such conceptual and epistemological transformation have been. Upon her return to the ancient city-state polis and the re-discovery of the sense of politics, political life or the public realm, Arendt argues that the political public space cannot be enacted alone by human plurality but that such plurality must be supported by enduring, time-transcending measures of tradition, authority and culture. The accelerating decline in the vitality of politics which Arendt observes in many public spaces of modern states in the world may be, her political thought suggests, abated and restored by our understanding of the model of the public realm in the original political community of ancient Athens, which was built on the interdependence of human plurality and enduring measures.

This chapter seeks to establish the principles of Arendt's political philosophy in order to lay the foundation to an analysis, in subsequent chapters, of postwar Japan's political condition. The chapter begins by unpacking Arendt's critique of the modern

notion of history, which underpins the dominant paradigms of politics, in order both to explicate what for Arendt is one of the cardinal problems of modern political thought – its Archimedean epistemology – as well as to introduce her alternative methodology and epistemology of political science. The chapter goes on to introduce Arendt's concept of politics in more detail, making particular reference to her derivation of the standards of politics from the experience of the ancient Greek city-state in general, and from ancient cosmology in particular. The chapter concludes by unfolding the contra-institutionalist approach of Arendt and her belief that the elemental and authentic political institutions of the polity lie in the 'perpetual debate and contestation' (Villa 1999: 116) of citizens in everyday life.

*Arendt's Critical Historiography and the Critique of Modern Political Thought*

Broadly speaking, two traditional schools of political thought hold sway, today, over our ideas and practices of politics: liberal-pluralism, which focuses its attention on the extent of reciprocity and tension between two pivotal entities, the state and the individual; and Marxism, in which politics takes the guise of a class struggle, or the conflict of antagonistic social forces more generally. Against these traditional accounts of politics and political action, Arendt proposes a very different account of political life, one which derives from an equally radical approach to history. Via a critical historiography, which reflects upon the original experience of Athenian politics, Arendt sheds new light on the human capacity to participate in and relate to the public realm. Bound up with this alternative historiography is a critical examination of modern political thought insofar as it is characterised by a particular epistemological framework, which Arendt calls 'Archimedean' and which she argues diminishes authentic analysis of human action and political life. The emergence of the Archimedean epistemology which governs the traditions of liberalism and Marxism demonstrates for Arendt a critical point in history in which the notion of politics was transformed, bringing about far-reaching implications at the level of both our thought and practice as to the political realm.

While it is true that Arendt 'almost never discussed methodological problems' (Vollrath 1977: 161), it is worth briefly investigating the implications of her methodological concerns, particularly over the forms of historical inquiry that either

inform or underlie the liberal-pluralist and Marxist conceptions of politics. Arendt's concerns with regard to the methodology of modern history can be summarised in two key points. The first of these relates to the notion of impartiality and objectivity presumed by the tradition of modern political thought, a presumption that can be described as 'Archimedean epistemology'. In *The Human Condition* (1958), Arendt explains the Archimedean epistemology as a framework that reflects a shift in man's viewpoint (from the earth to a point in the universe), a shift which increasingly hinges on the modality of natural science in terms of truth-revelation. This Archimedean epistemology entered modern thought as early as the seventeenth century, when Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that our knowledge of man must come from scientific knowledge enshrined in mathematical laws (Laurence 1972).<sup>10</sup> During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, modern political philosophy developed this initial impulse by way of amalgamating scientific methods with political thought. According to Richard Rorty, 'philosophy-as-epistemology' emerged from the study of how the human mind works and by so doing, the modern period asserted the possibility of attaining self-certainty (1979: 137). To the end of self-certainty, modern political theorists welcomed the 'new science' of Archimedean epistemology – the mathematical equation of thought-practice in which an algebraic formula translates the world (Arendt 1958: 264-266).

Since Galileo's discovery of the heliocentric system through his invention of the telescope, which brought forth a striking fact that 'it is not the sun that moves around the earth but the earth that circles the sun' (Arendt 1958: 258; see also Tant 1999: 106), there has been a growing suspicion as to 'the adequacy of the senses' vested in man. In place of the confidence which people had long held in their given senses, the Archimedean epistemology established itself, beefing up the minds of the modern man by bypassing and invalidating human-sense experiences. As Arendt puts it, the human mind 'look[s] upon and handle[s] the multitude and variety of the concrete in accordance with its own patterns and symbols' (1958: 267). Given the human mind which adapts the datum and formulas of geometry (as much as logics, patterns, generalisation and causation)

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<sup>10</sup> By 'epistemology' here, I mean something like an attitude or a mode of relating and belonging to the world – a 'way of thinking and feeling', as Foucault puts it (Foucault 2007: 105). Foucault uses this phrase to describe modernity, which he seeks to characterise as a way of knowing and relating to the world, rather than as a period of history.

malleably to its mental patterns, the modern world has welcomed the Archimedean approach to knowledge, to a considerable degree. No one doubts the certainty of two-plus-two-equals-four in comparison to truths grasped by human senses.<sup>11</sup> Thus, knowledge has been increasingly approached by data that conforms to the science of modern algebra such as causalities, processes, logics and the notion of teleology.<sup>12</sup> In forms of political science that derive from the liberal tradition, this Archimedean epistemology perhaps finds its most direct expression in the utilitarian philosophy and methodology of human reason and action. Bentham states that ‘nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*’ (1970: 11). For him, the principle of utility underlies the subjection of human beings to this axiomatic nature, meaning that this principle denotes that which approves or disapproves every human action (1970: 12). ‘What did distinguish Bentham from other utilitarians... [and] what keeps his work instructive to this day’, is, ‘the *ideal* of science’ that is seen in ‘celestial mechanics’ represented by the work of Newton (Mitchell 1918: 163-164). Bentham’s most significant contribution to modern thought – characterised as his ‘way of becoming the Newton of the moral world’ – is thus taken to be his introduction of a methodology taken from the field of physics and applied to the field of social and political science (Mitchell 1918: 164). Bentham’s *felicific calculus* thus aspires to provide a means of measuring and calculating precisely the motives that drive human action. By appropriating the motives of either pain or pleasure to four different circumstances as a primary significance: intensity, duration, certainty and propinquity, Bentham’s felicific calculus works out human conduct on the basis of mathematical science:

One begins with the first distinguishable pleasure or pain which appears to be produced by an act, multiplies the number of its intensity units by the number of duration units, and then multiplies this product by the two fractions expressing certainty and proximity. (Mitchell 1981: 165)

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<sup>11</sup> In reference to Friedrich Nietzsche, Arendt explains that his provocative statement, the “death of God”, was intended as a metaphor for our abrogation of suprasensory realm as understood by metaphysics (Arendt 1978: 10; Nietzsche 1996: 133).

<sup>12</sup> Arendt writes that while ‘the categories and ideas of human reason have their ultimate source in human sense experience’ (1993: 271), man begins to confirm the truths of appearances by knowing ‘How’ they come from rather than ‘What’ they are (1958b: 585).



Presupposing the universality of the basic nature of the sovereign subject – pain and pleasure – and exercising the felicific calculus to measure human action, Bentham’s Archimedean epistemology formulates a way of understanding the world by *deducing* everything – the nature of legislation, economics, morality and so forth – from it.

Perhaps the best illustration of the Archimedean epistemology in this context is the modern historian’s attempts to approximate physics, the principle of which is considered to be *objectivity* as opposed to the subjectivity of historiography (Arendt 1958b: 577).<sup>13</sup> The modern historian, as Arendt puts it, citing Ranke, affirms ‘the “extinction of the self” as the condition of “pure vision”’ (Arendt 1958b: 577). For the objective historian, his work must be, accordingly, constructed by the principle of ‘non-interference’ and ‘non-discrimination’ as well as by abstention from value-judgment (Arendt 1958b: 578), while in effect it is him who selects certain facts and data out of piled-up research materials. G. W. F. Hegel’s (1770-1831) concept of history is a case in point, particularly his valuation of reflective and philosophical history, which arguably explicates the objectivity of historical science, and his notion of history addressed as progress – a history seen developmentally and teleologically. In the work *The Philosophy of History* (1952), Hegel distinguishes the styles of writing history and prioritises one over the other. He identifies three methods through which history is articulated: original history, reflective history and philosophical history. Original history, represented by the writings of Herodotus and Thucydides, is conceived as ‘life-like descriptions’ found in legends, poems and ballad-stories (Hegel 1952: 153). Secondly, Hegel describes reflective history as a form of history that is universal, pragmatic, critical and transitional to philosophical history which, for him, represents historical inquiry in its fully developed stage (1952: 154-156). In designating three different modes of history, although Hegel introduces distinct methods to treat history, he not merely designates but also prioritises reflective history and philosophical history over original history, as forms of historical description that can be articulated by the advanced nations (1952: 153). In his criticism of the characteristics of original history, the notion of progress is presupposed. He holds

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<sup>13</sup> When it comes to natural science like physics, Arendt argues that it is no less a field of research that begins by a man-centred inquiry than the field of historical science. (1958: 577)

reflective history to be a developed form of historical description, arguing that historians no longer just describe past events but analyse them from a universal viewpoint which allows reflection on the present. For Hegel, it is important that the new concept of history adopts pragmatic or didactic reflections – demonstration of objectivity – so that truths are substantiated by relating the past to the present.

Hegel's philosophy of history reifies the Archimedean epistemology of process and progress, for example, in the concept of reason. He writes:

[Reason] supplies its own nourishment, and is the object of its own operations. While it is exclusively its own basis of existence, and absolute final aim, it is also the energizing power realizing this aim; developing it not only in the phenomena of the natural, but also of the spiritual universe – the history of the world. (1952: 157)

His philosophy of history presumes idea and spirit – an inner activity – to appear in the world in the form of reason. The world that is filled with objects and existences is not a mere physical entity but also a psychical entity that is governed by the providence of God. The essence of spirit which exists in and with itself is freedom, towards which the universal history has been continuously directed. Heading towards this absolute aim, the history of the world is a rational and determined process (Hegel 1952: 157). Each event of history is, hence, a manifestation of human will guided by providence. In this view, it is not inappropriate for Hegel to find 'the natural division of universal history' that determines the historical stage of countries in the world. For Hegel, Eastern nations symbolise the most backward phase; the Greek and Roman world characterises the next stage, and the German world demonstrates the most advanced phase (1952: 161). Hegel is attentive to the hidden nature of principles, aims or destinies that guide universal history. While the world is fraught with multitudes of volitions, interests and activities, he explains that they appear in human reason, the dialectics of which ever produce an infinite antithesis approximating the history of the world to its ultimate goal – freedom (Hegel 1952: 165).

In the case of Marxism, an Archimedean epistemology is enshrined by way of the principle of *dialectical materialism* which informs Karl Marx's concept of history. At the

heart of the Marxist conception of politics, and the socialist theories of government and political action which his concept supports, is a concern with labour, class and history. Marx defines labour as ‘a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature’ (2006: 493). For socialists, the individual purports the existence of egoism which is ‘a necessary form of the self-assertion of individuals’ (Marx 2006: 199). Civil society is an entity that consists of men as private individuals who treat other men as means and who similarly degrade themselves to a means (Marx 2006: 53) because they are, at the individual level, merely competitors. Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) argue that individuals are *predestined* to form a higher form of independent existence through belonging to a class. The history of all human society is ‘the history of class struggles’ (Marx 2006: 246). It is through belonging to and assimilating into the class that humans acquire a position in life and achieve personal development, which encompasses not just the evolution of individuals but also that of the history of mankind (Marx and Engels 1977: 82-83). Individual autonomy is achieved through one’s subsumption into the class. Marx’s theory of history prescribes that the dialectical experience of human species (not just a private individual but also a social being who belongs to communities) gives life to history as a real, objective process. In this way Marxist historiography illustrates the transformation of the entire structure of society and inter-societal relations, understanding such change as the transformation of underdevelopment to development (Peet 1980: 25). Marx’s dialectical materialism posits the material production of life as the basis of history. Starting from this material base, he seeks to *deduce* the ultimate end of universal history in the ideal of socialism, where humans achieve freedom by being liberated from all natural limitations, namely, by doing away with labour (Marx 2006: 195).

Marx’s resort to deductive methodology is substantiated by his justification of the premises from which he holds we begin the scientific investigation of human social history (1976: 31, 37). In January 1861, for instance, Marx wrote to Engels, highlighting that Darwin’s evolutionary theory serves him ‘a natural-scientific basis for the understanding of class struggle in history’ (Marx cited in Harris 1998: 48). For him, the Darwinian assumption of human bio-evolutionary development is the axiom of ‘teleology

in natural sciences' and serves to explain empirically the rational meaning of teleology which history bears (Harris 1998: 49). Dialectical materialism thus provides the paradigmatic example of modern Archimedean epistemology, suggesting that the events of human history are subject to universal laws which are developmental and teleological. The agent of such human history is equally presupposed as that which progresses, mediated by his or her belonging to class which demonstrates the most reasonable and productive forms of socio-economic organisation. In Marxist view, political actions are predetermined by patterns and logics.

Against the predominance of liberal and Marxist views of politics in many modern societies, Arendtian critics agree that Archimedean epistemology, which characterises many academic disciplines of the modern age such as sociology, psychology and history, tends to numb intellectual sensitivity to alternatives to Archimedean method, in spite of the fact that those disciplines are dealing with the realm of human beings and their interactions, and thus, with the plurality of phenomena inherent in the political public space (Baehr 2002; Vollrath 1977: 163-170). For Arendt, the values of objectivity and impartiality affirmed by the scholars of our age fail to integrate within their notions of time and history the insights of classical thought, best illustrated by what she calls Homeric impartiality and Thucydidean objectivity (1958b: 579). The impartiality that characterises Homer's writing, Arendt suggests, rests on the latitude of scholars: including the question of whether they can explore events that are considered to be worthy of 'immortalizing praise' *regardless* of friend and foe, and hence the question of his ability to place them equally in our judgment. For her, Homeric impartiality is the highest type of impartiality because 'not only does it leave behind the common interest in one's own side and one's own people... but it also discards the alternative of victory or defeat' (1958b: 579). Similarly, Thucydidean objectivity presumes that the field of history is coextensive with the field of politics, such that the world consists in that which could be viewed 'from an infinite number of different standpoints' (Arendt 1958b: 579). Crucially, these classical conceptions or practices of objectivity and impartiality differ from their modern counterparts which attempt to banish the fact that the author and his or her viewpoint are inherent in the address, and thus truths articulated are grounded in his or her standpoint. While such dispositions served as

a method for antiquity in order to *understand* the world, Arendt laments the fact that ‘none of the conditions of either Homeric impartiality or Thucydidean objectivity are present in the modern age’ (1958b: 580).

Arendt’s critique of the Archimedean epistemology is directed not only to the methodology of modern history embedded in the modern historians’ assumption of impartiality and objectivity but also to rationalism or positivism, widely exercised in the field of social science. Arendt’s experience of totalitarianism in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s laid the ground for her methodological alternative of narrative and storytelling in the domain of political thought. Facing the difficulty of communicating an event which she took to be unprecedented – an event which she thought flared up precisely on account of the prevailing ‘problem of understanding’ (Disch 1993: 666) – Arendt turned to narrative as a methodology of political-historical writing, in the hope that the otherwise incomprehensible event of totalitarianism could be understood as a story more deeply. For Arendt, narratives which range widely from anecdotes, proverbs and tales to personal stories can save the process of human understanding and judgment, because their specific effect touches off the Kantian notion of ‘enlarged mentality’ (Arendt cited in Beiner 1992: 104) – imagination – while preventing us from sliding into ‘ahistorical modes of thinking’, which seek analogies and generalisations, the modes prevalent in the Archimedean approach (Benhabib 1994: 122). The Archimedean epistemology, exemplified by the positivist paradigm of sociology, leads to ‘nomological generalizations’, which, on Arendt’s view, *impede* the exercise of human thought to think critically, to understand and judge, and especially to discern difference and its signification. As Disch and Vollrath emphasise, Arendt’s defiance of the primary methods of modern disciplines did not leave her free of critiques and charges, such as of ‘subjectivism’ (Martin Jay cited in Disch 1993: 666) and of a discourse that is ‘*not* a serious scientific construction’ (Vollrath 1977: 161). In defence of Arendt, however, Vollrath (1977: 179-181) and Disch (1993: 682) contest that storytelling used as the methodology of political thought or of historiography facilitates the *critical thinking* of the readers, influences them to derive the *meanings* of the events on the basis of their

understanding, and ultimately guides them to conciliation with the world in which they live.<sup>14</sup>

By illustrating the problems of the Archimedean epistemology, Arendt's critical historiography proposes that the fundamentally contingent, unpredictable and spontaneous sphere of the political public cannot be authentically understood by the forms of social and political science forged in the modern age. In order for the public realm to receive sufficient and fair light, she argues that historians need to heed attention to the classic understanding of history characterised by Homeric impartiality and Thucydidean objectivity. For her, the public space which abounds with human plurality and contingency cannot be examined through the Archimedean method of generalisation, and algebraic and teleological explanation. Critical thinking, as storytelling provokes, thus reduces the danger of our thought sliding into nomological generalisations of a space which is inherently haphazard and unpredictable. And it is against the background of such a critical historiography that we may appreciate the finer points to the cornerstone of Arendt's political thought, that is, her account of the political public space.

*Arendt's Return to the Political Communities of Athens and Rome in Search of Politics and its Standards*

Among Arendt's writings, for the purpose of this thesis two key works stand out as sources for developing an alternative standpoint for analysing political life today: *The Human Condition* (1958) and *Between Past and Future* (1993). The former, which Elisabeth Young-Bruehl calls the 'theoretical lexicon' (2006: 79) of Hannah Arendt's work, is a cornerstone of Arendt's political philosophy, developing her analytical

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<sup>14</sup> Important to our current context which discusses Arendt's unique integration of narratives into political thought is also the way she organised the book *The Origin of Totalitarianism* in which she compiled her examination of the elements that gave rise to the totalitarian regime. Through attention to Arendt's unpublished memos to Mary Underwood, in which Arendt addressed the difficulty of a kind of history-writing that does not depart from the presumption that historical events are an evolutionary process, Disch sheds light on Arendt's *objection* to the chronological writing of history (1993: 675; Benhabib 1994: 114). For Arendt, history described through the sequence of chronology obliterates the condition of political sphere which comes to pass with the contingency, spontaneity and boundlessness of actions. In her account of the public realm, Arendt exercises words like 'elements' and 'the *crystallization* of elements', proposing that historical writing should illuminate the particular constellation and crystallisation of elements into a whole, while guiding our thought to their past meaning (Benhabib 1994: 114). *The Origin of Totalitarianism*, which concerns the political public realm, highlights, therefore, the 'amalgamation' or 'the coincidence of elements that are not necessarily or causally connected but whose intersection is not simply random' (Disch 1993: 675).

standards as to the concept of politics on the basis of the examination of an original political community of the city-state polis in ancient Athens. Arendt's decision to take up the study of the components of the polis in ancient Greece – 'the community which first discovered the essence and the realm of the political' (Arendt 1993: 154) – stems from her passionate concern over the ruptures and disturbances in the realm of human interaction in the modern West, which manifested in an extreme form of Nazi totalitarianism in 1930s and 40s Germany. Arendt's investigation of the political community of ancient Athens provides us with an understanding of the phenomenon and potential of totalitarianism as perhaps not limited to Nazi Germany but as potentially developmental and expansive in any country which neglects a critical approach to and negotiation with the course of modernity that many modern states have pursued to date. In this respect, Arendt's work in *The Human Condition* offers us a practice of precautionary thought. But the importance of this work is not limited to the role of alarm: it offers us a framework of thought and practice with a view to the restoration of the political public space which Arendt announces in this work has declined considerably in the modern age, which is characterised instead by the rise of consumer society and the dominance of the authority of modern science. Put differently, modern subjects are, often, unable to separate their citizenship in practice and thought from that which, for Arendt, is influenced by the pre-political activities, discourses and beliefs, represented (as shall be discussed in Chapter 2) by consumerism and the epistemology of modern science.

Arendt begins *The Human Condition* by introducing the term *vita activa*, her designation of 'three fundamental human activities: labor, work and action' (1958: 7). By drawing upon the experience of ancient Athenians with these activities, Arendt considers the identification of the different characteristics of these human activities as essential for the establishment of political standards, given that the human condition:

comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man. Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence. The world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities; but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers. (Arendt 1958: 9)

At the bottom of the hierarchy of *vita activa*, as the Athenians experienced it, was the activity of labour and consumption. This evaluation was premised on the belief that ‘what men share with all other forms of animal life was not considered to be human’ – the *animal laborans* (Arendt 1958: 84). While modern social science speaks of society as a realm of the *behaviours* of the individuals rather than of the *actions* of the individuals, such a notion represents the nature of the *animal laborans* in its ‘one-ness’ – that is, ‘the unity of the species with regard to which every single member is the same and exchangeable’ (Arendt 1958: 123). Because labouring animals are enslaved to their bodily necessity throughout their life, and their survival is characterised by everyday struggle and the pain of labour, the ideal and objective of the *animal laborans* is abundance, leisure and a good life, in which the activity of consumption is priority. For the ancients, labour ‘corresponds to the biological process of the human body’, and its ‘cyclical movement’ accompanies the activity of consumption: ‘labor and consumption are but two stages of the ever-recurrent cycle of biological life’ (Arendt 1958: 97, 99). Given that ‘nothing... is more private than the bodily functions of the life process’ (Arendt 1958: 111), the activities and agents of labour and consumption were hidden in the private space – the *oikos* – where the whole activity of life, namely, biological life, was carried out, including the birth and death of a person, and the reproduction of family and its survival through the management of economy. As Aristotle clarified, the *animal laborans* – not just its activity but also its way of life – was antithetical to the political, the public or citizen’s way of life, because man as the *animal laborans* was ‘the way of life of the slave, who was coerced by the necessity to stay alive and by the rule of his master’ (Arendt 1958: 12).

Although the Athenians prioritised the public space by clearly separating it from the private, they in no way could make political life independent of the private space – the *oikos* (household). That is, for participation in public life, the ancient citizens – the master of the household – had not only to possess his private space but also to master the hardships of bodily necessities inherent in the activity of the *animal laborans*. Familial matters and economic activity were then excluded from the citizens’ consideration of the affairs of the polis. To that extent, the public space of the ancient Athenian city-state did not incarnate without a cost: it was built after having destroyed ‘all organized units



resting on kinship' (Arendt 1958: 2). The polis was constructed via drawing a stark border between the public and the private realms: into the space of the latter, biological life was contained. 'According to Greek thought', Arendt notes, 'the human capacity for political organization is not only different from but stands in direct opposition to that natural association whose center is the home (*oikiri*) and the family' (1958: 24). Since the *oikos* was governed under the rule of the master (violence included), moreover, from this space the notion of equality was eliminated. In contrast to the unequal structure of the private realm, the structure of the public was comprised of *isonomy* – the condition of no-rulership (Arendt 1990: 30).<sup>15</sup>

The second activity within the *vita activa* was work and production, which Arendt distinguishes from the activity of labour and consumption. She illustrates that 'the modern age in general and Karl Marx in particular... had an almost irresistible tendency to look upon all labor as work and to speak of the *animal laborans* in terms much more fitting for *homo faber*' – the mode of existence whose way of life lies with the activity of production and fabrication (1958: 87). Work – the activity of *homo faber* – differs from labour, for Arendt, because the objects and products which *homo faber* makes endure in time, contrasting with those of labourers whose objects are ephemeral so that they can be 'drawn swiftly into the never-ending cycle of man's metabolism with nature' (Arendt 1958: 126). Importantly, without the objects of *homo faber*, the political public realm cannot sustain its space alone because human action and speech, grounded in freedom, are evanescent experiences, no matter how grand and extraordinary they may become. The work of *homo faber* adds to the public space the durability of human artifacts that hand down to coming generations the memory of great individuals, agoras and civilisations. In other words, because the relatively permanent objects and products which *homo faber* fabricates are those – symbolised by art-work: story, sculpture, drawing and architecture – that are inimical both to the frailty of human deed and word and to the mortal existence of man, they help constitute and sustain the public space. Arendt writes

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<sup>15</sup> Unlike the notion of equality which we hold today, the notion that everyone is assumed to be *born equal*, Arendt points out that the equality of the antiquity was closely interlinked with 'the essence of freedom': Without the virtue of equality that creates the condition in which different individuals can *come together*, it was thought that the citizens were unable to appeal to and to receive the recognition of his fellow citizens and, ultimately, to deliberate on the common-wealth of all (Arendt 1990: 31). In this regard, the classic notion of equality holds a condition in which human plurality be upheld rather than legal or moral norms.

that ‘solidity’, which is added by such works to the public realm, is the result of a strength which builds upon the human activity to tear the material out of nature, and thus makes it a product of man’s hands (1958: 140). The political public realm, which ‘rises directly out of acting together, the “sharing of words and deeds”’, namely, the sharing of that in which men find connection each other, ‘depends entirely on *permanence*’ (Arendt 1958: 199, 55, italics added). The durable artifact that transcends time ‘gathers men together and relates them to each other’, and it is only by virtue of the existence of such artifacts that is there a public space: ‘If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal man’ (Arendt 1958: 55). The common world or the public space manifests with this permanence – ‘what we enter when we are born and what we leave behind when we die’ (Arendt 1958: 55).

The problem of *homo faber* – artisan, artist, craftsman – in being qualified for citizenship, namely, bearing political agency in the public realm, was thought to lie in the nature of work with which their mode of being is associated. With a view to producing artifacts, artisans must start with violating nature so that they can take materials out of it; and then with these materials, they begin to produce objects; during which process, their work is guided by an image of the final product (Arendt 1958: 140). For the ancients, the agency of artisans was characterised by the utilitarian epistemology, which would estimate everything as a *means to an end* (Arendt 2007: 195). *Homo faber*’s epistemology contrasted, therefore, with that of the political agent who arrests the phenomena of the public realm as they are or appear: citizens of the public space are able to grasp ‘man *qua* man, each individual in his unique distinctness’, by which he ‘appears and confirms himself in speech and action’, believing that ‘the greatest that man can achieve is his own appearance and actualization’ (Arendt 1958: 207-208, italics added). *Homo faber* was thus considered to have a barbaric vice, given that he cannot ‘think and judge a thing apart from its function or utility’, owing to their agency attached to the expertise in production activity (Arendt 1993: 215).

At the top echelon of *vita activa* hierarchy came the political faculty of action and speech, because man was deemed to bridge his mortal existence solely through these activities, thereby attaining potential immortality through the public memory of his deeds

and words. For the ancients, the form of the polis or body politic was based on their appreciation of cosmology. According to Eastern European phenomenologist Jan Patočka, it was with the discovery of the *whole* that the ancients found the peculiar feature of human existence. The ancient Greeks were the first to explain the world as a part of the *whole*, a unique *physis*, ‘an activity, a majestic drama to which we ourselves belong and not as spectators, but rather that both we and things are expended for it and consumed in it ... nothing lasts except for that engulfing and consuming itself’ (Patočka 1996: 8). For the ancients, the peculiar trait of humans rested on their inseparable relation to the dynamics of the whole. Arendt emphasises that man in such ever-consuming drama distinguishes himself by his personality, singularity and particularity. The cosmos is the sphere of the immortal, in which everything is moving in ‘a cyclical order’, whereas man’s life is mortal, moving ‘along a rectilinear line’ (Arendt 1958: 18-19). Against the eternal recurrence of the whole, mortality is the ‘hallmark of human existence’ (Arendt 1958: 18).

The quintessence of the political faculties of human deed and word lies in the fact that these acts address *who the person is*, helping to make his personality or particularity manifest in the public realm. For the Athenians who located the evaluation of every aspect of human life around cosmology, man’s existence as a moral being and his singular personality could be redeemed only by approximating the quintessence of cosmos and universe that was ever-lastingness:

The task and potential greatness of mortals lie in their ability to produce things – works and deeds and words – which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves. By their capacity for the immortal deed, by their ability to leave nonperishable traces behind, men, their individual mortality notwithstanding, attain an immortality of their own and prove themselves to be of a ‘divine’ nature. (Arendt 1958: 19)

Human deed and word reveal who the person is, and without each faculty both activities fail to disclose its subject in its full form (Arendt 1958: 178). Building on Augustine’s political thought which posits freedom as that which emanated ‘when man was created’

(Arendt 1958: 177), Arendt portrays freedom as *natality* which occurs first at our birth and second with our deed and word – the beginning of *somebody*.<sup>16</sup> Deed and word are, accordingly, ‘the modes in which human beings appear to each other... *qua men*’ (Arendt 1958: 176), building the public space with the capacity of *human plurality*. For Arendt, the Greek experience of politics always assumed the sphere of inter-subjective communications where man is not alone but in interaction with others.<sup>17</sup>

Embedding their cosmological consideration into the design of the polis, the Athenians could distinguish the different characteristics of major human activities: labour, work and action, prioritising the political activities over work and labour. Political life is *spatially constructed*, by virtue of its dependence on the realm of inter-subjective communication (Arendt 2005: 108, 119). Freedom, which is a human experience exclusively in the realm of the political or the public, emanates from the activities of discussions, deliberations and decision-makings, consisting in ‘having a share in public business’ (Arendt 1990: 119). The Athenian polis enabled such political life, in which the distinction of personality could emerge through human deed and word, and a citizen could gain the public light or recognition on them. Arendt argues that action and speech are characterised by their ‘sheer actuality’, that is, ‘specifically human achievement’ that ‘lies altogether outside the category of means and ends’ (1958: 207). Not ‘qualities’ but ‘virtues’ pertain to human action and speech, given that those actualities which deed and word reveal ‘exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself’ (Arendt 1958: 206-207). Hence Arendt describes action as ‘virtuosity’: a rhetoric used for ‘an excellence we attribute to the performing arts... where the accomplishments lies in the performance itself’ (1993: 153). Like drama, human deed and word bring forward meanings through

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<sup>16</sup> For the further understanding of the notion of ‘natality’, see Arendt’s *On Violence* (1972: 179). Examining this work, Benhabib (2001: 187) describes natality as the ‘quality through which we insert ourselves into the world... not [only] through the mere fact of being born but through the initiation of words and deeds’.

<sup>17</sup> While many concepts of freedom have arisen across the course of Western political thought since Plato, those concepts have largely depicted freedom as autonomy, that is, as an abstract, unconditioned ‘inner’ freedom — for instance, as an experience in the realm of thought (Kant), or as man’s doing whatever he likes (Aristotle) (Arendt 1993: 144, 147). For Arendt, on the contrary, man cannot know inner freedom if he has not experienced it first in his interaction with others (Arendt 1993: 148). Freedom is thus a ‘worldly *tangible reality*’ where man experiences a joy of expression and recognition in the light of multitudes (1993: 148; italics added).

their performance in the public realm. Meanings which action and speech are capable of producing are, thus, potentials to remain for long in the memory of spectators.

From this recovery of the Athenian experience of politics, Arendt thus develops an understanding of politics as a realm in which human deed and word emanate as an activity that does not pursue an end (*telos*) as Marx presumes, but is an ‘end in itself’ (Arendt 1958: 206). For the Athenians, human action which sets something in motion is an activity that *interrupts* ‘predictable processes as something unexpected, unpredictable, and ultimately causally inexplicable – just like a miracle’ (Arendt 2005: 111-112).<sup>18</sup> Unlike much modern political thought, which sees in human action generalities, causalities and patterns underpinned by the Archimedean epistemology, Arendt’s phenomenological account of the public realm recalls the Athenian experience of the irretrievability, contingency and unforeseeableness in human action. Indeed, on this account, it is precisely because human action and speech are irreducible to patterns, behaviours and causalities, that these political activities can produce a significance or meaning that may be remembered, and endure in human memory long after the event. The political faculties of human deed and word sat, accordingly, at the top echelon of *vita activa* hierarchy in antiquity, because these activities did not just disclose or reveal the *sui generis* of who the person is in the public realm but also provided mortal existence with a bridge to immortality (Arendt 1993: 169). Drawing upon cosmology, the ancient political public realm was characterised by the interaction and interdependence between mortal and immortal, in other words, between freedom (human plurality) and endurance (relative permanence) whose enterprises such as culture and authority are formed by the process of work (see Chapter 2).

The outstanding characteristics of the Athenian city-state polis as to the defence of the political sphere were underpinned by the Greeks’ resort to the law as a key means to build the body politic of their polis – a boundary line ‘between the private and the public, sheltering and protecting both realms while, at the same time, separating them from each other’ (Arendt 1958: 63). Arendt explains that the law in ancient Greece changed a mere human agglomeration into a political community and turned a mere

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<sup>18</sup> The sense of ‘beginning something new’ for the verb ‘to act’ derives, Arendt argues, from the verb’s origins in the Latin ‘*agere*’ (‘to set something in motion’) and the Greek ‘*archein*’ (‘to begin’, ‘to lead’, ‘to rule’) (Arendt 1958: 189).

conglomeration of residences into a city (1958: 63). This ‘wall’ was considered as ‘sacred’, because it functioned to keep the sphere and activities of the private at bay from the public realm: laws stood to protect the spaces of both the public and the private by securing political life, as well as biological and economic life of the family; this boundary enclosed the life of citizens – the political – while severing this space from the *oikos* whose activities were hedged and hidden by the four walls of the house, private property (Arendt 1958: 64). For the ancients, insofar as a body politic needed political beings – citizens – and sought for them the place to experience freedom, the establishment of boundaries which can prevent the overflow of private activities into the realm of the political was imperative.

Arendt writes that ‘bodies politic have always been designed for permanence and their laws always understood as limitations imposed upon movement’ (1958: 47). For the ancients, what incarnates the political, namely, human action and speech, has the nature of boundlessness, since spontaneous action, provoked from nowhere, is released into the realm of human communication and interaction, the realm which receives it with reaction which causes a chain reaction and new processes (Arendt 1958: 190). Although human institutions and laws are not entirely reliable safeguards against deed and word which are by nature boundless, the limitations and boundaries of the law would ‘offer some protection against’ it (Arendt 1958: 191). In this regard, the laws of the polis were not merely the boundary between the public and the private but a man-made bulwark against inherently boundless action. Furthermore, the ancients appreciated the indispensability of the law for their political life, concerning the primary role of the polis that ‘those who acted will be able to establish together the everlasting remembrance of their good and bad deeds, to inspire admiration in the present and in future ages’ (Arendt 1958: 197). ‘The organization of the polis’, as Arendt describes, ‘physically secured by the wall around the city and physiognomically guaranteed by its laws – lest the succeeding generations change its identity beyond recognition – was a kind of organized remembrance’ (1958: 198). Since human deed and word are – regardless of how extraordinary they become – transient and futile, the assurance and guarantee which the polis provided for these political activities to become an ever-lasting potential could not be effective without the aid of the laws which were the ‘stabilising protection’ against the onslaught of ‘acting

together' (Arendt 1958: 198). The immortal potential of action and speech which gushed forth in the public sphere would leave no trace without the polis and its laws. The boundaries of the laws redeemed both the fleeting existence of human beings and the ephemeral nature of freedom by providing the public sphere with stability, bolstering the polis and constructing its body politic.

Arendt's account of public life as experienced in the ancient Athenian polis may serve as a source of standards for understanding the meaning of politics outside the framework of the Archimedean epistemology. To this account, however, it is necessary to add a discussion of Arendt's critical historiography of the concept and experience of 'authority'. Her critical historiography suggests a criterion of the concept of politics by recounting how the notion of authority, another defender of the public space beside laws, developed and was approached in the course of the foundation of the Roman republic which built upon the experience of the ancient Greece. Its word and concept is Roman in origin and was first institutionalised in the Roman republic (Arendt 1993: 104). For Arendt, the indispensability of this enterprise for the public space is found when the decline of the public space in the modern age is recognised, a decline which reached the point where society in the twentieth century was submerged into totalitarianism. Moreover, the significance of this enterprise for the political public sphere is accentuated when we understand the political faculty of judgment which manifests in the public realm as in human action and speech (see Chapter 2).

Arendt outlines the characteristics of authority and tradition which play the role of the aegis of the political activities through their function of connecting the present to the past, describing that

With the loss of tradition [in the modern age] we have lost the thread which safely guided us through the vast realms of the past, but this thread was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past... But it cannot be denied that without a securely anchored tradition... the whole dimension of the past has also been endangered... [An] oblivion... would deprive ourselves of one dimension, the dimension of depth in human existence. For memory and depth are the same, or rather, depth cannot be reached by man except through remembrance. (1993: 94)

While the relevance and significance of authority and tradition to the political space are examined in more detail across Chapters 2 and 3, it is crucial to note here that Arendt has a complicated and, sometimes, equivocal approach to the limitations and boundaries of these enterprises. Because the focus of this thesis is on the political implication of the *vita activa* and its reversal in the modern age, it does not dissect Arendt's critical work on the *vita contemplativa* which speaks the world of contemplation in absolute quietness and thus illustrates the world of thoughts, theories and ideas. In this regard, this thesis refrains itself from dissecting Arendt's critical approach to Plato whose political thought seeded the base for the tradition of Occidental political thought – including the work of Marx, which helped reverse the hierarchy of the *vita activa* – and who introduced the 'skeleton' of the concept of authority which sets boundaries upon and guideposts for the political public space.

Having faced the death of his mentor Socrates, Plato lost his faith in words and *persuasion* as the key means to live in the polis, which eradicated from the public realm the other potential means of force and violence (Arendt 1993: 107; Arendt 1958: 26). With the act of persuasion having been discounted as a way for citizens to reach truth, Plato began to seek an alternative means to attain truth, which took the form neither of persuasion nor of violence. This search led Plato to the 'ideas', the nature of which is to be self-evident and hence coercive of the many because – exemplified by 'the "idea" of a bed in general [that] is the standard for making and judging the fitness of all particular manufactured beds' – 'the unwavering, "absolute" standards for political and moral behaviour and judgment' is essentially authoritative (Arendt 1993: 107, 109-110). 'The loss of the originally political experiences', reflected in Plato's new search for truth, gave rise to the tradition of political thought, of which Marx's theory is part (Arendt 2002: 296).

In ancient Greece, the concept and political experience of 'authority' was absent (Arendt 1993: 104), but this absence by no means indicated to the philosophers of Athens like Plato and Aristotle that the polis could dispense with something analogous to authority. Plato's need for a substitution for the concept of authority stemmed from the philosophers concerns with the condition of the Athenian polis at the time, including their view that ways to 'prevent deterioration of the polis' needed to be sought (Arendt 1993:



119). Plato and Aristotle searched for a model and example that could substitute for the notion of authority that was eventually perfected in the Roman republic. These examples were derived from the model of the private space or family and the structure of education, which was governed by the relationship between the master and the ruled, or the elder and the younger (Arendt 1993: 105, 118). In these forms, the enterprise of authority is contradictory and inimical to the essence of the public realm, given that the precondition for human plurality – freedom – is the condition of equality. Power which is ‘what keeps the public realm’ (Arendt 1958: 200) is actualised:

only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities. (Arendt 1958: 200)

Hence power and freedom are interrelated, while authority ‘implies an obedience’ (Arendt 1993: 106). But because both the political activities of deed and word entail ‘the unpredictability of its outcome, the irreversibility of the process, and the anonymity of its author’, there was a ‘temptation’ in ancient Greece, particularly from Plato onwards, to find a substitution for action or the political public space (Arendt 1958: 220, 222). Plato attempted to substitute work for action: his device of a prototype of the concept of authority and ‘all prototypes by which subsequent generations understood the content of authority’ arose ‘either from the sphere of “making” and the arts, where there must be experts and where fitness is the highest criterion, or from the private household community’ (Arendt 1993: 119-120).

After the Athenian experience of the polis, the Romans began the foundation of the republic at which time they accomplished the integration of the political philosophies of Plato and Aristotle with the concept of authority. In order to create a political space and develop a body politic, the Roman solution to the paradox of freedom, which produces ever-lasting meanings by virtue of its irreversible, ever-moving and transient nature, was to institutionalise the notion and enterprise of authority. The Romans’ integration of Greek thought with the foundation of the republic appeared in the Romans’

conviction of ‘the sacredness of foundation’ consisting of the trinity of religion, authority and tradition (Arendt 1993: 120). The act of foundation meant for the Romans the creation of that which ‘remains binding for all future generations’ (Arendt 1993: 120). ‘In contradiction to power’, Arendt emphasises authority has ‘its roots in the past’ (1993: 122). For the Roman republic and politics, religious and political activity were almost identical, and ‘to be engaged in politics meant first and foremost to preserve the founding of the city of Rome’ (1993: 121, 120). Like authority, tradition – although the two are not the same – played a role of sanctifying the past ‘by handing down from one generation to the next the testimony of the ancestors’: as long as tradition ‘was uninterrupted, authority was inviolate’ (Arendt 1993: 124).

The political relevance and significance of the enterprise of the time-transcending measures such as authority, tradition and culture is accentuated when the characteristics of human action and speech are considered, that is, their transience, irreversibility and contingency which require the mediums stabilising their ever-changing nature, recording their meanings and forwarding their significance to the future. This relevance and significance is further highlighted when we understand the political faculty and function of judgment (see Chapter 2). Arendt writes that ‘to act without authority and tradition, without accepted, time-honored standards and models, without the help of the wisdom of the founding fathers, was inconceivable’ (1993: 124).

### *Citizenship and the Political Virtues*

In her essay, ‘Culture and Politics’ (2007), Arendt argues that the realm of appearance is endowed with the *criteria of appropriateness*. Holding that both politics and culture are phenomena of the public world, she maintains that in these fields, the ‘judicious exchange of opinion’ of each community (Arendt 1993: 223) emerges: the citizens’ exchange of opinions as to ‘what the world is supposed to look like and what sort of actions should be taken in it’ (Arendt 2007: 197, 200). It is this process that brings the standards of appropriateness to a particular political community or public space. Drawing on the yardsticks of the original political community of Athens, Arendt sketches a picture of the political agent as exhibiting a set of political virtues such as glory, courage and responsibility. In this way, Arendt ‘defines’ citizenship: not in terms of the rights or

qualifications conferred by the state, institution (government or the courts), or system (liberal democracy), but rather as a kind of ontology – a way of living as *being* political.<sup>19</sup> Firstly, Arendt highlights the argument of Niccolò Machiavelli, who attempted to restore the criteria of ancient politics in the medieval Italian city. Machiavelli puts forth *glory* as the touchstone of virtuous actions, since its splendour outdoes either badness or goodness (1958: 77). In antiquity, since the citizens' desire for distinction and glory was so vehement, they carried the agonal spirit into the public space and against one another, competing to win the recognition of fellow members. Closely interlinked with glory is, secondly, the political virtue of courage (Arendt 1993: 156). Because the private realm was a space that encompassed and shielded everything essential to subsistence and survival, walking out of this protected space and entering the public realm indicated that a citizen was poised to risk his life. Moreover, courage was observed in the *untroubled* mind of the agent who was free from the everyday concerns of life and necessity, attending to the issues of common concerns and the public good (Arendt 1993: 156).

Examining Arendt's work of the political public space, George Kateb clarifies what may be the principles and contents of political activities: human action and speech. He argues that there are principles underlying the action of the political agent, that which make action virtuous and meaningful and speak to human memory. These principles are those which overlap with the nature of *disciplines* which a citizen imposes on himself by himself – 'an attempted consistency in the positions he adopts on those occasions when the creation or maintenance of the form of government that gives or would give him his opportunity is at issue, or even at stake' (Kateb 2006: 137). To a large degree, the activity of the polis or the public realm consisted of the citizens' participation, deliberation,

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<sup>19</sup> Although Arendtian scholars like Dana Villa, George Kateb and Seyla Benhabib, as well as Arendt's contemporary critics such as William Connolly, Sheldon Wolin and Chantal Mouffe, disagree over the precise attributes of the democratic subject, what those scholars are actually attempting to define is the specific ontology of the citizen – the way of being proper to participation in public political life. While a great deal of contemporary liberal pluralist's texts, especially those that study civil society, make considerable reference to notions of freedom, human plurality and participatory democracy, this terminology often seems to be deployed without reflection on the qualities or virtues of political agency. By contrast, Kateb, in his examination of Arendt's notion of the political agent, points out that the dimensions to citizenship on which Arendt focuses relate to specific 'motives, passions, principles or commitments' (2006: 132). Similarly, for Martin Levin (1979: 523), the spirit of Arendt's political agent is determined not just by the political 'activity' but also by the 'way of life or ... relationship to the world'. As Ronald Beiner (1998: 185) remarks, Arendt's depiction of the political agent is more robust and muscular than the liberal idea of the citizen. Since the classical era, these ontological attributes have, on Villa's account, come to congeal into the 'theatrical model of political action' (1999: 120).

discussion and judgment, and the issues and contexts of the polis, are, Kateb points out, related to the questions of whether a form of government or the polity is designed to safeguard and maintain the citizens' freedom (2006: 134).

The final political virtue to note here is responsibility, which for Arendt is fundamentally related to the political faculty of judgment. In *Men in Dark Times* (1995), Arendt writes that because 'a citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens of a country among countries', his rights and duties are *limited* 'not only by those of his fellow citizens, but also by the boundaries of a territory' (Arendt 1995: 81). By proposing the territorial delimitation of a citizen's responsibility – and thus the territorial delimitation of freedom as well – Arendt argues that the demand for a citizen to be responsible for a global government, and not just for his own, is an intolerable one. Criticising the Kantian, cosmopolitan pursuit of world government, she holds that the solidarity of mankind is – if positive – to be fortified by the *political responsibility* of citizens. A world government is one which, by virtue of erasing the boundaries of territories and the borders of nations, takes its root in the erasure of the distinctive tradition and the particularity of the past that defines each community. For Arendt, the cosmopolitan movement thus weakens the political responsibility of citizens, since it erodes the space of interdependence between freedom and those enduring measures that construct the relative permanence – the world – of a polity. In short, Arendt does not argue that the political public space is a realm of human plurality – freedom – only. Her political thought stresses the essential attitudes, approaches or modes of the agent who walks into the public sphere, which are the spiritual virtues of glory, courage and responsibility. Principles give rise to these virtuosities, turning a mere space of human interaction into the political public realm.

Arendt's conviction that freedom is the quintessence of politics arises from her historical investigation and finding of political phenomena following revolutions. 'The amazing thing about the Hungarian Revolution', Arendt recounts, was that there was an uprising of rebellions exclusively driven by the motive for 'freedom and truth' (Arendt 1958c: 23). She argues that the revolution in Hungary was not reducible to the class conflict, that is, the economic struggle, since we know that the rebellions were led by intellectuals and university students, the strata of the population that was privileged in communist society. Amid the maelstrom of people's spontaneous actions in Hungary,

there appeared the Revolutionary and Workers' Councils. Arendt applauds the appearance of such councils as symbolic political phenomena in which a democratic alternative could be sought with a view to restoring legitimacy and order. Although, after their emergence, the democratic alternative of councils scarcely survived, the political representation of council tradition has remained manifest throughout the modern history of Europe, in 'the assemblies of the sans-culottes in 1793, the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian soviets of 1905 and 1917, the *Rätesystem* in Germany in 1918-19, the council system in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956' (Miller 1979: 196; see also Wolin 1994: 299; Arendt 1958c: 28).<sup>20</sup> In *Crisis of the Republic* (1972), Arendt examines the contemporary form of democratic alternatives, and welcomes – within limits – *civil disobedience* ranging from student movements to anti-war movements in the 1960s. In this respect, Arendt's work on the public space takes a less institutionalist approach, having her chief focus on collective actions (as much as on individual actions).

Modern democratic states are based on the system of representation. At each election, the offices of representative government are shuffled, refreshing the relationship between the government and the people. For Kateb, representative democracy is 'distinctive and praiseworthy' because the system of election and the offices of government provide people with opportunities to say no – to dissent and to resist (1983: 123). Hence, Kateb disagrees with Arendt, who believes the system of representative government embodies 'essentially negative safeguards' for it insulates the interests and opinions of a chosen body of citizens from 'the confusion of a multitude' (1990: 69, 226). Kateb, by contrast, holds that without representation, 'there would be more of the things [Arendt] dreads and fewer of the things she celebrates' (Kateb 1983: 115). However, Kateb's defence of representative democracy misconstrues Arendt's anguish about modern democracy. For her, the party system which emerged from the factional strife of

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<sup>20</sup> For Miller, Arendt's presentation of a body of historical materials is however deficient in clarity and coherency. He argues that for the description of council tradition, for example, Arendt neglects the fact that they are 'almost always established and defended by an *armed* populace (Miller 1979: 181)'. In addition, Miller castigates the way Arendt explains the council tradition, the way in which she attributes these emergences to the single fount – freedom, which he believes overlooks important differences in institutional structure and political program between, for instance, the case of France and that of the Soviet Union (Miller 1979: 181). But again, critics like Miller misconstrue the nature of *vita activa* by interpreting Arendt's *phenomenological* account of action from the modern notion of politics that is highly attentive to institutions or the polity.

parliament ‘remains a body whose approach to the people is from without and from above’ (Arendt 1990: 248). The business of the party system is not only dictated by the interests of economy but also coordinated by the processes of administration and management, from which the space of ‘authentic politics’ (Kateb 2006: 133) is marginalised. Drawing on the Founding Father of America, Thomas Jefferson, who was able to interpret, in the Declaration of Independence, the meaning of the ‘pursuit of happiness’ as the pursuit of ‘public happiness’ (Arendt 1990: 126), Arendt proposes that the political public space is essentially characterised as one ‘where the voice of the whole people would be fairly, fully and peaceably expressed, discussed and decided by the common reason of all citizens’ (Jefferson cited in Arendt 1990: 250).

Concurring with Jefferson, she maintains that rotations in office do not realise authentic politics but systematically reduce opportunities for everyone to become ‘a participator in government’. Electoral politics potentially turns democracy to an ‘elective despotism’ once people become indifferent to public affairs (Arendt 1990: 237). For this reason, Arendt sees a fatal failure in both the American and French Revolutions for failing to formally institutionalise the elementary public spaces of townships and assemblies within the constitutions. Arendt praises the American Revolution in contrast to the French Revolution, whose politics she contends surrendered to the social question of poverty and economy (see Chapters 2 and 5), for successfully engaging with questions about the form of government. Yet she laments the imperfection of American politics as its ‘Constitution had given all power to the citizens, without giving them the opportunity of being republicans and of acting as citizens’ (Arendt 1990: 253). For Arendt, the sovereignty rendered to people under the Constitution gave them the opportunity to further private interests in the guise of the political public. Consequently, the American experiment in founding a polity failed to reserve a space where the people could engage with opportunities to act as *citizens* (Arendt 1990: 253) – which is to say, in accordance with those virtues appropriate to a concern with *public* affairs.

Arendt’s narrative of the political public realm points to the importance of an elementary politics that is seen in the citizens’ activity of participation, discussion and deliberation. But, owing to her derivation of the standards of politics from ancient cosmology, this emphasis on political activity is not independent of her consideration of

the balance between and interdependence of ‘mortality’ and ‘immortality’, in other words, the balance and relationship between freedom (human plurality) and the relative permanence which builds the common world inhabited by citizens. The next chapter expands on this consideration, focusing on the extent to which the political public space is ephemeral and hence needs supplementation by those aspects of the human world – particularly the products of *homo faber* – which transcend time and which thereby transmit the memory of the past to the people in the future. While the form of government and the type of the polity that protects citizens’ freedom are to be the major concerns of the public realm, as we shall see in the next chapter, the *reversal* of the *vita activa* hierarchy in the modern age inflates the concerns of the political agent, particularly over freedom’s balance with the enduring measures.

## CHAPTER 2

### *The Recession of Permanence: How the Political Public Space Declines*

Politics is not so much about human beings as it is about the world that comes into being between them and endures beyond them.  
(Arendt 2005: 175)

It is the objective status of the cultural world, which [insofar as it contains tangible things] comprehends, and gives testimony to, the entire recorded past of countries, nations and ultimately mankind.  
(Arendt 1993: 202)

### *Introduction*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Hannah Arendt's phenomenological recovery of the conditions of politics, as originally practiced in ancient Greece, offers an alternative approach to conventional forms and concepts of politics. Part and parcel of this recovery is a view both of the human condition and of the notion of time that sits at odds with the assumptions made by the prevailing political philosophy of liberal-pluralism and Marxism. Indeed, Arendt's examination of the *vita activa*, freedom, the political agent and the public and the private demarcation facilitates a critical thinking about the Archimedean epistemology that underlies those dominant political paradigms, and that privileges a particular attitude and methodology – algebraic and universalist – to understanding and directing political action.

The chapters that make up the second and third part of this thesis work towards an Arendtian critique of the thought and practice of politics and public life in modern Japan. In order to get us to this analysis, I attempt in this chapter to explain why an Arendtian approach may be useful, generally for reflecting the condition of public political debate today, and particularly for establishing an analytical foundation to identify and dissect the components and meanings of the public in a particular political space of a country and from which to begin the critical investigation of political public space in postwar Japan. As I show in the next chapter, critique and analysis based on Arendt's political thought is urgently needed for the study of political life in postwar Japan, owing to the dominance



of Marxist and liberal-pluralist approaches especially over the space of public discussions throughout Japan's postwar period.

In contrast to these approaches, Arendt's work calls for a reassessment of the very conditions to the political public sphere by arguing that this realm is sustained only by the fair balance and complementary relation between freedom and the forms of permanence that stabilise the world in which political action occurs. For her, the modern age is characterised by the reversal of ancient hierarchy in the *vita activa*, namely, the subversion of the political by the pre-political agents of *animal laborans* and *homo faber*, which has, through the erosion of the borders between public and private life, brought about catastrophic damage to the public realm essential to human, individual life. This erosion, in Arendt's view, has been accompanied by the tendency in modern political thought to blur or overlook the distinctions between different forms of activity in the *vita activa*. This chapter thus details how political public space in the modern West began to decline, particularly, by way of the withdrawal of what I call the enduring measures of the public space, in the forms of authority, tradition and culture. This chapter, then, returns to Arendt's account of historiography, as the postwar notion of time in Japan, which has been considerably influenced by that of Marxist, makes it difficult for the citizens to establish 'a genuine relation to the past' (Beiner 1992: 149). Of the central issue is a critical interrelation between our notion of time and the human faculty of judgment – one of the essential political faculties which Arendt argues is necessitated in one's life in a political community. In the discussion that follows, each of these points is debated in turn, with the aim of justifying the value of turning to Arendt in the study of postwar Japan.

### *Arendt on the Decline of the Political Public Space*

#### Secularisation's Challenge to Authority and Tradition

Reflecting on the meaning of politics as originally experienced by the ancient Greeks, Arendt notes that, against the eternal recurrence of the universe, cosmos and nature, mortality was the 'hallmark of human existence' (1958: 18). For this reason, the citizens of Athens cherished the polis in which freedom could grant them a chance to attain potential immortality. In order to retrieve man's existence as mortal as well as to stabilise

the space of movements, however, the public realm had to be endowed with a certain degree of permanence, which were seen in such cultural forms as the laws and artworks. Human plurality is a phenomenon and revelation which incarnates a public space, but the human action and speech that realise such plurality have the nature of spontaneity, contingency and importantly, transience. Without a public to bear witness to these events and to materialise and preserve those events – which are meaningful – in the form of human artifacts and collective memory, and without the things and measures which inform the future generations of the traces of the past, the public space of human plurality is frail and cannot sustain itself, particularly, in the face of incessant coming and going of the new generations, for whose freedom is enjoyed only with these guideposts. Arendt argues that ‘common sense’ emerges through the citizens’ ‘judicious exchange of opinion’ (1993: 223) as to the standards of appropriateness for their common realm, not only enabling their freedom but also protecting it. What ‘the French so suggestively call the “good sense”, *le bon sens*’, she argues,

discloses to us the nature of the world insofar as it is a common world; we owe to it the fact that our strictly private and “subjective” five senses and their sensory data can adjust themselves to a nonsubjective and “objective” world which we have in common and share with others. (Arendt 1993: 221)

In this regard, authority – that which is ‘more than advice and less than a command, an advice which one may not safely ignore’ (Mommsen cited in Arendt 1993: 123) – is an indispensable dimension of worldly permanence, providing the public realm with a measure of common sense, put differently, the standards of ‘communicability’ (1978: 267). Arendt observes in the Roman *agora* an exemplary political public space where freedom was assured by the stability which authority added to the public realm in its role to ‘augment’ (from the Latin verb, *augere*) the foundation to the republic (Arendt 1993: 121). Although authority implies an obedience, it does not signify that in its place men cannot retain their freedom (Arendt 1993: 106). To repeat, freedom and power cannot sustain the public space alone, needing the banister of things that transcend time for its security and stability. Because of this interdependence, the political public

realm is spatially delimited, nullifying the prospect of the emergence of the trans-territorial public realm. In this view, a political paradigm of cosmopolitanism, such as that proposed by Kant, supported by the Archimedean epistemology, fails to explain the political significance of why the public space may have to be territorially delimited. In other words, the enduring representations of laws, traditions or authority derive from the citizens' 'judicious exchange of opinion', which work to underpin such freedom. In this view, the project to imagine and build a trans-territorial public realm is to jeopardise, rather than vitalising, the freedom of a public space through the elimination of guideposts that transcend time. In turn, they make up the *body politic* of a community: the term 'the body politic' is used here to name not only a political structure and form of a state, but also that which is coupled with legality and particularity of a given territory. Today, the question of the balance between human plurality and the enduring measures of the body politic is a scholarly terrain that has been much debated by Arendtian as well as critical Arendtian scholars (Moyn 2008; Mayer 1992; Gottsegen 1994).

The form and significance of that question can be elaborated by way of a negative example, Jürgen Habermas' essay 'Religion in the Public Sphere' (2006), which is paradigmatic of work which poorly addresses this balance. In this work, Habermas conveys his apprehension over the recent revival of religious fundamentalism, while he acknowledges the 'wave of secularization' – and with it the ascension of hopes associated with 'multiple modernities' (2006: 2) – which he illustrates have swept across the European continent since the end of World War II. Highlighting a legal provision of the US, Article 16 of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees freedom of religion as a basic right of the individual, he discusses the legitimacy and priority of secularisation in the liberal state (2006: 3), which grants citizens the positive liberty to pursue their own faith (Habermas 2006: 3). Habermas' secular theory is loyal to liberal-pluralist's promulgation of the doctrine of natural rights, which confers fundamental rights on the individual. He argues that it is 'the deliberative mode of democratic will formation' – the liberal political virtue – that substitutes for the loss of legitimation that had been compensated till the age of secularisation by the non-secular decrees of higher law (2006: 4). Habermas' contention – that the legitimacy of the secular state is derived from the foundation that prevents the violation of the interest of others – remains concerned with

the stake of human plurality in the public sphere, not unlike the work of other liberal-pluralists. In this way, Habermas affirms freedom of religion, in other words, citizens' exercise of 'basic rights', and the democratic procedure as the legitimate means to generate legitimation in the secular public space (2006: 5). However, this liberal way of defending secularisation for the sake of individual rights leaves the critical question of the recession of authority, underpinned by religion, in the secular public realm, untouched.

A significant volume of Hannah Arendt's work on the public space, by contrast, is apprehensive about the modern erosion of the otherwise enduring features of a public space – culture, tradition and authority – that help to define the borders of the public realm, the loss of which, she argues, puts freedom, namely, human plurality, at risk. In *Between Past and Future* (1993), for instance, Arendt argues that the corrosion of culture, the broken thread of tradition and the dissipation of authority have contributed considerably to the decline of the political public space in the modern age. These media of the public space share the nature that they transcend the life-span of mortal individuals. In this regard, what Habermas fails to tackle in his discussion of secular priority is, precisely, the question of the extent to which the modern experiment of secular states generates a vacuum in the public space in the form of the recession of such enduring measures, that is, the dissipation of the standards of communicability. He thus neglects the question of how, given secularisation's undermining of authority and tradition in its pursuit of conferring, prioritising and securing the rights and interest of individuals, to protect the freedom of rights-bearing citizens. The disintegration, atomisation and even gradual extinction of the public realm seen in many parts of the world today are, arguably, related to these questions.

At issue here is the 'ontological anchoring' (Beiner 1992: 144, 152) provided by such enduring measures, which may retrieve man's life as a mortal existence. As discussed in Chapter 1, Arendt argues that the mortal existence of human beings was safeguarded by the polis in that this ancient city-state reserved a space for remembrance for the transient life of the citizens and the fleeting nature of political activities. For this polis to be an 'organized remembrance' (Arendt 1958: 198), however, the instruments of laws were needed in order to stem both the dissipation of the boundary between the

public and the private realms, and the instability of the public realm inherent in its condition where the ‘will of a multitude’ is ‘ever-changing by definition... [and thus] a structure built on it as its foundation is built on quicksand’ (1990: 163). Discerning the difference between power and law, the Romans took on the grandiose attempt to construct their body politic upon a ‘sacred’ foundation consisting of tradition, authority and religion, and appropriated the function of these enduring measures to the institution of the Senate from which authority was lodged (Arendt 1993: 122). As Arendt points out, ‘what authority or those in authority constantly augment is the foundation’, and the role of the Senate was to add to political decisions, not power but the foundation (1993: 122). The Romans skilfully embodied within their body politic two quintessential features of the political public space, by erecting a republic in which ‘power resides in the people, [while] authority rests with the Senate’ (Arendt 1993: 122). With the citizens of Greece having the laws, and the citizens of Rome having a conviction of the sacredness of foundation, it was seen that their bodies politics provided them with the ontological anchoring.

Today, this political experience has bearing on Anthony Giddens’ examination of the universalising tendencies of the *global society* and identification of the decline of tradition. In *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (1995), Giddens announces that today’s society – satiated with a ‘feeling of disorientation and malaise’ – is a ‘post-traditional society’ which has emerged out of the ‘grand experiment of modernity’ (1995: 56, 59). Increasingly driven by the decentred and enveloping pattern of expanding capitalism, local communities and their activities have been subject to the hazardous interventions of modernity into time and space. Giddens suggests that tradition, which cements the space of inter-subjectivities, remains the key target of modernity’s challenge and experiment. While the central function of tradition lies in its control of time by orienting the present to the past and thereby giving the former a capacity to organise the future, Giddens argues that the experiment of modernity recklessly endeavours to control the future, introducing into the public realm the new factors of incalculability and risk (1995: 62).

Giddens explains that tradition has an *organic* character, despite the latent *functional* conceptions which seek the most effective way to transmit ‘a formulaic notion

of truth' (1995: 63). Through the symbolic reification and practice of tradition as *rituals*, tradition conveys formulaic truths to *human memory*, which works at the level of unconsciousness. Tradition appeals to individual memory, but more so to collective memory, since its pivotal feature of repetition is practised collectively, connecting 'the thread of today's activities with those of yesterday' (1995: 64). Tradition thus has an organic character in that the functional aspect of formulaic truths weaves integrity and authenticity in its process and practice. Through the help of guardians like elders and healers, formulaic truths learned from past events are continuously interpreted and inherited across time. In an echo of Arendt's observations about the interrelation of tradition with authority, Giddens construes that tradition prescribes authority, because the formulaic truths of tradition are lodged from normative and moral substances (1995: 82).

Charles Taylor's analysis of *A Secular Age* (2007) adds further important points to this account of the contemporary public realm. He asserts that the age of secularisation by no means suggests that religion has faded from the world. Religion is 'as present as ever' (2007: 427). In addition, the situations wherein authority – associated with religion, tradition, rituals and customs – impacts upon the public spaces in the world are 'so various and sui generis' (Taylor 2007: 426). Furthermore, Taylor demonstrates that today's neo-Durkheimian age is one which is characterised by the 'recomposition' of religious life. Rather than the dissolution of religious life (2007: 461), in other words, the secular age has seen its recomposition such that religious life is remodeled to fulfill the design of God incarnated in the polity. By understanding the design of their charter as providential, the United States, for example, vested higher law in the Declaration of Independence, which guarantees the rights of individuals (Taylor 2007: 448). Yet such reverence for the rights of individuals, and particularly for 'pursuit of happiness', overlooks, on an Arendtian account, the extent to which the essential *synthetic* and *organic* function of shared tradition, and collective memory protects freedom in the public space as well as secures human life in the private space. For critical modernists, when tradition and authority withdraw, they leave a realm of:

widespread indifference; no socially significant shared religion; and religious ideas being no more common than would be the case if all minds were wiped blank and people began

from scratch to think about the world and their place in it. (Bruce cited in Taylor 2007: 435)

Seen from an Arendtian viewpoint, Bruce's statement that citizens have to begin 'from scratch to think about the world' tells a great deal about her proposal that the public space requires common sense, because this statement suggests the deprivation of the *standards* of judgment and the categories of thought which are stored in the political capacity of human memory.

As Taylor writes, religion did not just consist of the major sects but also of the folk religion which encapsulated the agricultural context, the ritual of a pre-Axial religion that was 'concerned with securing human flourishing, and protecting against the threats of disease, famine, flood, etc...' (2007: 439, 443). It was through these holistic functions of collective rituals that the general welfare, success of crops, health of animals and protection against diseases were warranted (2007: 463). These dimensions are not excluded from the concerns of modern science, which is more powerful in its demonstration of 'the availability of technical solutions to life problems' (Taylor 2007: 428); however, modern science has certainly contributed to the shift in the mental attitude of people of faith and to the decline of ancient rituals which enveloped human communities in the sacred order. For Taylor, a critical transformation in the age of mobilisation and recomposition is the mental attitude of the citizen who had once held a faith 'connected with a sense of one's own powerlessness' in deference to the sacred order, but who now 'feels in control of one's life' (2007: 452). In this regard, as seen in Chapter 1, the need for the Greek philosophers to seek a substitution for the concept of authority, given their appreciation of human affairs which they considered 'must not acquire a dignity of their own but be subjected to the domination of something outside their realm' (Arendt 1993: 115), is seen to have lost its meaning in the modern project of secularisation.

On this account, when, for example, the issue of environmental damage is raised in the public space, the key political problem may concern less the issue of the actual damages which environmental disasters cause for a shared realm, than the fact that secularisation has forfeited the categories of thought, such as the sense of awe and

deference which ancient rituals had taught. Developed disaster-management schemes would not provide the fundamental solution to the problem of intensifying environmental aggravation, for the modern project of secularisation continues to neglect, if not exacerbate, the withdrawal of what could once be received as the enduring measures of ritual, tradition and authority. It was the organic and synthetic function of those traditions which sheltered the border of the public that, for instance, regulated the excesses of private activities like consumption and provided people with the wisdom to discern superfluity and amplitude. In this respect, the proposition that secularisation is prerequisite for the support and protection of the rights of individuals perhaps needs reassessment, for its potential to overlook secularisation's potential threat to the political public space. The enduring measures of the public realm which secular movements antagonise in order to uphold the rights of individuals must be re-evaluated, with regard given to their synthesising role in anchoring the public space.

#### The Socialisation and Privatisation of Culture

Culture, as distinct in a sense from law, tradition and authority, is, for Arendt, another branch of permanence that attests the sustaining, living space of the public. For her, 'an object is cultural to the extent that it can *endure*' (1993: 208, italics added), and so culture, in Arendt's term, is a realm encompassing the durable products of artisans, particularly, works of art, the quality of which – beauty – guarantees the longest degree of permanence among other objects of *homo faber*. Art claims its superiority insofar as its objects withstand the use and consumption of men by virtue of its exceptional endowment of beauty which 'guarantees even the most transient things' (Arendt 2007: 196). Because of its beauty, a work of art causes people to remove it from the routines of daily-use and consumption, helping to ensure its durability. Artworks add to the public realm, to the otherwise transient and ephemeral space of the public, solidity and stability (see Chapter 1). The artwork of culture is, accordingly, the property of the public, serving in its realm to provide not merely the appearance but also the standards of beauty, which speak to human memory. 'Politically speaking', Arendt stresses, whatever emerges in the public space which is beautiful 'is imperishable from the standpoint of the political sphere' (2007: 196).



For Arendt, however, the modern age has seen the degradation of culture through two stages of historical development: the ‘devaluation of the products of culture’ with the rise of a ‘cultural philistinism’ (2007: 182-3); and the ‘disappearance of culture’ with the rise of a ‘mass society’, into the realm of the entertainment industry advanced by denaturing the objects of culture to ‘objects of consumption’ (2007: 182). At the turn of the eighteenth century, firstly, the corrosion of culture set into motion, a period when there emerged what Clemens Brentano called ‘cultural philistinism’ (Arendt 2007: 179). The philistine purports a stratum of the people who began to instrumentalise culture for the sake of their social prestige and advancement (Arendt 2007: 179). Although the artworks of *homo faber* are *objective* in the sense, as Arendt describes, that they stand in between (ephemeral) humans and (eternal) nature thereby constructing ‘a world’ (1958: 137), the rise of the philistine meant for the cultural realm the beginning of its degradation, because what mattered for the philistine was no longer the ‘own intrinsic “value”’ of cultural objects (Arendt 1958: 155), but cultural objects as ‘exchange values’ (Arendt 2007: 180). That is, ‘culture was being used or abused for social purposes’ (Arendt 2007: 180). Then, the cultural world started to suffer from further tragedy with the rise of *society* – a space which no longer meant only for the people in the upper classes but which integrated every strata, generating in its place ‘mass psychology’ (Arendt 2007: 180). Culture – already demoted from something possessing its own intrinsic worth to something defined merely by its exchange value – began to depreciate further, through its transformation into an object that is merely consumed, even mass-consumed (Arendt 2007: 181). The agent of culture’s further devaluation was the ‘entertainment industry’, the products of which are:

not values to be used and exchanged; rather, they are objects of consumption as apt to be depleted as any other such object. *Panem et circenses* [bread and circuses] – these two do indeed go together: both are necessary for the life-process, for its sustenance and its recovery (Arendt 2007: 181)

Arendt contends that culture’s decline impacts upon the political public realm. This argument can be elaborated with reference to the critical theory of the Frankfurt

School's Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In 1947, 'critical theory's signature text' *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Wolin 2006: 1) set forth what Adorno and Horkheimer argue are the catastrophic effects which the culture industry introduces into the realm of artwork. Drawing the standards of culture from a bourgeois society, Adorno and Horkheimer write that the work and objectives of artists were, until the eighteenth century, safely protected from the mechanism of the market, owing to the existence of buyer's patronage (1979: 157). In pure art, resistance against the requirements of the market was found in the nature of artworks which obeyed 'their own law', whereby their indifference to the style demonstrated *objectivity* (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979: 157). The Frankfurt scholars argue that the work of artists was still distanced from exposure to the growing demands of the market in pre-Fascist Europe, where absence of democratic control maintained in art the unadulterated fundamentals of legitimacy and autonomy (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979: 135, 157).

Led by the structural law of capital, the advent of the entertainment industry has increasingly decomposed art's characteristic of *particularity*. The culture industry, 'which involves the production of work for reproduction and mass consumption' (Bernstein 2001: 4), fabricates products which are preceded by the administrative process of schematisation and classification. The technological rationale of the cultural industry standardises cultural objects through the overriding power of technology that organises, labels and schematises them. The transformation of culture into mass culture, on this account, robs art of its symbolic trait of the particular, and irretrievably reduces works to sameness. The objectivity of the artwork is, accordingly, subsumed into the dominant forms of *generality*.

The Frankfurt scholars assimilate the political question of human identity and plurality into their cultural studies by elaborating on the malignant effects that the standardisation and generalisation of culture bring to its particularity. The entertainment industry interferes in human consciousness, in their view, through the monopolisation of culture, including the monopoly of advertising media such as radio, magazines and films. The culture industry provides consumers with an illusory image that their products can eliminate the shortage and deprivation which they may feel in everyday life. The images and pictures of advertising select, eliminate and program beforehand those things that

satisfy the necessities of consumers. Products which are schematised, in advance, by the technological rationale of industry reduce the capacity of consumers for imagination and reflection (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979: 126). Tapping into the pleasure of human emotion which opposes effort, toil and labour, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the entertainment industry serves to create a pleasant condition in which consumers have no need of independent thinking – ‘any logical connection calling for mental effort is painstakingly avoided’ (1979: 137). Divested of time and space for reflection and resistance, the individuality of the individual is gradually standardised by the totalising power of the culture industry, as with the products of mass culture. ‘Only because individuals have ceased to be themselves and are now merely centers where the general tendencies meet, is it possible to receive them again, whole and entire, into the generality’ (Adorno & Horkheimer 1979: 155). Hence, by highlighting the permeation of ‘pseudo-individuality’, Adorno and Horkheimer tackle the critical effects of the monopoly of the culture industry, which extend beyond the work of art, impacting upon the identity of the individuals.

In this way, Adorno and Horkheimer help to identify what for Arendt amounts to the corrosive effects of the culture industry and mass culture, particularly with regard to the question of human plurality.<sup>21</sup> But where the Frankfurt School critical theorists focus on the effects of mass culture in relation to human plurality, for Arendt it suggests a political question, given freedom’s dependence upon things that transcend time (see Chapter 1). As Arendt puts it in ‘Culture and Politics’:

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<sup>21</sup> The Frankfurt School’s primary concern with the political public space can be seen in their focus on individuality. In *Eclipse of Reason* (1947), for example, Max Horkheimer criticises the extent to which the shift in the mode of production has impacted on the political kernel of individuality in the age of industrialism. When liberalism was still at an inchoate stage in the seventeenth century, individualism was, under the privilege of bourgeois individuals, an esteemed doctrine and practice of liberal society, whose members believed that they ‘could achieve the highest degree of harmony only through the unrestricted competition of individual interests’ (Horkheimer 2004: 94). Alongside the development of commerce and free enterprise, bourgeois individuals were still capable of exercising their intellectual functions to pursue their long-term interests. In this early modern society in which technocratic organisation and control were yet absent, Horkheimer contends that individual life was – ‘except [for] the structure of hierarchy’ – still free from the rationale of integration (2004: 98). But liberalism has advanced to such an extent that one of the most important attributes of individuality – ‘spontaneous action’ – began to fade away (Horkheimer 2004: 97). Under the dominant form of monopoly which meddles in the sphere of culture, with the culture industry ‘endlessly reduplicating the surface of reality’, Adorno and Horkheimer stress that the intellectual functions of individuals are so paralysed that they start to imitate what had been produced and reproduced (Horkheimer 2004: 96). When divested of capacity for thought and reflection except for assimilation, individual identity is demoted to a fictitious character.

Without the freedom of the political, culture remains lifeless ... Without, however, the beauty of cultural things and without the radiant splendor in which a politically articulated permanence and a potential imperishability of the world manifest themselves, the political as a whole could not last. (Arendt 2007: 202)<sup>22</sup>

On an Arendtian account, the significance of Adorno and Horkheimer's study lies in their identification of the essentials of *objectivity* and *particularity* that underlie bourgeois art. For them, objectivity is inherent in high art, which resists style and expresses irregularity, negation and dissonance. In concurrence with them, Arendt observes objectivity in artworks, but in terms of that which emerges in between men and nature. While mortality is the hallmark of human existence, nature and cosmos are, by contrast, an ever-recurrent movement; it is in this contrast that objectivity takes root, offering men a sense of home and assurance in being surrounded by the things that endure in time. Artistic objectification, Arendt writes, 'derives from a desire to erect a dam against one's own mortality, to place something between the perishability of man and the imperishability of nature' (2007: 189). Objectivity is thus found in an artwork that bears the principle of beauty which confers on it a relative permanence – namely, the durability of a work that is inimical to the finitude of human existence. Given Arendt's viewpoint, Adorno's and Horkheimer's distinction of high art and low art is a matter of political importance, because the commodification of culture deprives artwork of objectivity, which is to retrieve human's sense of homelessness, a sense that nothing may outlive his life, that is, a sense of living in a world where few things and principles can be bequeathed to the generations of the future.

Culture's adulteration into mass culture, that is, the particular's assimilation into the general, occurs equally, for Arendt, when use-value is replaced with exchange-value. On the classical Marxist account, the use-value of a commodity, which serves for the necessity of human life through use or consumption, is generated by 'the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labour' (Marx 2006: 461). By contrast, exchange-value is

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<sup>22</sup> Arendt's politicisation of mass culture is addressed in work such as *The Origin of Totalitarianism* (1951), 'Society and Culture' (1960), 'Culture and Politics' (2007), 'The Crisis in Culture' (1993). The analysis of the issue is also found in her work on 'Judging' (1978).

derived from a quantitative *relation*, that is, from ‘the portion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place’ (2006: 459). When the use-value of commodity is supplanted by exchange-value, Marx argues, ‘its existence as a material thing is put out of sight’, wherein we no longer perceive the material elements and shapes that give the designation of use-value to the product (2006: 460). In this regard, it can be said that the work of art is like the commodity defined solely by its use-value, because cultural objects, although they are fundamentally not for use, possess a particularity and an intrinsic value that is therefore, by definition, inexchangeable. Presupposing such an analogy, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that, by way of the commodification of culture, works of art lose the trait of use-value as underpinned by the work’s intrinsic value, which is increasingly displaced by exchange-value, in which ‘no object has an inherent value; it is valuable only to the extent that it can be exchanged’ (1979: 158).

It is through such processes that, in Arendt’s view, the activities of *oikos*, the private realm, began to overflow into the exclusive space of the political public. Bound up with such processes is the emergence, in the modern age, of ‘society’ as a new sphere ‘between the familiar spaces of the private and the public, in which the public sphere is in the process of being made private, and its private counterpart is in the process of being made public’ (Arendt 2007: 184). The private space is a realm where the activity of economy is carried out, producing and reproducing the means of subsistence to maintain the labouring body – the *animal laborans*. With the spillover of the private into the public, culture is threatened most by what Arendt calls the process of *socialisation* in which cultural objects are either used and exchanged, evaluated and applied or else consumed and ingested for the purpose of mass sales (2007: 183, 190). In the space of the social, moreover, even if labourers work together harmoniously, the interrelations they enact are not the same as those conditioned by the public realm, in which citizens appeal to each other. Put differently, the acting together of labourers is a ‘one-ness’ that is characterised by the *unity of the species*, in which every individual distinction and personality is incapacitated (Arendt 1958: 123). This is exemplified by the members of a family. Society is marked, thus, by the *behaviours* of the individuals rather than the *actions* of the individuals which attest distinction, particularity and spontaneity. ‘In any event’, Arendt

writes, a labouring society is ‘characterized by *understanding* and *interpreting* everything in terms of the function of the individual or social life process’ (Arendt 2007: 183, italics added). Lacking either contingency or singularity, the sphere of society devours the public realm such that human plurality is extinguished by the undistinguished behaviours of *animal laborans* – the labouring body, and its ontology and epistemology.

If the public space is realised by the actions of the political agent – virtuosity – and if the social realm is characterised by the interests of *animal laborans* – leisure, abundance and a good life that will emancipate the labouring body from pain and toil, then the cultural space is, in Arendt’s view, that which consists of the durable objects which *homo faber* produces – relative permanence. For her, in contrast to the products of *homo faber*, the consumer objects which the *animal laborans* produces are those ‘through which life assures the means of its own survival’ (Arendt 1958: 94). With the radical change in the production process in the modern age, the new deployment of *animal laborans* in place of *homo faber* through division of labour has threatened the survival of experienced skills for the production of goods that endure in time (Arendt 1958: 123). In this way, Arendt foregrounds the corrosive effects of the process of socialisation, in which the private activities of labour and consumption began to spill over into the public sphere in which the political fundamentals of freedom and enduring measures dwell.

To identify the political implication of these processes, it may be useful here to turn to one of the key political faculties which Arendt highlights – judgment. With Immanuel Kant’s text on judgment at hand, Arendt writes that ‘no philosopher before or after Kant has ever made it the object of his inquiry’ (2007: 199). It is Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790), she argues, that provides the basis for political philosophy, rather than his *Critique of Practical Reason*. Arendt explains that the activity of judgment is mediated by the *taste* of humans, evaluating, re-evaluating and deciding not only matters of quality but also *among* qualities. Man exercises this faculty to discern the particular, for example, art, wherein he searches for *communicability* through imagination – an enlarged way of thinking. For her, what enables human imagination is the repository of memory that is embodied in the enduring forms of culture, tradition and authority: ‘Mnēmosynē – remembering and remembrance – is the mother of the muses... it is through thinking and remembering that reality is revaluated’ (2007: 191). From this

perspective, culture's devolution into consumable mass culture presents a critical issue, given the diminishment of that essential repository of memory, from which we derive the standards of judgment, and from which we may speak, for instance, of the glory, beauty and excellence of phenomena in the public realm. In other words, had the *standards* of judgment and the *categories* of thought upon which man falls back for the purpose of deliberation and judgment be lost, that is, *common sense* which the act of imagination informs, it makes increasingly difficult for man to communicate with his fellow citizens who would otherwise share a common public realm.

In *The Life of the Mind* (1978), Arendt, following Kant, explains that the activity of judgment deals with particulars, in contrast to the activity of thought that is apt to generalise matters. For Kant, a vehicle for the activity of judgment is the private and subjective sense of taste. The activity of taste in aesthetic judgment works to discern the object in terms of its being agreeable or disagreeable. Because the pleasure or displeasure of what is arrested is 'immediate and overwhelming', the force of this discrimination deals with particulars. For Arendt, this 'peculiar talent' goes beyond aesthetic judgment, stretching its ability to handling the affairs of the public (1978: 215). This faculty pleases or displeases in 'representation' – imagination in which the 'distance, the remoteness or uninvolvedness or disinterestedness' starts to be established (Arendt 1978: 265). This distance allows discernment, evaluation and re-evaluation. It sets off critical thinking 'where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection' (Arendt 1978: 257). Arendt explains that at this stage, taste is no longer the activity of taste but that of a judgment that concerns the viewpoints of the others, turning subjective sense into the sense that seeks communicability in a public space, which Kant identifies as *sensus communis* (Arendt 1978: 268). She maintains that 'the criterion [of judgment] is *communicability*, and the standard of deciding about it is Common Sense' (Arendt 1978: 267, italics added). Since the activity of judgment thus situates one person in the place of any other, it is not a mere aesthetic capacity but also a political faculty that puts aside private interests and viewpoints, while taking into account what is communicable.

When talking of different territorial space or a specific historical period, it is often the case that our capacity of imagination as to what informs the communicability in that public space confronts difficulty. This difficulty is owing, arguably, to the fact that we do

not know the standards that form the communicability of that public space, due to the absence of our presence in that shared realm via participation, deliberation and collective judgment. For Arendt, both consensuses and disagreements which the citizens attain in a common space are not separate from the process of collective deliberation and the record of collective memories (2007: 200). The judgment of taste arrives at a common viewpoint not through the act of violence but through the act of persuasion (Arendt 2007: 200). In order to judge matters of public importance, it is true that reflections and thoughts are required not merely by an individual but also by the members of a shared realm, who are to be collectively concerned with the *appropriateness* of things and actions that appear in their common realm. Upon the process of collective deliberation, the members of a public decide ‘what the world *qua* world is supposed to look and sound like, how it is supposed to be looked at and listened to’ (Arendt 2007: 200). In the process of reaching collective consensus on the matters of a shared realm, that is, on the appropriateness of things and actions – the standards, it is the repository of memories, upon which man’s critical imagination is thrown back, that come to aid. Communicability, hence, relies on the process of a person’s participation in the public space as well as from his or her reflection on the guideposts which are stocked in his or her memory, those which transmit the wisdom of the past to the present. Enduring measures such as culture, tradition and authority are, in this regard, the informants of collective memories, at bottom protecting the freedom of public realm. Arendt writes, however, that ‘today, the question of the relation between culture and politics is a *secular* question’ (2007: 184, italics added).

Given Arendt’s reflection, the Frankfurt narratives which address concerns in the field of culture are relevant to the realm of the political. For

a political being... needs to be able to depend on production, so that it may provide lasting shelter for acting and speaking in their transience – and for the perishability of mortal life in its perishability. Politics is thus in need of culture, and acting is in need of production for the purpose of stability. (Arendt 2007: 196)

As Adorno and Horkheimer indicate, the culture industry’s assimilation of high art into low art liquidates, at the same time, the particularity of individuality, a process which suggests ‘the societal realization of the defeat of reflection’ (Bernstein 2001: 11). Taking



this critique further, an Arendtian analysis of the political implications of the socialisation of culture<sup>23</sup> would emphasise the extent to which the predominance of the culture industry brings about a paralysis of a taste that discriminates among qualities. Where people can no longer discern the particular, political life atrophies: citizens cannot discriminate quality or beauty among other objects, which would not thus last long and fail to construct the repository of human memory. Hence, it is not only human plurality of the public space but also the question of how this same realm can be sustained and have relative permanence that must be the primary concern of the political agent.<sup>24</sup>

#### Pseudo-Politics? Contemporary Activism in the Reversal of *Vita Activa* Hierarchy

In the bodies politic of the ancient Athens and the Roman republic, a hierarchy underlay three of the fundamental human activities. In the modern age, however, the project of secularisation eroded the historical threads of tradition and authority which worked to stabilise the public space, while the rise of society began to diminish the stature of culture and moved the sphere of culture from where it was traditionally located, which all in all sparked off the reversal of the ancient hierarchy of the *vita activa*. This reversal meant that, predominantly, the activities that had been confined to the private realm spilled over into the realm of the public – resulting in a condition in which modern men can no longer easily discern the boundary between the public and the private spaces (Arendt 1958: 28, 38). Arendt writes that ‘in the modern world, the social and the political realms are much less distinct’, a condition exemplified by Marx’s belief that ‘politics is nothing but a function of society, that action, speech, and thought are primarily superstructures upon

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<sup>23</sup> The demotion of culture into mass culture holds that there have been fewer and fewer narratives, legends and poems which reinforce the imagination with stories of distinctive individuals or remarkable deeds and words. More and more, the fames of excellent figures are today conveyed by way of information or the headlines of web-pages. In this manner of transmitting the past to the future, critical modernists think that the possibility for the individuals to achieve immortal fame is almost impossible, as information does not speak to human memory.

<sup>24</sup> Arendt states that culture and politics are ‘both phenomena of the public world’ (2007: 197). The commonness of both fields is that their products – artwork and action/speech – require the space of appearance and recognition. In addition, the publicity of both fields is determined by the same faculty of human beings – the activity of judgment that concerns the appropriateness of things and matters which appear in a common public space. Furthermore, the activity of thinking is an inner activity, whereas ‘judging, the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking, realizes thinking, makes it manifest in the world of appearances’ (Arendt 1971: 446). Judging is an activity that reveals itself in the public realm. In this view, it is important to point out that the rise of mass culture which malignantly impacts on the faculty of taste, a vehicle for the activity of judging, deforms the space of the public.

social interest', as Arendt puts it (1958: 33). Emerging 'from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere' (Arendt 1958: 38), the *animal laborans*, who 'neither know[s] nor need[s] a public', defines modern society (Arendt 2007: 183). Arendt describes the characteristics of 'mass man' in 'mass society', as one who has traits of loneliness, excitability, lack of standards, great capacity for consumption, accompanied by inability to judge and distinguish (1993: 199). Marx, believing that the 'complete victory of society would mean the eventual emergence of the "realm of freedom"' (Arendt 1958: 45), celebrated 'a society of laborers' (Arendt 2007: 183).

Arendt's critique of this collapse of the borders between the public and the private is extremely significant when it comes to reflecting on the means by which one might analyse contemporary political life. Today, a large volume of studies explore human activities pertaining to political life, represented by the studies of new social movements and of the politics (or culture) of consumption. Despite the focus of their investigation on the activities that constitute politics, these studies are, often, lodged from the field and discipline of a cultural study that fails to appreciate the significance of Arendt's analysis of this erosion of the borders between the public and the private. Accordingly, such studies of contemporary activism overlook the extent to which culture has been privatised and socialised. At the same time, equivocation is often found in these studies, regarding the boundaries of discipline that is symbolic of the blurring border between the public and the private realms in the modern age, that is, of society's absorption of the border essential to human life. In examining and contesting such equivocations, then, I propose to demonstrate the significance of turning to Arendt's work and of developing Arendtian approach to the analysis of contemporary public life, with the aim of contributing to the recovery of the border between the public and the private spaces. In so doing, it is possible, perhaps, to provide the struggles of contemporary activism not only with diagnosis but also with prescription, that is, an alternative way to stem its struggles. Politically speaking, the dissection of the studies of contemporary activism, which I unfold in the following, finds that these studies confirm the decline of the public realm in our age, rather than substantiate the revival of vibrant political life.

The contemporary study of social movements, often referred to as New Social Movement (NSM) theory, observes in the change in the character of social movements

since the 1960s the dynamics of a social transformation. For NSM theory, post-1960s activism has been characterised by a change in the modality of issue-articulation. The preeminent concerns of NSMs revolve around issues of identity and autonomy, which appear to qualify the discussion and movement of such activism as political, yet, as Judith Butler has observed, there also has been a growing trend for social theorists to situate the activity of NSMs in the dimension of culture (Butler 1997: 265). Analysts of NSMs such as Jürgen Habermas and Claus Offe agree that the post-1960s social movements differ from those of the previous decades. Although post-1960s activism is not altogether dissimilar from the pre-1960s movements, the concerns of NSMs and the ways in which those concerns are articulated have been distinctly different in terms of values, issues, actors and modes of institutional practice. One of the perceptible distinctions is that the social movements of the first two decades after 1945 (the old social movements: OSMs) revolved around issues of economic growth, equal distribution and national security, whereas the concerns of NSMs have been directed more to ‘the grammar of forms of life’ (Habermas 1981: 33; Offe 1985: 821). The actors are also different. OSMs are largely led by the labour class, while NSMs include people from a wide range of backgrounds, including non-labour class, gender and locality. Conspicuous in this multiplicity of categories is the rise of a *new middle class* constituted mostly of the people in higher educational strata, public office and social service (Offe 1985: 837). Offe writes that the new politics of what he calls ‘alternative movements’ are marked by a *de-differentiation* characterised by the fusion of public and private roles, of instrumental and expressive behaviour, and of community- and institution-based organisation (1985: 829).

What is so outstandingly original about NSMs is the manifestation of concerns around the themes of identity and autonomy. As Habermas illustrates, the new politics address the problems of quality of life, equality, individual self-realisation and participation (1981: 33). According to Alberto Melucci, ‘personal identity ... is the property which is now being claimed and defended; this is the ground in which individual and collective resistance is taking root’ (1980: 218). The new politics, which is profoundly entangled with the conflicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society, finds the space of action in the sub-institutional and extra-parliamentary level (Habermas 1981: 33; Offe 1985: 819). It is the sphere of *civil society* that exhibits the revival of the

articulation of discontents silenced during the time of postwar consensus – ‘liberal-democratic welfare-state consensus’ (Offe 1985: 821).<sup>25</sup> For Melucci, the salient claims seen in NSMs over such issues as the human body and the natural world articulate ‘the *cultural* locus of resistance and of desire’ (1980: 221, italics added).<sup>26</sup> He contends that ‘these are modes of social representation of that domain which, in the individual, resists domination and rationalization’ (Melucci 1980: 223). For him, NSMs express resistance from within the realm of culture, while indicating:

both the rejection of a social realm manipulated and controlled by the apparatus of the existing order... and the assertion of the social realm as the locus of action which consciously produces man’s existence and his relations with other men. (Melucci 1980: 223)

For Offe, movements organised around environmental issues, human rights, pacifism, and alternative modes of production and distribution are a form of political action because their actions are concerned with the benefit of the wider community.<sup>27</sup> For Habermas (1981: 36) as well as Offe (1985: 829), these new political movements have been driven by the concerns of ‘life-world’: the body, health, sexual identity, physical environment, cultural, ethnic and national identity, and survival for humankind in general. Faced with the crisis of life-world, people seek a solution in ‘the revitalisation of buried possibilities for expression and communication’ (Habermas 1981: 36).

Exemplified by the work of Melucci, despite the fact that the focus of NSMs theory is given to the activities and issues of the political, and thus the theory appears to speak to a genuine political commitment on the part of modern citizens, an Arendtian

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 7 for a discussion of this issue in the context of postwar Japan

<sup>26</sup> For Melucci, movements like women’s rights and gay rights spring from the concerns of the body. He observes in the relation of body concerns with individual rights the centrality of nature, that is, the assertion of human beings as a part of nature. In ‘The Crisis in Culture’ (1993), Arendt explains the Roman origin of the word and concept, *Culture*: ‘The word “culture” derives from *colore* – to cultivate, to dwell, to take care, to tend and preserve – and it relates primarily to the *intercourse of man with nature* in the sense of cultivating and tending nature until it becomes fit for human habitation’ (1993: 211-212, italics added). Arguably, the classification in which contemporary critics link the NSMs with the cultural, not the political, occurs when scholars presume the objects of their advocacies are associated with nature – e.g. the body. For Arendt, action and identity belong – by contrast – to the political.

<sup>27</sup> In this regard, he believes that the movements bound by religious sects and terrorism do not belong to the nature of political action.

analysis of NSMs would suggest that the fact that these works have increasingly dealt with the activities and matters of the political from within the field of culture itself implies a political problem, potentially prescribing a defective solution. Indeed, in spite of the primary focus on movements (collective action), the analysis of NSMs has been reluctant to tackle problems from the field of politics, in the much more limited sense to that term that Arendt gives it. The trend in the study of NSMs to attribute the topic of social movements to the field of culture is indicative of the extent to which the distinctions and meanings surrounding politics, culture and society have today become increasingly blurred, confirming Arendt's argument regarding the collapsed boundary between the public and the private spaces, and hence the decline of the political public realm.<sup>28</sup> If, as some analysts claim, the question of how and why such studies must be done is 'as pressing as ever' (Jordan, et al. 2002: 5), the first task which NSMs scholarship must take on would be a review of disciplinary boundaries, the task of which may contribute to the recovery of the political and emancipate NSMs from their struggle over the issues of identity and autonomy.

From an Arendtian perspective, the convolution of the formerly distinct meanings that separate each discipline from one another underlies the theories of contemporary activism, suggesting a contemporary inability to articulate the meaning of politics. Judith Butler delivers a key argument that illustrates this problematic of perplexed disciplinary boundaries, when she discusses 'the cultural focus of leftist politics' today (Butler 1997: 265). Butler unveils her objection to a growing tendency in contemporary academia to relegate NSMs to the sphere of the cultural, the tendency which dismisses NSMs as that which are concerned with "'merely" cultural' issues and which describes 'this cultural politics as factionalizing, identitarian, and particularistic' (1997: 265). For Butler, this tendency is driven by the resurgence of the leftist orthodoxy which attempts to reconstruct the division between the cultural and the material or the economic by calling for a 'unity' – the neoconservative's strategic attempt within the Left which she argues reinstates the hierarchy of questions, in which the issues of sexuality and race are deemed secondary (1997: 268, 276). Symbolised by the work of Nancy Fraser, the new

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<sup>28</sup> In *The Promise of Politics* (2005), Arendt also pronounces the trend in which contemporary academics are increasingly unable to articulate the meaning of politics.

orthodoxy on the Left separates, for example, gay struggles from ‘the material conditions [or sphere] of life, a proper and constitutive feature of political economy’, while discounting them ‘as merely matters of cultural recognition’ (Butler 1997: 272, 271). Butler denounces Fraser’s viewpoint, arguing that the regulation of sexuality has been central to the functioning of political economy – a standpoint which Butler builds upon the insight of feminists in the 1970s and 1980s that sexuality is part of ‘the mode of production’ (1997: 273). By identifying the new orthodoxy’s tactical reconstruction of the division between the cultural and the economic accordingly, Butler aims to re-address questions of economic equity and redistribution for those who fell to suffer secondary oppression and to restore for them legal and economic entitlement, as well as to eliminate those practices by which the matter of who is socially recognisable person is largely defined (1997: 265, 276).

It may be worth transporting Butler’s polemic to the politico-cultural dynamics of Arendt’s political thought. On a number of points, Butler convincingly demonstrates her political engagement. For example, against the critique of the new orthodoxy that NSMs are causing factionalisation on the Left, she emphasises the importance of difference which ‘is the condition of possibility of identity or, rather, its constitutive limit’ (1997: 269). Thus, Butler argues, the question of unity which the leftist orthodoxy calls for is resolvable only by ‘a mode of sustaining conflict in politically productive ways’, not by way of constructing a unity through exclusions (1997: 269). Here, Butler maintains to capture the principle of politics as that which is a space of plurality; the imposition of any ‘unity’ or ‘overarching universal’ imagined to be abstracted from its location in power would thus ‘always be falsifying and territorializing’ (1997: 269). Butler’s analysis of NSMs presents, in this regard, her healthy political commitment.

On an Arendian account, however, Butler’s argument confirms Arendt’s proposition that the public space is in decline, given the former’s equivocation as to the meaning of the disciplinary boundaries between the economic, the cultural and the political generally speaking, and the resulting subsumption of the public realm of the cultural and the political under the private realm of the economic in particular. Despite the fact that Butler’s re-problematisation of the division between the economic and the cultural contributes to the field of NSMs study, her return to Marx’s labour theory

prevents her from demonstrating the clarification of the borders, characteristics and components that compose the difference of each sphere. Accordingly, her Marxist solution to the struggles of NSMs over the matters of identity may result in the extension of the social sphere – where the human plurality of who one is neither counted nor discerned – rather than in helping recover the public sphere where such distinction is possible.

The principal drawback to Butler's argument can be found in her ambiguity of the difference between the economic and the political. Like the claims of many other NSMs, Butler reclaims freedom – a space for everyone to equally participate in the discussion of the common concerns and wherein everyone can access opportunities to be recognised – for gays and women. But her attempt to restore a public space for such oppressed minorities begins by re-emphasising the importance of murky border between the economic and the cultural. She does so precisely because for her, the economic or the material is the realm and agenda of the political, and thus a stress on the indissociable realms of the cultural and the economic has cultural issues qualify as political concerns. For her, as in class and race struggles which are considered by the leftist orthodoxy as an issue of the economic, feminist and queer struggles should not be confined merely to the realm of culture but be considered also as the realm of the economic (Butler 1997: 270). In order for her to politicise or challenge the project of neoconservatism within the Left which reconstructs the division between the economic and the cultural, Butler revalorises the Marxist labour theory which influenced the arguments of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. Socialist feminists of the time developed their theories on the basis of the arguments of Engels and Marx that the mode of production is predicated on the production and reproduction of human beings (1997: 271). Hence for socialist feminists, sexuality is that which is socially regulated and central to the functioning of political economy (Butler 1997: 271).

Butler contends that the definition of 'legal "personhood" is rigorously circumscribed by cultural norms that are indissociable from their material effects' (1997: 273). To substantiate this murky border, she highlights the arguments of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Marcel Mauss. For Mauss, Butler explains, 'the economic is only one part of an exchange that assumes various cultural forms', and the distinction between these

spheres ‘is not as distinct as it has come to seem’ (1997: 275). Lévi-Strauss agrees with Mauss, seeing that the relation of exchange is ‘simultaneously cultural and economic’, producing ‘a set of social relations’ (Butler 1997: 275). Indeed, Butler reconfirms, ‘Marx himself argued that precapitalist economic functions could not be fully extricated from the cultural and symbolic worlds in which they were embedded’, and he was aware that the distinction between the cultural and the economic is ‘the effect and culmination of the division of labour and cannot, therefore, be excluded from its structure’ (1997: 274). Thus, a continued insistence on that distinction can only lead to a failure to appreciate that the mode of production is connected with the normative reproduction of gender that is essential to the reproduction of heterosexuality and the family (1997: 274).

In this way, however, Butler and the NSMs overlook a significant, genuinely political problem. Butler’s renewed project to coordinate the splintering Marxism or to redress some forms of Marxism seen in neoconservatism within the Left remains to wed to Marx’s labour theory, but this neglects the ‘political’ phenomena of NSMs – action and calls for the restoration of a space for identity – and their fundamental difference from Marx’s proposition of the economic as the political, when seen from Arendt’s work on the political public space.<sup>29</sup> That is, while the *animal laborans*’ approach to the common wealth (or the public good) may succeed in the fair and wider distribution of economic entitlements, such an approach can only exacerbate the decline of the public sphere, by reducing this essential space of freedom and equality to the private concerns of labour and consumption. The problem for Butler’s emancipation project sets in, then, when she aims, along with the question of fair economic entitlement, at *recognition* for gays and women among others in the context of a mass society where the division between the spheres of the economic and the cultural is no longer clear cut, as Butler herself confirms albeit in a different sense, and the realm of the latter has already been adulterated into the space of mass culture. As seen in an Arendtian dialogue with the Frankfurt school’s critical theorists, the border between the economic and the cultural is

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<sup>29</sup> As Arendt points out, since Marx’s ‘influence on [our notion of] politics was tremendous’ (2002: 284), his labour theory has played a significant role in delimiting what modern research can imagine as what it means by politics. Because Marx envisages the model of political agency in the form of *animal laborans* and *homo faber*, the motion of history is life process rather than contingent praxis or action. Sustained and urged by the force of life process, the *animal laborans* pursues the result of its activity – ‘abundance’. A path to achieve the ideal of *animal laborans* has been, accordingly, demonstrated as politics, including economic growth and equal distribution.



less distinct than it once was, and culture is subsumed by the private sphere where the activity and rationality of economy unfold. In this respect, it is certainly reasonable for Lévi-Strauss and Mauss to address an ‘inappropriate and unstable’ distinction between the economic and the cultural (Butler 1997: 275). But, for Arendt, projects such as Butler’s which highlight the link between the mode of production, and the production and reproduction of human beings – gender and sexuality to an extent – and which thereby extend the realm of the economic into the cultural and the political ultimately threaten the very *space* of politics.

For Arendt, that is, the will on the part of citizens to take on the ‘burden of jurisdiction, defense, and administration of public affairs’ is inseparable from the fact that they have a public space of recognition: opportunities to reveal who they are, and for their deed and word to be recognised and meaningful (1958: 41). But the modern ascendance of the social, on her account, has seen the rise of intimacy and conformism, a phenomenon which arose from the transformation of the public sphere to the social where ‘distinction and difference’ become ‘private matters of the individual’ (Arendt 1958: 41). Moreover, modern society does not hold out the promise for a public space of recognition, because the equality it offers is not one in which the members of a public could equally have this chance to disclose who they are, but rather one that misconceives equality as a state of conformism in which everyone is *a member of the family* (1958: 39-40):

Whether a nation consists of equals or non-equals is of no great importance... for society always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest. (Arendt 1958: 39)

In the space of the social where the *animal laborans* marginalises the space of the political, that is, where behaviour replaces action ‘as the foremost mode of human relationship’ (Arendt 1958: 41), a ‘public happiness’ that is based on the political precondition of equality becomes inaccessible not just for minorities but also for everyone – regardless of sexuality, gender or race.

It must be stressed that to critique existing NSMs scholarship in this way is not to marginalise the struggles of NSMs – environmental issues, gay rights, women’s rights,

distributional justice, and so on. An Arendtian identification of the confused disciplinary boundaries in the studies of contemporary activism, including Butler's, seeks instead to propose an alternative path through which these struggles can be emancipated or ameliorated. This path proceeds by re-enacting the border between the public and the private, namely, through a project of restoration, in which the problematisation of blurred disciplinary boundaries is constitutive. In an Arendtian view, the problem of environmental aggravation today, for example, is critically connected to the collapsed boundary between the public and the private spaces. It is a by-product of this collapsed boundary, driven not only by the activities of capitalist or of environmentally unfriendly industries but also, importantly, by the mass consumption of mass society. The reestablishment of the border between the public and the private spaces can mean the consulted return of tradition and authority – the aegis of the public space which receded with the rise of secularisation – which may restore or reinforce in people the standards of judgment, potentially restraining the untrammelled activities of consumption.

Moreover, Butler's Marxist solution to the problem of distributional justice is even open to question, given the emergence of neoliberal market model today in some parts of the world, which was prepared for by the Keynesian market model (see Chapter 7). While Arendt's political philosophy challenges and is very critical of the activities and epistemologies of the private, a resort to Arendt's work on the political public space by no means abandons the concerns and issues of economy – the activity of the private – which are today political problems of the first order, given the collapsed border between the public and the private realms or the socialised public sphere. In contrast to Butler's Marxist solution to questions of distributional justice, an Arendtian project to recover this border may seek after a model of the market in which the market can undertake the role of an umpire which stems the overflow of human activities from the private to the public or *vice versa* (see Chapter 7). At any rate, Butler's Marxist solution to the recent movement in academia which increasingly 'relegates NSMs to the sphere of the cultural' does not take account of Arendt's contribution in the field of politics, an oversight which has important consequences for both the discourse and practice of the NSMs.

A second form of contemporary studies which explore the activities of the political – celebrating them as a sign of the health of political life – helps to illustrate

further the extent to which certain trends in cultural studies research fail to appreciate the significance of Arendt's work on the decline of the public sphere. In this second form, it is the political worth of consumer activism that is the focus, particularly in the work of scholars such as Mark Bevir, Matthew Hilton, Catherine Needham, John Clarke and Kate Soper, working under the leadership of Frank Trentmann, in a British research Centre dedicated to the study of 'Cultures of Consumption'.<sup>30</sup> This work explores the terrain of politics – individual, collective action – by investigating consumer activism, and in doing so raises again the question of the contentious boundaries between politics and culture and between the public and the private. Trentmann, for instance, has conducted many scrupulous empirical analyses of the historical dynamics of consumption, criticising the traditional study of consumer society for being dominated by 'a philosophical engagement with "modernity"' (2004: 373). He argues that because the study of consumption has been overridden by the philosophical inquiry, the new approach must refine 'an empirical reassessment of the historical dynamics of consumption', particularly, by contextualising 'the different forms and functions of consumption, and the affiliated social visions and political systems competing with each other at the same time' (Trentmann 2004: 400). In 'Bread, Milk and Democracy: Consumption and Citizenship in Twentieth-century Britain' (2001), Trentmann examines how the standards of politics were markedly upgraded through the improvement of consumption in the twentieth-century. Scrutinising consumer politics from the white loaf to clean milk, he finds 'a larger reconfiguration of consumption and citizenship', a shift in which a consumer transforms into the political agent – a citizen (2001: 130).

For Trentmann, this trend harks back to mid-nineteenth century Victorian and Edwardian Britain, where he discovers what he calls the 'dietary story of advancing liberal democracy' (2001: 134). For the people, the support for free trade was a crucial area of engagement in which their everyday life, which had suffered from the horrors of starvation, could be improved by legitimately distancing a society from the state. Women in general and the Women's Co-operative Guild (WCG) in particular spearheaded social movements, supporting free trade and voicing how dietary politics was central to the

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<sup>30</sup> Details of the many research projects conducted under this umbrella can be found on the Centre's website: <http://www.consume.bbk.ac.uk/index.html>

women carrying the basket. As Britain entered into the First World War, the WCG began transferring their concerns from the ‘white loaf’ to ‘brown bread’ and clean milk, raising the issue of ‘food purity’ (Trentmann 2001: 138). Calling for good nutrition at fair and stable prices, consumers found themselves in a vigorous engagement with politics, on this account, in order to influence the larger institutional order of state and market. Trentmann describes how, in a battle against the powerful rise of trusts, combines and profiteering, the first wave of consumer movements before the beginning of the Second World War, still exhibited a sense of reciprocity among individuals, that is, the role of active citizens and a sense of responsibility towards each other (2001: 135).

Trentmann’s investigation of consumer politics in Britain follows the movements until the 1950s in the early postwar period. He comprehensively examines the statistics of consumption in the different periods of history, the demands of consumers and consumer organisations, the reception of co-operatives, and the state responses. His empirical study records the success of consumer politics in the upward trend of living standards among consumers, as well as in the fact that their demands and concerns were more and more integrated into the decision-makings and regulations of the state. Therefore, Trentmann’s social-democratic standpoint situates the politics of consumption around the struggles of social movements for the ideal of entitlement – consumers’ right to a fair price – and the ethics of distributional justice. He celebrates the development of consumer politics that grew from the hunger battle of the Edwardian period to international consumer politics; from the British consumers’ concerns that had been rooted in the localities to their concerns of the issue of global hunger which they presumed resulted from the perilous effects of global capitalism (Trentmann 2001: 159).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Catherine Needham offers an analysis of the consumer movement that diverges from Trentmann’s. In contrast to the focus of Trentmann on the grass-root consumers’ movements, Needham explores a larger reconfiguration of the premise regarding the identity of *consumers* and *citizens* in the state’s new approach to its citizens. It is since 1997, Needham indicates, that the New Labour government of Britain has changed their relationship with citizens, treating them not as citizens but as consumers/clients. She contends that the state’s new projects insidiously reconstitute the ways in which public service is delivered into a model of private economy (Needham 2003: 5). Although at its core citizenship ‘designates membership of a political community’ (2003: 11), Needham criticises the approach of the government for effacing from citizens their political attribute, for example, by its adoption of advertising and promotional languages and techniques such as choice, branding and targeting; and by the change in the consultation mechanism of public institutions, which not only neglects the basics of representative democracy but also bypasses the process of individual and collective deliberation on the introduction of new policies and regulations (2003: 17, 20). Needham contests that citizens are not the passive receiver or appraiser of government provisions. For her,

On an Arendtian view, however, the consumer politics contested by the ‘Cultures of Consumption’ projects may not be able to be sufficiently seen as political, public activism. As with the work on the NSMs previously discussed, the ‘Cultures of Consumption’ projects appropriate political themes of freedom and identity to ‘culture’ (Trentmann 2004: 399). As in Butler, this study overlooks already socialised culture. Like Butler, Trentmann, despite his initiative in re-articulating the question of the dichotomy between consumption and the public/citizens, fails to unpack the political concept of freedom. Instead, he places it, routinely, in a ‘social-democratic vision’ that predicates freedom on the principle of distributional justice (2001: 160). His approach is, therefore, neo-Marxist – one in which the ideal of politics revolves around abundance and the good life, which, for Arendt, could, never resolve the frustrations of an identity-politics that is enacted in the privatised public space. Except for drawing on the reason of necessity, the school’s explanation of how and why consumption or consumerism is a political issue, is equivocal.<sup>32</sup> Without this lucidity, it should be said that Trentmann’s statement – ‘consumer culture is at the centre of contemporary debates about freedom, identity and social justice’ (2004: 399) – may remain as a *pre*-political theme, falling short of political, public qualification.

Supported by Melucci’s emphasis that ‘personal identity’ is ‘the ground in which individual and collective resistance is taking root’, and by Offe’s illustration of the new politics as marked by a de-differentiation characterised by the fusion of public and private roles, an Arendtian view of contemporary activism implies that the voices and actions for recognition, freedom and identity are not a phenomenon which reflects only the struggles of minorities. The decline of the public realm infers that everyone – the

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the state’s renewed identification of citizen-consumer-persona suggests the import of consumer values into the government-citizen relationship rather than the export of the political dimension of citizenship into consumer behaviour (Needham 2003: 7). While consumerism has been the acknowledged fact of neo-liberal domination in mainstream politics since the 1980s, Needham warns that the development of neo-liberal creed after 1997 draws further attention to its systematic attempt to overturn democracy in the marketplace.

<sup>32</sup> In *Consumerism in Twentieth-century Britain* (2003), Matthew Hilton, for instance, conducts a historical analysis about the postwar ideal of Michael Young, who pursues the social-democratic vision of consumerism. Hilton pays attention not only to the movements of empowered shoppers but also to the outstanding work of Young, who tried to elevate the concerns of ordinary people to the level of political expression, in his focus on the intersection of consumer movements with political actions such as ‘participation’ and ‘active democracy’ – ‘at all levels as active members’ (Hilton 2003: 269). However, Hilton’s work is – like Trentmann’s – insufficient in clarifying the dichotomy (or continuum?) between consumption and the public, keeping political movements submerged in the ideal of consumption.

majority – has been engulfed in the vortex of this crisis of public space. Accordingly, action and advocacy spring up in relation to a wide range of forms and concerns, from environmental and anti-globalisation movements, through peaceful activities like voluntary, non-profit and sport associations, through to, potentially, terrorism, yet many, misperceiving these phenomena as a sign of a prospering public realm, do not recognise that the rise of such multifarious movements is, in fact, a reaction to and a ramification of a declining public sphere. In other words, these movements are the by-products of the ascendance of the social where the space of distinction, recognition and authentic communication is shuttered by the one-ness of mass society, and the standards underlying the communicability of each public space have waned. Marx's contradiction in his attempt to recover the realm of freedom through the victory of society appears, accordingly, only to aggravate these ramifications emanating from the blurring border between the public and the private spaces, and hence to worsen the scale of environmental catastrophe and the question of identity. In this respect, turning to Arendt's work on the political public space may be an immediate task for scholarship on contemporary activism in order to re-calibrate the location of their voices and actions.

Overall, despite the fact that the Frankfurt school, the study of NSMs and the 'Cultures of Consumption' project deal with the political themes of identity, freedom and autonomy, an Arendtian analysis of these forms of contemporary cultural studies finds them inadequate for drawing out the *political* stakes in what they analyse. Seen from an Arendtian perspective, the failures of these cultural studies are attributable, partly, to their inattention to a critical historical watershed in which culture declined to mass culture. Partly, they do not take account of the erosion of the border between the public and the private spaces, which, as I argued earlier, has worked to blur disciplinary boundaries and confuse the original meanings of disciplines, including the economic, the cultural and the political. Furthermore, with the erosion of the essential principle in culture – objectivity – the socialisation of culture affects the political faculty of judgment by thinning the repository of human memory; that is, references to what is permanent and durable become meagre. For Arendt, culture's decline is one of the major factors of the crisis of the political public space in the modern age, and so any adequate analysis of the potential for political action must include this decline within its scope.

*The Past and Judgment: The Japanese Question*

In the spirit of Arendt's recovery of the original meaning of politics, the major part of this research, unfolded across the following two parts of the thesis, examines the extent to which a public space thrives in Japan today. Part of the context of such an examination is the dominance, within the study of Japanese politics, of a mainstream historiography informed by the political narratives of liberalism and, especially, Marxism, across the postwar period. The considerable dominance of Marxist or neo-Marxist historiography has been political in its implication and consequence, partly due to the teleological or Archimedean notion of history making it difficult for the citizens to establish 'a genuine relation to the past' (Beiner 1992: 149). For Marxist historiography in particular to assume hegemony for more than half a century in postwar Japan suggests that this nation's citizens have been deprived of the ability to construct the future of their public realm – what is to be decided as common, the public and permanent – with the members of the general public suffering from the constant oscillation of their ontology in sharing a public space.

In the context of scholarship on the political life of post-1868 Japan in general and of postwar Japan in particular, Arendt's work on the political public space offers – against the frameworks of liberalism and Marxism – an alternative path to the revitalisation of authentic politics or political life. The need to turn to Arendt's political thought may be especially urgent, given that Japan's defeat in the Second World War has enmeshed the nation in the modernisation project so much so that the citizens' space of freedom, namely, the realm of inter-subjective communication, continues to be unsettled. For Arendt, our conduct and thought in everyday life are inseparable from our relationship to the past, and so our capacity to participate in and our ways or relating to the public realm are not unconnected to our experience of time. Because the political public realm – a space of discussion and deliberation – has been overshadowed in postwar Japan by Marxist notions of politics and history, the critical interrelation between time and the human faculty of judgment – one of the essential political faculties which Arendt argues is necessitated in the public space – has been threatened. Seen from an Arendtian perspective, the breakdown of this interrelation, rather than being a celebratory

sign of the emergence of modernisation or civilisation, threatens what Ronald Beiner calls our ‘ontological anchoring’, which is secured in an act of judgment, without which one would be left in a world ‘without meaning [or] existential reality’ (1992: 144, 152). In contrast to the mainstream historiography in postwar Japan, then, Arendt’s work provides the political agent with a different relation to Japan’s past, that is, an alternative vision through which he or she may restore the ability to judge, determine and behold his or her path. In Arendt’s view, we ‘may reclaim our human dignity, win it back, as it were, from the pseudo-divinity named History of the modern age’ by properly restoring the faculty of judgment, which ‘is our faculty for dealing with the past’ (1978: 216). The Marxist notion of history, in Arendt’s view, paralyses this faculty.

As a means of teasing out the implications of Arendt’s political thought for dissecting political life in postwar Japan, this thesis focuses on what I call *the Japanese question*. This phrase concerns the foundation to Japan’s body politic, whose *sui generis*, I argue, builds upon the crucial relation between the emperor system and those traditions, culture, rituals and forms of authority that serve essential criteria through which a community finds communicability in its public space. Put differently, the Japanese question highlights and focuses on the borders of the public realm (see Chapter 1) that once formed Japan’s body politic, borders which were enacted by those enduring measures that derive, to a large extent, from the emperor system. This formulation of ‘the Japanese question’ thus serves a conceptual cornerstone for developing an account of the history of modern Japan based on Arendt’s work on the political public space and her theory of judgment as grounded in a relationship with the past.

Ronald Beiner’s discussion of Arendt’s uncompleted work on judgment, and in particular his account of the ontological anchoring provided in the act of judgment, may help to demonstrate the philosophical underpinning of this move to revisit Japan’s relation to its past. In the final section of a long interpretive essay introducing *Hannah Arendt’s Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (1992), Beiner stresses the centrality of the faculty of judgment in Arendt’s political thought by comparing Arendt’s work with that of Friedrich Nietzsche’s on the knot of *meaning* and *time*. For both Nietzsche and Arendt, human life is essentially meaningless, with their existence continuously afloat in the flux of time – a mode of being which Kant considers to be ‘an otherwise intolerable



existence' (Beiner 1992: 146). To the fact that Being is situated in 'the meaninglessness of temporal succession', Nietzsche responds with 'the thought of eternal return' (Beiner 1992: 148, 146). The thought of eternal return which asks us whether we want to relive our life innumerable times as we have lived it, evokes 'the moment' – what Nietzsche alternatively calls the 'gateway' – where our existence is 'circular', namely, 'pointlessness and futility', where nothing outside itself can serve to justify itself (Beiner 1992: 149, 148). As the word 'gateway' suggests, the moment is, at the same time, the moment that asks the absolute justification of itself – affirmation (Beiner 1992: 146, 149). For Nietzsche, a means to affirm the moment is the Will: 'the iron resolve, to *think* this problem is itself its own solution' (Beiner 1992: 149).

By contrast, according to Beiner, Arendt offers a solution to our existence in the meaninglessness of temporal succession by a means of 'reflective judgment or judging reflection upon the deeds of the past' (1992: 150). Arendt critically observes, Beiner explains, Nietzsche's proposal that the Will is the way to affirm the moment, arguing that the Will – 'whose projects always assume rectilinear time and a future that is unknown and therefore open to change' – contradicts with the thought experiment of the eternal return where Being is circular (1992: 150). Hence, the Will's impotence to affirm the moment, Arendt posits, led Nietzsche to the thought of the eternal recurrence, 'the final redeeming thought' (Beiner 1992: 150). In contrast to the Will which cannot go backward, Arendt's proposed solution, judgment, is backward glance. As in the eternal recurrence which retrieves humans 'from a responsibility that would be unbearable if nothing that was done could be undone', Arendt's reflective judgment retrieves humans from the problem of human freedom, that is, the burden of awesome responsibility for freedom (Beiner 1992: 150, 153).

Arendt's ontological reconciliation with the burden of *responsibility* for freedom is crucial here. In *The Human Condition*, she reminds us, again and again, that the characteristics of human deed and word are boundless, irretrievable and contingent. Arendt explains that:

Men never have been and never will be able to undo or even to control reliably any of the processes they start through action... he who acts never quite knows what he is doing,

that he always becomes “guilty” of consequences he never intended or even foresaw... [and that] very meaning [of his action] never discloses itself to the actor but only to the backward glance of the historian who himself does not act. (Arendt 1958: 233)

Therefore, without the faculty of judgment through which we reconcile our freedom (Arendt cited in Beiner 1992: 153), man would be doomed to an existence without meaning:

We can sustain ourselves in the present and retain hope for the future only by reflecting on the miraculousness of human freedom as instantiated in particular moments of the past. Without the possibility of retrospective judgment, we might well be overcome by a sense of the meaninglessness of the present and succumb to despair over the future. Judging alone makes satisfactory provision for meaning and thereby allows us, potentially, to *affirm* our condition. (Beiner 1992: 154).

On this basis, Beiner concludes that ‘judgment is not simply a capacity of political beings... It actually comes to serve an ontological function’ (1992: 152). For citizens of a public space to engage with the activity of judgment means their leap to the position of an umpire, in which they view and deliberate on the meanings of what is appearing and happening in the public realm with these ‘disinterested, uncommitted and undisturbed’ glasses (Arendt cited in Beiner 1992: 148). In order to resolve the meaning of what is occurring in the shared space, Beiner argues, Arendt’s citizen-spectators fall back on the reservoir of memory, since the act of judging which deals with the particular is always premised on a *backward glance* (1992: 151).

In a political space conditioned – as is the case in the public space of postwar Japan where the public discourses and political activities receive the powerful influence of Marxism – by a break with the past and by an orientation to the future as the *only* place in which the public realm (political life) may be achieved, the capacity of citizens for judgment, hence for responsibility for their freedom, can be significantly curtailed. Worse more, as suggested in Nietzsche’s formulation of the Will which becomes ‘ill’, if we fail to ‘come to terms with the intractability of time’, losing ‘a good will’ toward time ‘wreaks revenge for his inability to go backwards... [and] will against time and its “it

was” (Beiner 1992: 149). In this regard, it may be possible to see this ill will as an undercurrent of the actions and discourses of Marxist intellectuals in postwar Japan (see Chapters of Part III). In this way, Beiner’s discussion of Arendt’s account of meaning, judgment and time is an important preface for this thesis, which diagnoses the citizenry’s evasion of the Japanese question today – the question which would have the Japanese public address the linkage of Japan’s past with the present. Failure to engage this question potentially transforms a public space such that the citizenry’s sense of responsibility for their freedom and its space diminishes. In the place where authentic communication and interaction is absent, Arendt holds that there is no power.

Arendt stresses that the past is sanctified through tradition. Had a public space become a realm where the present acts without the authority and tradition of the past – ‘without accepted, time-honoured standards and models, without the help of the wisdom of the founding fathers’ (1993: 124) – such public space would suggest the crisis, because the loss of permanence divests people of the evaluative, re-evaluative standards upon which the act of thinking and judging may have recourse. Pointing to the principle of state-church separation in modern states, Arendt dreads the far-reaching implications of the project of secularisation, arguing that the public sphere has lost its authority and ‘with it that element which... had endowed political structures with durability, continuity and permanence’ (1993: 127). After the Second World War, Japan became another modern state in which the principle of secularisation was programmed by the Occupation in the forms of a policy called the *Shintō* directive and the contradictory provisions in Article 1 and 20 of the postwar Constitution.<sup>33</sup>

For Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), these postwar arrangements which diminish the public relevance of the emperor system worked to destroy a public realm, depriving the people of a sense of their orientation to each other and to their collective past. Together, these postwar arrangements have deprived Japan of the history of its public space, and of a resilience against the malignant aspects of the modern age fortified by the rise of

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<sup>33</sup> Article 20, paragraph 3, states that ‘The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity’ (cited in Hasegawa 2007: 63). Hasegawa Michiko explains that on the basis of this Article ‘an imperial rite like the ... *Shihōhai*’ – the ritual performance of the emperor that pays homage to the four directions of the cosmos and prays for averting natural disasters and for having abundant crops – ‘cannot be treated as a public function’. She questions how the emperor can act ‘as a symbol of the unity of the Japanese people without performing such rites as public functions’ (2007: 63, italics added).

consumer society and the authority of the Archimedean epistemology – in other words, the activities and approaches of the *animal laborans* and *homo faber*. Mishima skillfully described what is at stake in the Japanese question when he argued, drawing on the language of German idealism, that for the Japanese the emperor represents his existence not merely as *Sein* – existence as *is* – but also as *Sollen* – the source of ideas and norms (1969). In an intense panel discussion in 1969 with the students of *Zenkyōtō* (*the Zengaku Kyōtō Kaigi*) (the Conference for the Struggle of Joint Schools) at the Tōkyō University, Mishima argued that the principle of revolution rests – in Japan’s case – only on the emperor (Mishima & Tōdai Zenkyōtō 1969: 143). In opposition to the teleological notion of time expressed by the claims of some students, in which the goal of history is inherent in the present, Mishima argued that, for the Japanese, the emperor exists in the recesses of their minds as *Sollen* (‘ought’); which suggests not only that the emperor is shared by the multitudes as something common but also that, accordingly, the present can never be assumed teleologically (Mishima & Tōdai Zenkyōtō 1969: 73). *Sollen* informs us of the principle of action. Mishima sought to explain to the young Japanese the meaning of the existence of the emperor, contending that it is a shared agency through which the will of the people can be connected to that of the state or the polity without going through any medium authority, and that the emperor both as *Sein* and as *Sollen* (‘is’ as well as ‘ought’) galvanises the politics of collective action (Mishima & Tōdai Zenkyōtō 1969: 64).

Considering language to typify this connection, Mishima argued that language consists of the sedimentation of that which weaves meanings because it has been used in a certain space, by a certain community, and according to the continuity of a certain time (Mishima & Tōdai Zenkyōtō 1969: 74). Because language is not just practised by one generation in the past but exercised and refined by many generations, people in the present age can draw from its reserves in order to select words to express what they wish to say. In this manner, Mishima suggests that culture is not a dead remnant of the past but a vibrant, living entity which, by virtue of its relative permanence and accumulation, continues to be available in the everyday life of people today. Thus Mishima holds that, in Japan, the principle of revolution can come only from the emperor, because the emperor as *Sollen* and *Sein* is the source of communicability and the principle of action.

Although Mishima does not identify the emperor system in this term, this embodiment might also be expressed via a classical Japanese term *kokutai* (国体) – a term which roughly translates as ‘body politic’, but which I recover in Parts II and III of this thesis (and especially in the following chapter) as a name for what is at stake in the Japanese question.

As the project of secularisation takes hold in the modern state of Japan, the enduring measures that once constituted the borders of Japanese *kokutai* have begun to recede. Coinciding with this recession has been the ascendance of a new authority grounded in the epistemology of modern science. As elaborated on in Chapter 1, the epistemology of *homo faber* is inimical to that of the citizens whose residence is in the public space. The crisis of the public realm has been further aggravated by the ascendance and overflow of the activities of *animal laborans*. In the geographical space of East Asia, the proposition underlying the Japanese question may hold the key to the crisis of the political public realm brought about by the rise of the activities and approaches of these new actors: the *animal laborans* and *homo faber*. The public space in modern, postwar Japan, that is, has perhaps not been immune to the problem of the reversal of *vita activa* hierarchy proposed by Arendt. It is with a view to exploring this possibility, then, that the next chapter turns to Japan’s ‘pre-modern’ political public space, in order to identify the specific aspects of enduring measures which set the borders of the public, prior to the introduction of the 1946 Constitution, since which the velocity of country’s modernisation has been inordinate.

### CHAPTER 3

#### *Bakumatsu Japan: A Symbolic Public Space and the Japanese Question*

The time to tell stories is when the past has “lost its authority” ... Stories preserve continuity, transmitting tradition from one generation to the next.  
(Disch 1993: 669)

The narrative structure of action and of human identity means that the continuing retelling of the past, its continued reintegration into the story of the present, its reevaluation, reassessment, and reconfiguration are ontological conditions of the kinds of beings we are. If *Dasein* is in time, narrative is the modality through which time is experienced.  
(Benhabib 1994: 125)

Japan’s experience sheds new light on the common fate and predicament of twentieth century man; a situation which includes an abundance of material goods, an atomization of ancient relationships in the new megalopolis, and loneliness in an international order haunted by the fear of the atom.  
(Jansen 1968: 330)

#### *Introduction*

In *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt attempts to correct two widespread misconceptions of modern man about the meaning of politics. Firstly, she insists that the political public space, which is characterised by a heightened moment of *revolution*, becomes visible and vigorous not because of people’s concerns with the problem of poverty and economy. Rather, political life comes to pass, fundamentally, with people’s pursuit of public happiness, namely, freedom. The second correction she makes with regard to the common prejudice of modern man is that the etymology of the term revolution did not, initially, have such significations as novelty and beginning. Originally, the word was derived from the field of astronomy in which it denoted recurrence or cyclical movement. When this term was appropriated – metaphorically – to the field of politics, Arendt explains that revolution was meant to revolve back to a pre-established point, and hence presupposed *restoration* (1990: 42-43).

This chapter substantiates these Arendt’s statements by providing an overview of the political movements of the *bakumatsu* period (幕末) in Japanese history (across the 1850s and 1860s). The *bakumatsu* climax is presented here as a period of the most axiomatic public space in the history of Japan, insofar as the political activities of

deliberation and participation proliferated in tandem with the public concern over what I, in the previous chapter, called *the Japanese question*. While the Japanese term *Meiji Ishin* (明治維新:1868) – which designates a series of events and reforms from the *bakumatsu* era to the restoration of monarchy in the Meiji period – indicates the novelty and newness of political environment in the Meiji era, the English translation of the term, ‘the Meiji Restoration’, may appear more accurate if we refer to Arendt’s illustration of the original meaning of *revolution*, and if we recognise, as this chapter aims to show, that the bloody battles of the *bakumatsu* period were guided by a need or hope for a ‘revolution’ to that point from which Japan had departed – by the people’s concern, that is, for what had to survive and, hence, had to be restored.

This chapter begins its discussion of the significance of the *bakumatsu* period by examining conventional views, as held by mainstream historiography, on the period preceding the introduction of modern democratic instruments, such as parliament and constitution. The fact that Marxist interpretations have dominated Japanese academia in the postwar period poses great dangers to the public realm of Japan both as discourse and praxis, for they obstruct alternative perspectives from entering into the public debate. The second and the third sections of this chapter set up two challenges to these interpretations. Broader critiques of the popularly examined *bakumatsu* period are opened up by attending to the epochal collective actions and political movements of the time, which this chapter proposes were kindled over the Japanese question – the foundation to the body politic. Exposed to the crises resulting from the endogenous problem of growing dissatisfactions as to the discrepancies of the *bakuhan* system (幕藩体制)(the system composed of the Edo shogunate and *han* (domain) authorities) as well as from the exogenous issue of Western expansion, *bakumatsu* Japan was on the verge of civil war or semi-colonisation. The multi-tiered political authorities and agents, despite divergences in their approaches and sharp confrontations, found an intersection of mutual rapport, agreement and compromise, which this chapter argues was owed, largely, to a shared concern over the Japanese question. For the many at the time, this question was a concern of the security of the emperor-predicated polity, in which the virtues and principles of the public and the people were enshrined.

*Bakumatsu* Japan exhibits a strong contrast with Japan's political public space in the 1960s, as it emerged, for instance, over the 1960 *Anpo* battle and student radicalism at the end of the 1960s (see Chapter 6). In these later events, an inquiry into the Japanese question was renounced and opposed, with the public manifestly rejecting government policies that were seen to reengage with Japan's past. The final section of this chapter explores the Japanese question at the turn of the Meiji period when Japan's sovereignty increasingly began to erode, beginning with the signing of the Perry Convention (or Kanagawa Treaty) in 1854 and continuing through a series of subsequent unequal treaties. The promise of modernisation to assure the political life of modern nation states through the institutionalisation of democratic system can be re-summoned by questioning half a century of Japanese struggle over the unequal treaties of the time. This final section thereby not only demonstrates the contribution that an Arendtian approach may make to Japanese historiography, but also opens the way to reassessing the question of whether political life is incapacitated before a country possesses the structures and institutions which underpin the *modern* polity.

*Postwar Japanese Historiography: Discontinuity with the Past as Precondition*

We also know to our sorrow that freedom has been better preserved in countries where no revolution ever broke out, no matter how outrageous the circumstances of the powers that be, and that there exist more civil liberties even in countries where the revolution was *defeated* than in those where revolutions have been victorious. (Arendt 1990: 115, italics added)

Reflecting on the significance of the past for the concern of the present and the future public sphere, Hannah Arendt suggests that the study of politics, the identification of political problems and the resuscitation of political life depend on the extent to which the contemporaries 'retie the broken thread of tradition or ... invent some newfangled surrogates with which to fill the gap between past and future' (1993: 14). While Arendt's grand project to restore the political public space endeavours into the lost past, this thesis proposes that postwar Japan can be seen to present one of the most severe cases of the erosion of the past in the world. Partly, this erosion escalated because a seven-year long US Occupation after 1945 did not neglect the task of influencing Japanese interpretations



of the past (Conrad 2003: 89). Partly, the erosion accelerated because postwar Japanese academia swiftly succumbed to the intellectual hegemony of Marxists, who, Conrad suggests, demonstrated ‘an astonishing degree of consensus’ with the Occupation forces (2003: 90). John Whitney Hall also highlighted the consensus, observing that the understanding of the pre-modern Tokugawa epoch (1603-1868) which prevailed in Japanese academia in the 1960s was of it being a final ‘dark age’ defined by feudalism and despotism, before the arrival of Western influence which offered the hands of salvation (1974: 66, 71). Hall stresses that no critiques of this period were as scathing as those put forward by Marxist historians, adding that the positions held by Western scholars, however, did not differ markedly from those of Japanese Marxists. For him, Western intellectuals as much as Japanese Marxists helped exaggerate those aspects of Tokugawa society which were immaterial to many genuinely important issues of the time (1974: 68-69, mt). In this way, ‘Western scholars of Japanese study were equally constrained by preconception and cultural prejudice, and accordingly devalued many of the legacies which Tokugawa Japan bequeathed to modern Japan’ (1974: 68-69, mt).

The aspect of this consensus can be viewed with reference to Victor Koschmann’s analysis of ‘the debate on subjectivity in postwar Japan’ (1981-82). His analysis is noteworthy for its grasp of the basic propositions which inform postwar analyses of political life in Japan. For Japanese Marxists, these propositions have also affected the world of praxis, leveraging the production of new political life throughout the postwar period. Koschmann argues that, between 1946 and 1948, the period in which the most friendly relationship unfolded between the communist party and the Allied Occupation, it was the political kernel of *the individual* that held the attention of postwar, ‘progressive’ intellectuals, who aimed to lay down the new socio-political substratum of postwar Japan (Koschmann 1981: 610). What was expressed as *shutaisei* (主体性) – ‘a form of subjectivity, authenticity, or “selfhood”’, and ‘by extension... firm commitment and a stance of independence in relation to potentially deterministic, external forces’ (Koschmann 1981: 109-610) – was presumed by Japanese Marxists to be an essential political kernel (or spiritual force) which was to be awakened in the course of the development of history. For Japanese Marxists, *shutaisei* was not born prior to Japan’s

postwar period.<sup>34</sup> With a view to awakening the new consciousness among the postwar Japanese, Marxist progressives established a new school of literature, the *Shin Nihon Bungaku Kai* (New Japan Literary Society): out of which emerged two journals – *Shin-Nihon bungaku* (*Literature for a new Japan*) and *Kindai bungaku* (*Modern literature*)<sup>35</sup> – which were dedicated to advancing socialist values through literature and literary criticism. Many *kindai bungaku* authors depicted an ideal of postwar subjectivity as self-centred, privatised and egoistic individuality – a mode of subjectivity that is ‘a positive step toward universality’ (Koschmann 1981: 617). Some Marxist scholars like Umemoto Katsumi and Mashita Shinichi objected to the new emphasis on self-centred subjectivity, contending that the phenomenon of human action or praxis does not merely arise from individual expediency, but from the higher point where subjectivity seeks liberation of the self as well as of humankind (Koschmann 1981: 619). For Koschmann, a few years of *shutaisei* debate following the end of the Second World War ‘established in final form the conceptual framework and vocabulary for a mode of political criticism’ (1981: 609). To postwar Japanese society, the Japanese literary public promoted ‘explicit rejection of the recent Japanese past’ as ‘virtually a *condition* for participation in intellectual discourse’, stressing the importance of conceptual shifts from ‘particularism to universalism, chauvinism to cosmopolitanism, mystical obscurantism to scientific rationality’ (Koschmann 1981: 612, italics added).

Exemplary of this rejection of the past is the work of Maruyama Masao – one of the most renowned political philosophers in postwar Japan – who propounds that the contemporary age was ‘the most appropriate historical epoch for the Japanese to scientifically analyse and comprehend the intellectual structure of Tokugawa feudalism’ (1998: 7, mt). For him, overcoming the deep-seated feudalism which still permeates every corner of postwar Japanese society is not only an urgent task, assigned by the

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<sup>34</sup> It is important to note that the discussion of subjectivity in Japan actually began in the *pre-war* period. Intellectuals such as Nishida Kitarō, Natsume Sōseki, Watsuji Testurō, Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun brought about the first wave of the subjectivity (*shutaisei*) debate in the 1920s and 1930s (see Koschmann 1981: 614-615).

<sup>35</sup> Although the latter emerged in opposition to the viewpoint of the former, the extent of their difference may be in question because writers for both journals stressed the cultivation of private interest (life or egoism) – the interest of *animal laborans*. Where the viewpoints differed was in relation to the question of whether *shutaisei* took the form either of the collective (the claim of *Shin Nihon Bungaku* writers) or of the individual (the claim of *Kindai Bungaku* writers)

history of mankind, but also a crucial agenda for the development of civil society (1998: 7). In the immediate aftermath of the 1945 defeat, Maruyama's brisk call for Japanese society to tackle history imminently set the stage for the ascendance and dominance over the next sixty years of a new, postwar historiography. In his lectures on Japan's history of political thought (1948-1967), Maruyama overhauls the structure and spirit of Tokugawa feudalism. He argues that, although the formation of the social category of class, which signifies 'intrinsically modern political consciousness' (Maruyama 1998: 41, mt), is an inevitable outcome of feudalism, class did not emerge in Japan during the Tokugawa epoch. For him, class suggests a merchant stratum and bourgeois consciousness, one which would become the first potential force and agent to overturn the feudal system. If we seek the development of enlightened anti-feudal political thoughts in the history of Japan, Maruyama contends that our efforts would be in vain, because the Tokugawa feudal society was structured by a naked manifestation of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, in which the new powers of peasants and merchants (who would otherwise form a class) were thoroughly oppressed (1998: 23, 48). Unlike Europe, therefore, there was, for Maruyama, no growth of an anti-feudal, hence *political* consciousness in Japan (1998: 41). Joseph Strayer also illustrates the anti-political characteristics of Japan's past by offering another structural account. For him, Tokugawa Japan represents feudalism of extreme rigidity (1968: 11). Japanese feudalism was characterised by an unprecedented degree of hierarchical structure, consisting of a fragmented political authority, privately possessed public rights and military rule (1968: 3). In contrast to the law-states constituting late medieval and early modern Europe, Strayer explains that Japan's feudal society was devoid of law, constructing social relationships on the family model. Authority, the head of the family, 'may reward or punish his children as he pleases.... Nothing in the religion, the mores, the political theories... justifies resistance' (1968: 8).

For Maruyama, it was the growth of *buke seiji* (武家政治)(*buke* politics: the political governance of the country by samurai or warrior) – starting from the end of the Heian period in the twelfth century to the end of the Edo period in 1868 – that cemented the structure of feudalism in Japan. The perfection of feudalism which was achieved at the Tokugawa epoch was largely facilitated by economic factors. Maruyama argues that

the system was, above all, reinforced by the feudal mode of production: the organisation of agricultural production under the rulership; the small scale agricultural management and its widespread connection with small scale manufacturing; the chaining of peasants to the lands by force outside the factors of economy (and the ruler-ship of feudal lords over them); the creation of social status upon this foundation; and the incorporation of self-employed manufacturers and merchants into trade associations (Maruyama 1998: 24). While there was a rise in the level of agricultural production after the medieval age, the development of a commercial economy was hampered, and the enhancement of labour power frustrated, because Japanese agricultural methods were based on small-scale irrigation, and the sluggishness of output stemmed from a paddy-field agriculture managed by family serfdom (Maruyama 1998: 30). In particular, Maruyama stresses that the complex kin relationships hindered the diversification of class, deepening the parochial communal character of villages (1998: 30). Moreover, the heavy onus of annual tributes and the spread of parasitic usury throughout society contributed to the liquidation of the peasant class, increasing the number of peasants who were deprived of their lands (1998: 30). On the one hand, the Tokugawa *bakufu* (幕府)(shogunate/government) was successful in quieting conflicts and revolts as well as in restoring social order nationwide (Maruyama 1998: 28). One of the shogunate's major policies of *sankin kōtai* (参勤交代) – the political device introduced by the first shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, which let a fiefdom's lord spend half of his time, hence income, in Edo, and as a result the seat of power for the Tokugawa shogunate – had the effect of developing transport, augmenting the market and expanding commercial networks to a nationwide scale (1998: 28). On the other hand, Tokugawa authority ranked merchants at the bottom of the *shinōkōshō* (士農工商)(the Tokugawa social hierarchy in the order of samurai at the top, peasants, artisans and merchants) in spite of their remarkable social advancement. Maruyama argues that this paralysed the evolution of political consciousness among the merchant class and thus prevented them from being active initiators of change in the feudal order (1998: 33). Due to the buried opportunities for class consciousness to develop, a revolutionary apparatus which could challenge the absolutism of Tokugawa feudalism did not develop.

Presuming, in a fashion similar to Maruyama, that Japan's political development (or otherwise) is owed to its economic structure, Marxist intellectual Ōtsuka Hisao (1907-

1996) turned his attention to the economic history of the West in general and that of Great Britain in particular. In *Kokumin Keizai (National Economy)*(1967), Ōtsuka argues that for parliamentary democracy – the dimension of modern political structure – to be actualised in practice and to maintain its substance and spirit, the particular ways in which industry – the dimension of economy – is structured and the specific economic policies attached to those structures matter (1967: 166). In early eighteenth-century Britain, he explains, the country had ample labour reserves which were increasingly regulated by the social division of labour. A decisive factor for Britain to demonstrate greater advancement earlier than any other country, Ōtsuka contends, may have lain in the industrial structures of the country which formed a ‘national economy’, structures in which various sectors of the economy such as agriculture, manufacturing and commerce *shared* interests (based on division of labour and cooperation) (1967: 147). Across the Atlantic, colonial subjects in the US won political independence at relatively early stage by virtue of the establishment of a similar economic foundation. For Ōtsuka, although there were scattered regional markets in eighteenth century America, they gradually moved to constitute a single economic realm, establishing a national economy. In contrast to the cases of other colonies in which the mono-production sector showed marked growth, America developed an economy based on a self-sufficient, autonomous social division of labour as a whole. This enabled the US to claim national independence at a very early point in the foundation of the state (Ōtsuka 1967: 157). In a similar vein, Britain witnessed, by the early eighteenth century, the advent of a framework of a unified domestic market on a national scale, orchestrated by diverse economic sectors which were brought together by shared interests (1967: 155-156). They formed a class so that labourers could promote their interests – mercantilist protectionist policies – to parliament. With the birth of a national social apparatus, the labouring class became, Ōtsuka argues, a driving force of political movements (1967: 156). He concludes that parliamentary democracy took hold as a sequel of the development of certain industrial structures.

In ‘*Kōshin Shihon Shugi to sono Shoruikei*’ (‘Late Development Capitalism and its Types’)(1973), Ōtsuka equates the mode of economy in Japan, Germany, Russia, and the other late developing countries with that of the Netherlands (1973: 10). In contrast to

the strong national economies of the UK and the US, Ōtsuka argues that the industrial development of the Netherlands was hamstrung by the dual structure of its economy in the same period. Because the country served as the international terminal for trade which was under the direct control of the urban aristocracy, this distinctive industrial structure prevented – despite the existence of a large population of labourers (as was the case also for England) – the emergence of shared interests which may have connected labourers and urban aristocracy (Ōtsuka 1967: 146). Given the predicament, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the Netherlands could dispel the autocracy of the urban aristocracy which was maintained through the parliamentary system.

According to Sebastian Conrad, who examines Ōtsuka's work of modernisation and his premise of the modernisation gap between Europe and Japan, Ōtsuka's argument is 'a mode of historical explanation that explain[s] differences between regions of the world as differences in temporal progress along a universal path of development' (Conrad 1999: 73). Conrad argues that Ōtsuka saw Japanese modernisation as backward and incomplete, and that Ōtsuka presumed this status to lay in neither geographic nor ethnic differences, but in the absence of capitalist spirit in the sense of Max Weber (1999: 72). For Ōtsuka, Weber's notion of 'the spirit of capitalism' is different from Brentano's usage of the word 'capitalist spirit' – the 'aspiration of the greatest possible gain' (Koschmann 1998: 102). Ōtsuka explains that the spirit of capitalism is born not only from the motivation to pursue profit but also from 'a particular "Ethos" which embraces and gives direction to the profit-motivation' (Koschmann 1998: 103). For him, the Calvinist spirit that represents the spirit of capitalism encompasses an ethos of individual autonomy, freedom of consciousness and suppression of selfishness along with a capacity to be concerned with the profit for the greater whole such as society, the nation and the world. In this sense, nobody better than Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Ōtsuka argues, would embody Weber's concept of the spirit of capitalism, since the ethos of diligence, frugality and meticulousness as well as the ability of rational organisation characterise Crusoe. Ōtsuka posits a paucity of independent entrepreneurial ethos in the East in general and in Japan in particular as a decisive factor that makes these countries different from the UK, where there was a radical development of the agrarian productive forces, and identifies the underdevelopment of Crusoe-like spirit as the cause of absolutism and

fascism in Japan (Conrad 1999: 72). Given his analysis of Japan as an underdeveloped country underpinned by the absence of independent entrepreneurial ethos, Ōtsuka attempts to explore in Japan a *shutaisei* – a ‘modern human type’ (近代的人間類型) (Conrad 1999: 73) – symbolised by seventeenth-century English yeomanry (Koschmann 1998: 100). Conrad writes that ‘all histories were mapped on the same universal and linear time axis. Every society was allotted the potential for endogenous modernization along the universal path’ (1999: 73).

Like Ōtsuka, Maruyama illustrated the characteristics of an ideal ‘modern man’ – a human who is independent and self-sufficient, who retains decision-making competence as the arbiter of competing demands who responds to universal, transcendental values, who has a rational and logical mind, and who always puts the interests of the individual before the interests of society (Koschmann 1981: 625-626). Through the presentation of ideal human types, both Ōtsuka and Maruyama sought an internal force that would form political agency and which could lift the feudalism that still lingered in postwar Japan, with a view to having the country catch up with the advanced Europe. Moreover, Japanese Marxists presupposed that the modern human type was to emerge naturally in Japan for history is linear and teleological. In short, progressive intellectuals like Maruyama presumed that the Tokugawa epoch of pre-modern Japan was defined by an unprecedented degree of hierarchical structure. *Class* – the sole driver of history which would lead Japan to the stage of modernity – was seen to be deficient, owing to the Tokugawa shogunate’s severe oppression of the rise of the anti-feudal political class: merchants and peasants. By the same token, Ōtsuka contended that the form of political development which underlies the modern state is inseparable from a particular way in which industries are structured. Due to a lack of specific industrial structures found in advanced economies such as Britain and America, Japan’s political development, in his view, was inevitably curtailed during the pre-modern period. Japanese Marxists found in the personalities and subjectivities seen in Europe – represented by the Calvinist spirit – a prototype of modern subjectivity which they thought needed awakening in postwar Japan for its political development. Overall, the discussions of progressives in this early postwar period laid down a paradigm for the Japanese to understand the underdeveloped condition of their society and thus a way to

develop their socio-political culture. This paradigm indicated at the same time that an approach that parted company with the past was a precondition for engaging with the political public space. That is, what is dismissed as a part of public discourse is an attitude to seek the potential of political life in pre-1945 Japanese society on the basis of a historiography that is free from Marxist interpretation.

Seen from an Arendtian perspective, however, Japanese Marxists' celebration of the modern age and their premise of developmental historiography, wherein the particular social, economic and political conditions of a country are explained in terms of definite historical stages, suggest a political epistemology which is hostile towards the authentic condition of the public realm. In this regard, the examination of Arendt's historiography and her work on the political public space would contribute at the level both of discussion and of practice to the project to restore a capacity in Japanese citizens to judge, determine and construct the present and the future of their own public realm. Moreover, turning to Arendt's political thought as a basis of our investigation of political life across modern Japan may help identify a bypass from the impasse of modernity which today takes a wide range of forms, including a catastrophic degradation of global environment, that threaten the public realms throughout the world (see Conclusion).

### *The Bakumatsu Climax and the Japanese Question*

Despite the volume of work endeavouring to examine the period of *bakumatsu* Japan – the final epoch of Tokugawa *bakufu* from the early 1850s to 1868: the Meiji Restoration – with the aim of clarifying and comprehending the socio-political conditions of pre-modern Japan, little attention has been paid to the way in which the rise of the political realm – namely, action or movement: freedom – was driven by a concern for the need to seek and restore legitimacy in Japan's public space, in view of the crisis of authority: in other words, by the question of how best their public realm could recover stability, a question which eventuated in the enactment of a new polity in Meiji Japan. The *bakumatsu* movements were a symbolic, political event which demonstrated Japan's political public space, given the extent to which such collective actions engaged with what Arendt would describe as 'that element' which endows 'political structures with durability, continuity and permanence' (1993: 127; see Chapters 1 and 2), put differently,



with the fount of historical ‘guideposts’ (Arendt 1993: 14) which facilitate the people’s imagination of the borders of Japan’s public realm. The Japanese question concerns these guideposts as well as the way in which these guideposts emerge. It is when political movements manifest in such a way as to engage with the question of that which proposes, negotiates and enacts the borders of a public space that, on Arendt’s account, authentic politics – or politics in its original sense – takes hold (see Chapter 1). In the case of Japan, a source that enacts the enduring measures of tradition and authority, and which makes the nation *sui generis*, is *kokutai* (国体): Japan’s body politic predicated on the emperor – the primary subject of the Japanese question. To the extent that it recalls *kokutai*, this question explores the foundation to Japan’s body politic which pertains to the critical interrelation between political action (freedom), the emperor and the enduring measures that manifest in practice in the form, for example, of judgment, ‘common-sense’ interweaving ‘communicability’ (see Chapter 4), and what this chapter demonstrates to have been the rise of democratic processes at the end of the Tokugawa period. Under this *kokutai*, it was possible to see a ‘power’ that reached such an extent that it formed a force to unite a country in battle against the threats arising from within and outside.

The significance of what I thus call the Japanese question can be seen symbolically in the *bakumatsu* period at which time key political agents – such as *bakufu* officials, court officials, the emperor and samurai – confronted the arrival, threats and demands of the Western nations. The public-sustaining role of the Japanese question in this period can be seen to have played a key role in mobilising the people, unifying the nation, and providing a compass to navigate through the crises resulting from the paradoxes of the *bakuhan* system and foreign threats. Moreover, in contrast to the decades since 1945 in which the memory of a lost war has disjoined many Japanese from the Japanese question, the *bakumatsu* climax marks a distinguished moment in Japanese history, having begun with this question and ended with the survival of this concern. Indeed, in no other epoch did the Japanese question seem to preoccupy the minds of the people at every stratum.

The distinction of the *bakumatsu* period lies in the fact that, although the dynamic political movements of the time were propelled by the divergent approaches of multiple parties, concerns as to the survival of the *kokutai* were shared by all parties. To that

extent, it is possible to argue that praxes and processes that may justifiably be described as *democratic* – open participation in issues of common concerns; decision-making based on public deliberation – were seen in the *bakumatsu* movements and importantly, were born of the Japanese question, rather than being introduced as a new method and legitimised in the transformation of the polity after 1868. In addition, it was by virtue of a shared concern over the Japanese question that multiple parties were able to minimise confrontation over their divergent approaches and to reach mutual agreements and compromises, prioritising the task of national unification in order to avert foreign interventions. More than simply a symbol of unification, therefore, the Japanese question suggests a far more complex and dynamic significance which contemporary Japan's public realm would need to reassess, particularly, given its distance from this question, which has furthered over the past six decades.

David Earl's investigation of Yoshida Shoin's thought is instructive in this regard. Yoshida (1830-1859) was a samurai of a lower class in the Tokugawa era, born in Matsumoto in the Chōshū *han* (domain or fief). One of the preeminent intellectuals of his age, Yoshida was among the first to anticipate the forthcoming crises in Japan and to develop a philosophy of the *kokutai* that he felt was going to be threatened by the coming of foreign powers. Yoshida's warning as to the impending crises which Japan would face was not without the basis, having been preceded by repeated Russian probing from the north; the sporadic appearance of American whalers since the end of the eighteenth century; the sighting in Nagasaki in 1808 of a British ship in pursuit of a Dutch vessel; and the landing of a cohort of English sailors on the Mito coast in 1824 (Auslin 2006: 17-18; Earl 1964: 88). Yoshida's early lectures on *Bukkyo Zensho* (仏教全書)(the treatise of Buddhism) defined *kokutai* 'in the sense of honour or the avoidance of disgrace', explaining that Japan's *kokutai* was a sacred inheritance from the ancestors, which must not be conceded to barbarians (Earl 1964: 162).

Yoshida kept working on the development of the notion of *kokutai* and in 1853, appropriated a different signification, describing *kokutai* as 'power, influence or authority in action' (Earl 1964: 163). Three years later, his thought on *kokutai* reached maturation, addressing a distinction between the visible expression of *kokutai* and a more fundamental ground to that expression. Yoshida viewed national customs as phenomena

on one side, whereas he proposed, on the other, *kokutai* as fundamental and unchanging ideals that are drawn from the national history (Earl 1964: 163). For Yoshida, *kokutai* is something that possesses a distinct character for each country. ‘Kokutai, as it is the essence of one country, may be called “unique”... Something that excels all other nations, as *kun-shin no gi* (君臣の義) – the virtue tying the relationship between the lord and his people – toward the Imperial Court, is the unique characteristic of one country...’ (Yoshida cited in Earl 1964: 164).<sup>36</sup> While drawing a distinction between national customs and *kokutai*, Yoshida stressed the crucial interconnection between them, pointing out that the appearance of the former relied on the operation of the latter.

What Yoshida identifies here is a critical relationship between the emperor-predicated polity and the enduring features of a shared world which ordinary Japanese live with in their everyday lives as their ethical guidance. In this regard, the Japanese question, as it is raised initially in Yoshida’s reflections, concerns not just the existence of the emperor and the continuity of his lineage but, most critically, the interconnection of his *Sein* with *Sollen* (to use Mishima’s framework; see Chapter 2), wherein the figure of the emperor is no longer envisaged in the minds of the people in a clear form but rather, becomes opaque, abstract and normative. In a nutshell, the Japanese question concerns the *foundation to a body politic* that is organised around the presence of the emperor as a sacred figure; the belief of the people in that figure as a wellspring of norms; and the practice of rituals, customs and tradition through which the people form a connection with the truths ratified by the history of this polity. The Japanese question here discusses a conception of *kokutai* as that which is more than simply the issue of the sovereignty and authority of the emperor. Thus, Inoue Kowashi, for example – a preeminent contributor to the Meiji Constitution (promulgated in 1889) – sought to account for *kokutai* as the totality of Japan’s polity by envisaging it as ‘the synthesis of existential structures such as the notion of monarch, the ethics of people, law, political system, as well as aesthetic culture, customs, art and religion’ (Ohara 1982: 29, mt).

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<sup>36</sup> While the notion that Japan’s *kokutai* excels all other nations is the notion of Yoshida and, to a degree, of the time, this quotation is given in order to illustrate the perspective that *kokutai* was held as particular, and that the principle of *kokutai* rested on *kun-shin no gi* (君臣の義). If the principle of republic is virtue, and that of monarchy is honour (see Arendt 2005: 65), it should be said that the principle of Japan’s *kokutai* – albeit a form of monarchy – lies in *kun-shin no gi*.

Further to these characteristics of the Japanese question, the scholarship produced by the Mito school fleshes out the notion of the foundation to Japan's body politic.<sup>37</sup> Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, the intellectual efforts of Mito scholars such as Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628-1701) – the grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu (the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate) – and Asaka Tampaku (1656-1738) to compile a huge Japanese history (大日本史: *dainihonshi*) reached their zenith a century later in the rapid spread of neo-Mito narratives among the imperial loyalists. From this history, the Mito school valorised a story of a watershed in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, in which Emperor Go-Daigo assumed political rule. This story speaks of samurai Kusunoki Masashige's fidelity to Go-Daigo, who differed from other emperors of Japan – most of whom were hardly politically assertive – owing to his attempt, in the fourteenth century, to run the state (Shillony 2008: 137). His initiative caused more than half a century schism in the imperial family (1336-1392), the schism which divided the Court into the Southern and the Northern Courts. Go-Daigo's foundation of the former Court was in fact legitimate by virtue of his possession of the 'Three Sacred Treasures of Japan' (三種の神器: *sanshu no jingi*) which attest to the legitimacy of the imperial throne (Shillony 2008: 137; Tokoro 2012: 51). The Mito school highlighted and emphasised Kusunoki's loyalty to Go-Daigo, while the battle of the imperial family over the legitimacy of the throne ended with the triumph of the Northern Court for which the then shogun Ashikaga Takauji pledged his support (Earl 1964: 83; Shillony 2006: 137). Kusunoki was defeated by Ashikaga.

Around a century after the completion of a huge Japanese history, Fujita Tōko (1806-1855) who learned the thought of the Mito school produced a verse – titled *Seiki no Uta* (正気の歌) – which became very popular at the time (Izawa 2012: 293-298). A theme of the Mito school remained the same as that which was seen in the story of Kusunoki's loyalty to Go-Daigo, with Tōko's verse illustrating the key occasions in the Japanese history, in which an authentic energy was unveiled (Izawa 2012: 293-298). Tōko's verse highlighted the names of these loyalists who were devoted to the throne. This verse is a Japanese version of the Chinese verse which illustrates the story of Buntenshō, the loyalist in the Song dynasty. The Chinese verse speaks of the existence of

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<sup>37</sup> The Mito school originated in Mito han. The Mito school takes its base in Confucianism and Shinto.

right or authentic energy in the cosmos: it explains how the right energy influences a human society; this authentic energy reveals its power, especially, when a society falls into chaos (e.g. when a dynasty is threatened by foreign powers or when a society is endangered by the rise of pirates/terrorists). In recognising the period of *bakumatsu* as the era of difficulty, Tōko's verse anticipated and encouraged the rise of authentic energy, that is, the emergence of loyalists who would commit to the emperor and devote themselves to retrieve the sacred land from the crises. At the *bakumatsu* period, Tōko's verse widely spread among samurai from the upper class to the lower class.

Importantly, in the era of Mitsukuni, the Mito scholars' recollection of Kusunoki's glory was not intended to oppose the Tokugawa shogunate, but rather sought to cultivate loyalty and patriotism among the wider population. Despite the absence of any factious intent, the Mito school accentuated the sovereignty of the emperor around which Japan's body politic centres, and thus highlighted the fact that the shogun was only his loyal minister (Earl 1964: 86). Notable, moreover, in this early Mito thought is, on the one hand, a clear comprehension of the role of the monarch as an inviolable performer of rituals – a sacerdotal authority – combined, on the other hand, with a visibly equivocal view as to the role of emperor in affairs of the state (Webb 1965: 175).<sup>38</sup> What the Mito school made unequivocal was *kokutai*'s institutional structure as configured by two heads: one – the court – standing as the sovereign of the body politic, albeit its ruling in question; and the other – the shogunate – seeing to the task of governing.

The neo-Mito thought developed by intellectuals such as Fujita Yūkoku (1774-1826), Aizawa Seishisai (1781-1863) and Yūkoku's son, Fujita Tōko (1806-1855) surged to the fore as a series of mounting crises led up to the mid-nineteenth century, including the appearance of increasing numbers of foreign ships along the coasts of Japan, and the fall of many *han* into economic crisis illustrating the paradoxes of the *bakuhan* system (Mikami 1979; Earl 1964: 86). Shortly before the crises headed to a national climax, Fujita Yūkoku, one of the leading scholars of the neo-Mito school and a retainer of the Mito *han*, reframed, in view of these challenges, the idea of *kokutai*:

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<sup>38</sup> Webb (1965: 175) writes that, in the Mito narratives, 'there is no hint that the throne might play an active role in the state, nor is it made clear what attitude one should accord to the personal views of any particular emperor'.

If the shogunate reveres the imperial house, all the feudal lords will respect the shogunate. If the feudal lords respect the shogunate, the ministers and officials will honour the feudal lords. In this way high and low will give support to each other, and the entire country will be in accord. (Yūkoku cited in Webb 1965: 177)

Fujita's description of *kokutai* was accompanied by the reminder that the emperor was to be concerned with the problems and welfare of his people, while Fujita urged the people to prepare national defence (Earl 1964: 87). Both Fujita Yūkoku and Aizawa Seishisai advocated the principle captured by the slogan '*sonnō jōi*' (尊皇攘夷) – worship the emperor and expel barbarians/foreigners – the ultimate end of which, they explained, was 'the preservation of *kokutai* both spiritually and materially' (Earl 1964: 91). In this view, Fujita's premise of *kokutai* drew a picture that is different from the polemics of postwar Japanese historiography, which posits the polity of Japan as authoritarian in structure and in governance, and accordingly presupposes Japan's public space to be formed by the politics of hierarchy. By contrast, the picture Fujita presented in respect of *kokutai* seems to suggest that Japan's body politic cannot be defined by the hierarchical notion of ruling and being ruled, but is rather bound by the metaphysical commitment between the spirit of deference (from below) and the concerns of common wealth (from above). In other words, Fujita's characterisation of *kokutai* suggests that Japan's public space was formed by a '*consensual hierarchy*'.<sup>39</sup> Akita and Hirose support this proposition, writing that the monarchy of Japan was 'never intended to be "absolutistic". A prominent feature of Japan's political culture is the suspicion held against overwhelming power in any part of the political system' (1994: 418). Moreover, this concept of *kokutai* as characterised by the mutual concerns of the public can be seen to have allowed for the coexistence of multiple autonomous authorities, represented by the *bakuhau* system (including the shogunate, *han/daimyo*, the emperor, the court officials, samurai, merchants and

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<sup>39</sup>I borrow this phrasing from Moyn (2008: 87, italics added), who uses it when he analyses the problem of secularisation in modern politics by comparing Arendt's political theology with Carl Schmitt's. While Moyn uses the term to describe, with reference to Arendt's reading of John Locke, the relationship between private right holder and public sovereign, I borrow this phrasing for my context in order to highlight the characteristics of hierarchy in the Tokugawa period in Japan, that is, a type of hierarchy that cannot be entirely defined by the notion of the ruler and the ruled but which encapsulates the relationship of the master and his subjects. This relationship is formed by mutual consent over the role that each party undertakes with a view to the protection of the public.

peasants). Put differently, it was due to *kokutai* that the branches or sub-forms of authorities and autonomies could exist and function in harmony, while being incorporated into the abstract orbit of a common body politic, as I shall demonstrate in the following section.

#### Multi-tiered Decision Making, and the Japanese Question as a Point of Convergence and Consensus

The preceding review of the intellectual thought of Yoshida Shoin and the Mito School unpacks the concept of the Japanese question and challenges the major premises and tenets of postwar Japanese historiography. This challenge is also attempted by Sakata and Hall in their discussion of the political dynamics of *bakumatsu* Japan ('The Motivation of Political Leadership in the Meiji Restoration'). According to Sakata and Hall, a tendency towards excessive generalisation prevails in mainstream historians' work on the history of Japan, especially in respect of concepts and causes (1956: 32). They argue that critical historiography needs to attend to aspects such as the existence of sidelined actors whose contribution, for instance, to a given historical event is indispensable even if that event ends in a radically changed socio-political environment with the triumph of other actors. Attention also needs to be given to the particular structures historians describe in order, for example, to locate specific social environment, including institutions and organisations, as well as to 'the stresses and strains which subject the structure to its constant modification' (1956: 35). For instance, where Strayer (1868) sees only rigid authoritarianism in Japanese feudal society, it is possible to find evidence that the political structure and culture of Tokugawa Japan resisted the application of the customary concept of hierarchy in general. While, as Strayer contends, Tokugawa Japan lacked an *egalitarian* principle in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, Tokugawa Japan was characterised by many unregimented aspects of *kokutai* in which the *bakuhan* system developed.<sup>40</sup> As such, the system was more complex in its structure than can be accounted for by the notion of hierarchy, and thus left many spaces for the practice of negotiation. The fact is that political decision-making was hardly monopolised

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<sup>40</sup> See Totman (1980: 5) who also writes that domestically, the elements of the broader societal ideal that disintegrated after 1853 'included the order's fountainhead in a benign imperial legacy and its institutional expression in the *bakuhan taisei*'.

either at Edo, the seat of the shogunate, or at Kyoto, the site of the imperial court. In addition, the space of political participation was, to a considerable degree, widening at the end of the Tokugawa age. Seen from the perspective of the dynamics of Tokugawa structures and strains, Japan's *kokutai* can be understood as more integral, malleable and responsive during the heightened crises of the *bakumatsu* period, promising the possibility of a more vibrant political life than the one we find in Japan today.

The political structure of Tokugawa Japan was made up primarily of an equilibrium between three distinct political institutions: the imperial court (Kyoto), the shogunate (Edo) and the *daimyo* (大名), or lords of the *han* (藩) (Sakata & Hall 1956: 36). Collectively, these institutions went under the name of the *bakuhan* system. But the operation of this political structure was further complicated by the existence of other powerful sub-branches (Kitchell 1995: 201): *gokamon* (御家門)(collateral descendants of the first shogun Ieyasu and his kin; e.g. the Echizen Matsudaira and the Aizu Matsudaira families), *fudai* lords (譜代大名)(hereditary vassals whose fidelity to the shogunate was indubitable, governing around 50 *han*) and *tozama daimyo* (外様大名)(those who had been former opponents of Ieyasu, and under whom approximately 200 *han* were governed). In truth, the imperial court of Kyoto was not entirely ruled by the absolute will of the emperor, in that the voices of the court officials surrounding the latter had some influence on the views of the emperor. Neither was the power of the shogun of Edo as unqualified as is often assumed, since his representation and consultation largely counted on *gosanke* (御三家)(the three families that had the strongest tie with the main line of the Tokugawa shoguns and that were secondary in position only to the latter) and *fudai* lords. A number of influential court officials – *kuge* (公家) – surrounded the emperor, whose voices the emperor could not ignore and who often, rather, controlled the voice of the emperor: thus, the role of *kanpaku* (関白), the chief adviser to the emperor during the Tokugawa era, was to convey the will of the *bakufu* and therefore, literally, to monitor the emperor internally.

A closer review reveals that the Japanese question smouldered throughout the menacing crises of the *bakumatsu* period, which were both endogenous as well as exogenous in nature. The Japanese question mediated the crises and served the people as a compass providing direction on how to overcome them. Early manifestation of this



question in the face of the visibly growing crises can be seen in the development of the *kōbugattai* (the court and the shogunate [and *han*] coalition) paradigm (公武合体論). Until the early nineteenth century, the *bakuhan* system prided itself on its stability. The paradigm which surged shortly after the 1860 *Sakuradamon-gai no Hen* (桜田門外の變)(the Sakuradamon Incident), in which Ii Naosuke – the high-ranking *bakufu* official who had signed the Harris treaty with America – was assassinated by a group of Mito samurai, explains the background in which the discrepancies of the *bakuhan* system began to overshadow its proclaimed stability. Mikami Kazuo's study of the *kōbugattai theory* (1979) is worth noting in this respect, and his study supports Sakata and Hall's argument that the exogenous problem of foreign (military) threats could no longer be separated from the endogenous problem of the economy (1956: 37). Although the *kōbugattai* paradigm which emerged amid the *bakumatsu* climax prefigured the *tōbaku* movement (倒幕運動)(a political movement to overturn the Tokugawa shogunate) with its call for the unification of the country, the goal of the *kōbugattai* paradigm was limited to unification, whereas the later movement extended its objective to the point of liquidating the *bakuhan* system. That is, the *kōbugattai* movement, when it emerged, still pursued ways to resuscitate the crisis-ridden *bakuhan* system by resolving the paradoxes causing the conflicts both between the shogunate and the court, and between the shogunate and the *han* (Mikami 1979: 6).<sup>41</sup>

Since Japan had been on the receiving end of military threats from foreign countries since 1853, Mikami writes that the ultimate concerns of leading *han*, including the Echizen *han*, rested on how to prevent the acceleration of a civil war which they thought would divide the country and invite semi-colonisation by foreign powers (1979: 7).<sup>42</sup> Mikami, in pointing out the indisputable role of the Satsuma *han* in leading the

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<sup>41</sup> See also Toyama (2007: 420), who writes that the established order was increasingly threatened by 'the impoverishment of finances, the insecurity of control over the peasantry, the collapse of morale among the samurai class' – 'serious contradictions in the system of feudal rule'.

<sup>42</sup> See Toyama (2007: 424): In 1864, when the Four-power fleet made up of Britain, America, France and Holland bombarded Chōshū, there was a preceding agreement among them, the consensus being that 'no cession of territory or exclusive rights were to be demanded'. Foreign powers did not militarily advance further, keeping to the matter of foreign trade. The leading power, Great Britain, had knowledge of foreign affairs based on its experience in China and India and recognised that the chief aim of market expansion can not necessarily be achieved through the means of military force. Britain knew that market expansion could instead be achieved by one of the internal parties in conflict – the 'enlightened party' – removing the feudal/dominant system/regime 'by themselves'.

*kōbugattai* approach, also pays great attention to the Echizen *han* as one of the conspicuous drivers of the *kōbugattai* movement, because of the latter's sheer struggle over the financial deficit. Mikami argues that it was partly by virtue of the family of *gokamon* that Echizen fell into profound financial woes more than any other *han*, having to confront the paradoxes of the *bakuhan* system (Mikami 1979: 8, 39). Two such paradoxes were termed *sankin kōtai* and *daimyo jyoyaku* (Mikami 1979: 17). Through the political device of *sankin kōtai*, the first shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, aimed to weaken the ties between the *daimyo* and his territory by requiring the lord of each *han* spend half of his time in Edo and hence much of his income (Strayer 1968: 7).

Mikami's case study, which examines the financial state of the Echizen *han* in the beginning of the nineteenth century, evidences the severe agony of the domain (1979: 19). In contrast to the *han*'s 1802 revenue of 32,703 *ryō* (兩), expenditure in the same year amounted to 46,774 *ryō* (Mikami 1979: 18-19).<sup>43</sup> It is noteworthy to reveal that the *han*'s expenditure on Edo reached 60 percent of the domain's outgoings; and this Edo expenditure amounted to 91 percent of the *han*'s total revenue. The excessive expenses for *sankin kōtai* drained the Echizen economy, leaving the *han* no choice but to become a frequent borrower of money from highly successful merchants in areas like Osaka and Kyoto, and to impose provisional taxes on the residents of the domain, an imposition which played a part in causing the 1744 and 1748 uprisings, or *ikki* (Mikami 1979: 20, 24). Accordingly, when the *bakufu* ordered strengthening of the coastal defences in the face of growing sightings of foreign ships along the Echizen coasts from the end of the 1840s, there was a considerable financial barrier to the costly production of gunpowder and cannons (1979: 82-88). This was despite the *han*'s desire and readiness to reform its military system; for instance, the use of spear arms was banned, and Western artilleries became the *han*'s chief military instruments. The *bakuhan* reform proposal of Tokugawa Nariaki in Mito demonstrated that the recovery of the *han* economy was a priority for Japan, concerning the reinforcement of its military and defence. Despite the fact that the reform proposals were submitted, one after another, from the Mito *han*, the Echizen *han*

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<sup>43</sup> Although the conversion of the value of currency in the Tokugawa period to the current value is difficult because the rate of conversion is different, it is suggested that *koban* (an oval gold) 1 *ryō* was equivalent to 100,000 yen at the beginning of the Tokugawa era, and its value declined to 3000-4000 yen at the *bakumatsu* period (Ryō: <http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/兩> – accessed 12 Aug 2013).

and the Satsuma *han*, the senior council – the ‘crucial policy-making organ of the shogunate’ – neither heeded the *daimyo*’s advice nor modified the existing restrictions and burdens (Sakata & Hall 1956: 38). A series of rescue measures adopted by many domains had little success, while Satsuma and Chōshū restored the power of their *han* due to the success of their financial trials, a success which later led them to the leadership in the *tōbaku* movement (Sakata & Hall 1956: 38-39).

Following Commodore Perry’s arrival with coal powered steam ships in 1853, and thereafter a series of landings by foreign ships and squadrons – including from Britain, France, Russia and Holland – many *bakufu* officials were convinced that rejection of Western demands for trade ‘would invite war and defeat while accommodation would buy time in which to prepare a defense of the established order’ (Totman 1980: 8). The country was, indisputably, ‘forcibly opened’ to the Western world (Sakata & Hall 1956: 31; see also Shillony 2006: 137).<sup>44</sup> The *sonnō jōi* (or *jōi*) movement *initially* upheld a policy of *sakoku* (鎖国)(seclusion of the country) in opposition to *kaikoku* (開国)(opening of the country).<sup>45</sup> Although the *jōi* movement seemed to be opposed to the *bakufu* consensus which braced up *kaikoku*, it is crucial to acknowledge that, as Totman argues, both creeds ‘acted from the same motives and towards the same objective. They differed, in fact, not about the end but about the means of attaining it’ (1980: 2). While Totman fails to elaborate on what underlay the commonness of these motives,<sup>46</sup> it is possible to suggest at this point that it was the latent Japanese question that channeled the movements of each party while producing ‘much diversity’ (Totman 1980: 2) in the means of attaining the end. This end was, precisely, the preservation of *kokutai*, which the neo-Mito scholars Fujita and Aizawa pointed out.

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<sup>44</sup> At this point, for foreign powers to conquer and colonise Japan was not a difficult matter; the shogunate had no faith in the military preparedness of its own country, nor knowledge of the level of military power which foreign nations already possessed (Toyama 2007: 421). Moreover, the shogunate’s presumption that Japan’s refusal of *kaikoku* – opening the country – would invite war and defeat had a firm foundation. Around a decade before Perry’s arrival, China refused Britain’s coercive demands for trade, and China’s importation of narcotics, which led not only to the Opium War between 1839 and 1841 but also to China’s loss, resulting in Britain’s colonisation of China (Auslin 2004: 19).

<sup>45</sup> As Earl points out, it is important to bear in mind that *sakoku* – taking a firm stance against foreigners while confining trade to the existing foreign contacts – ‘was not a traditional imperial policy’, that is, not the policy of *kokutai*: *sakoku* was a policy of the *Tokugawa shogunate*, given that Japan had had broader trade relationships with other countries in the pre-Tokugawa era (1964: 90).

<sup>46</sup> See Totman – ‘The *deep and widespread* concern about the *Kinai* has not been properly investigated’ (1980: 12, italics added).

Fujita Satoru's work *Bakumatsu no Tennō (The Emperor of the Bakumatsu)* (1994) and Sasaki Suguru's book *Bakumatsu no Tennō and Meiji no Tennō (The Emperor of the Bakumatsu period and the Meiji period)* (2005) substantiate this premise that the thread of the Japanese question ran through the multiple approaches and movements emerged at the *bakumatsu* climax. Although both works recognise the key frictions between the *bakufu* and the court (particularly, given that Emperor Kōmei was determined to enter into the political stage), the pivotal contribution of their work is their illumination of the very nature of Japan's *kokutai* at the *bakumatsu* period. Both works highlight that the distinct political authorities of the time did not utterly collide each other; rather, the important fact was that each party sought mutual adjustment, rapport and facilitation, as though each party would lose its *raison d'être*, legitimacy and authority without the existence of the other party.

Sasaki's work begins by describing Kōmei's outing to the shrines, *Kamowake Ikazuchi* and *Kamo Omioya* in Kyoto in 1863, since an outing of the emperor in the Tokugawa era was a great rarity and held considerable political significance, given that the personal freedom of the emperor and the court had been subject, for so long, to the 'unprecedented restrictions' of the Tokugawa shogunate (2005: 18; see also Webb 1965: 172). In the sixteenth century, shogun Oda Nobunaga constructed a balanced relationship with Emperor Ogimachi under mutual respect and gains. In this relationship, the emperor had no trouble going out and thus would disclose his figure to the eyes of the ordinary people. By contrast, Tokugawa Ieyasu, while guaranteeing the material splendour of the imperial institution, came to regulate the conduct of the court through the *kuge shohatto* (公家諸法度) (the 1615 laws). Under these laws, the emperor's freedom to walk out of the premises of the court was banned (Webb 1965: 171, 175). The prohibition against the emperor's contact with his people was thus part of the shogun Ieyasu's machinations with a view to elevating his own authority over that of the court. When Kōmei visited the shrines therefore, it suggested something more than oddity, but something political: a changing relationship between the *bakufu* and the court (Sasaki 2005: 20). It was after 237 years that the public witnessed the emperor's physical appearance.

The political public space is, as Arendt argues, fraught with 'events' that are contingent and unpredictable. Japan's public realm in the period of *bakumatsu* climax

was no exception in this regard. The *bakufu*'s appointment of liberal<sup>47</sup> Abe Masahiro in 1843 as the head of senior council (老中: *rōjū*) set off unprecedented new processes and ways of decision and policy making, through which the shogunate sought consultation even with the capable, non-*fudai daimyos* – Shimazu of Satsuma, Mōri of Chōshū, Yamanouchi of Tosa and Matsudaira of Echizen, and it lifted some of the useless financial burdens from the *han* (Sakata & Hall 1956: 40).<sup>48</sup> In 1858, American diplomat Townsend Harris pressed for commercial treaties with Japan, during which negotiation he informed the Edo shogunate of the fact that the battleships of Britain and France were also heading to Japan for such treaties. Despite Kōmei's prior articulation to the *bakufu* of his disagreement with *kaikoku*, Abe's successor, Hotta Masayoshi signed – without the emperor's approval – the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the US in June 1858 (Sasaki 2005: 37-43). The *bakufu*'s signing was unavoidable, given that war could not have been avoided had Japan not agreed to the demands of foreign countries, and that Japan would have faced catastrophic loss in such an event, owing to the significant disparity in level of armament between Japan and the foreign powers. The decision to sign was a realistic, objective response for the *bakufu*, yet Kōmei – despite steadfastly maintaining that he had delegated the task of governance to the shogunate – insisted on his commitment to *sakoku*,<sup>49</sup> in recognition that the shogunate's authority was ultimately

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<sup>47</sup> Here the term is not related to the Occidental theory of liberalism. It means an approach of great flexibility, combined by a remarkable degree of prescience. For Sakata and Hall, it was ironically, Abe's liberal action that opened the way for the active participation of the non-*fudai daimyo* in national affairs and led to the demise of the *bakuhan* system (1956: 40).

<sup>48</sup> See also Honjo's *Economic Theory and History of Japan in the Tokugawa Period* (1965): In Part II, Chapter VI, he explores the views of various *han* on the opening of the country. It is interesting to note that, according to Honjo, *han* throughout Japan held at least five different viewpoints on the opening of the country.

<sup>49</sup> See Fujita (1994: 221-223): On 21 Feb 1863, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (or Keiki) – the prepared successor to the 14<sup>th</sup> shogun Tokugawa Iemochi – and Echizen *daimyo* Matsudaira Yoshinaga met Nakagawanomiya (中川宮)(the emperor's relative) regarding the concern of political disarray that the decrees were issued now both from the *bakufu* and the court. Via Nakagawanomiya, Tokugawa Yoshinobu and Matsudaira Yoshinaga requested the emperor to choose and confirm – with a view to re-defining the addresser of order – whether political decision-making authority rested on the shogunate or the shogunate needed to return political authority to the monarch. The letter of response from the court merely indicated that the political authority of the shogunate remained in (that is, was limited to) his role to expel foreigners. Meanwhile, the shogun Tokugawa Iemochi received the court's order which not only halted the return of Iemochi to Edo (he had been then in Kyoto) but also asked him to decide on an explicit date to carry out *jōi*, that is, to rescind the signed treaties and to battle against foreign powers now surrounding Japan. In April, the *bakufu* replied to the court with the proclamation of *jōi* date as 10 May 1863, while, importantly, in this moment the *bakufu* was still continuing its dealings with foreign nations, putting aside the domestic friction with the

consigned by the emperor and that its role was thus limited to *seii taishogun* (征夷大將軍) – the legitimate authority of shogun to rest only on his role in eradicating foreigners (Sasaki 2005: 44-45; Fujita 1994: 222).<sup>50</sup>

From 1860 onwards, moves to narrow the rift between Emperor Kōmei and the shogunate gathered pace.<sup>51</sup> Both parties made, under the *kōbugattai* approach, a clandestine agreement to adopt the policy of *kaikoku*, but only until Japan could prepare enough armaments to resist foreign pressures, and thereby to annul the treaties (Fujita 1994: 205; Sasaki 2005: 49). In the meantime, the *sonnō jōi* movements propelled by samurai and *kuge* were getting so radicalised and unrestrained that the voice of the emperor was no longer heeded nor was the deliberative council of the court functioning (Fujita 1994: 216). Prior to this chaotic state, the court had established a deliberative council on national affairs, following an official call for the submission of opinions and proposals from the ordinary people, as well as appointing individuals with the right expertise and flair for dealing with the crises to official positions (Fujita 1994: 220). These efforts were driven by the court's fear that a series of terrorist acts would stem from a lack of space for discussion and debate at the popular level.

By early 1863, the political space of the court was dominated not only by *jōi kuge* but also by *jōi samurai*,<sup>52</sup> despite the court's establishment of the council having aimed to suppress the overriding *sonnō jōi* voices. Many *jōi samurai* called themselves *sōmō no shishi* (草莽の志士) – self-appointed political agents who devoted their lives to national affairs on the basis of loyalty to *kokutai*. The abbreviated term, *shishi*, can be juxtaposed with the term *rōnin* (浪人: adrift, 'unattached man' (Sakata & Hall 1956: 44), a term which does not necessarily imply a commitment to the public good, and often signals a samurai who had abandoned his *han* and become free man, *rōnin*, of whom there were

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court. Emperor Kōmei pronounced his adamant stance, stating that 'even if this imperial land were burned to the ground, I absolutely do not accept the opening of ports and international trade'! (1994: 223, mt).

<sup>50</sup> The reversal of the authority of the shogun over the court was made manifest in an occasion in October 1862, in which court emissaries visited the shogun in his castle. The shogun himself walked to the entrance to welcome the emissaries; he guided them to the main hall, and sat in a seat below the emissaries who sat in the upper seats (see Fujita 1994: 218).

<sup>51</sup> Fujita writes that *kazunomiya kōka mondai* (和宮降嫁問題) – a marriage between the shogun Tokugawa Iemochi and the imperial princess Kazunomiya in 1862 – (1994: 205) was planned as a part of the *kōbugattai* movement (1994: 205).

<sup>52</sup> Within the court, there were many *kuge* who resorted to *jōi samurai* so as to increase their advocacy and power.

many during the *bakumatsu* period). As critical historiographers emphasise, it is important to attend to the fact that *shishi* did not enter into the realm of politics because of ‘economic reasons’: in divergence to the Marxist assumption that revolution would be initiated by the bourgeoisie or merchants, many of revolutionaries were men of the middle and the lower rank; moreover, the vision of their society was a return to ‘agrarian self-sufficiency’ within the body politic of *kokutai*, and thus not the foundation of a republic without a monarch (Sakata & Hall 1956: 44; Jansen 1968: 322; Toyama 2007: 421). Furthermore, as Marius Jansen illustrates, ‘the pool of talent was constantly larger, and the opportunity for importance consequently greater’ (1968: 323). Consequently, participation in politics was ‘constantly on the increase’ in this *bakumatsu* climax (1968: 323).

Underpinned by the political thought of Fujita and Aizawa in the neo-Mito school, the *jōi* advocacy and actions were intended to endorse and preserve *kokutai*, in which the sovereignty and security of the emperor counted above all. Fujita explains that the more the *jōi* voices escalated within the court – a phenomenon resulting from the emperor’s earlier effort to democratise the discussion process (by way, for instance, of the establishment of the deliberative council) – the less the genuine voices of the emperor were able to be heard (Fujita 1994: 224). The consequence of this situation manifested in 1863 as the August 18 coup d’état which was an unexpected event in which *jōi kuge* and Chōshū *shishi* – the Chōshū *han* being the domain which pioneered the bloody Kinmon Incident (禁門の変)(the Hamaguri Gate Incident) in 20 August 1864 against the shogunate based on their principle of *sonnō jōi* – were suddenly purged from the court by the *kōbugattai* faction centring on the samurai and lords of the Aizu *han* and the Satsuma *han* (Fujita 1994: 224). The prevailing turmoil within the court had been such that *jōi kuge* radicals like Sanjō Sanetomi – in consultation with powerful *jōi shishi* – shunned the opinions of the emperor by usurping the internal decision-making process (1994: 226).

Arguably, Chōshū became one of those *han* which plunged into the most ironic – and tragic – of circumstances in the dynamic and complex period of *bakumatsu*. The Chōshū *han*, in its unswerving commitment to *sonnō jōi*, clashed with the *bakufu* troops which set out two times on a ‘punitive expedition’ (in 1864 and 1866) against Chōshū: the edict to punish Chōshū was issued by the emperor to the shogunate in 1864 (Fujita

1994: 231; Sakata & Hall 1956: 45).<sup>53</sup> In 1865, an armada consisting of British, American, French and Dutch ships landed off Hyōgo to negotiate for the opening of Hyōgo port, at which they extracted ‘imperial approval of the treaties previously negotiated’ (Totman 1980: 12). Fujita argues that, having purged most of *jōi* advocates from the court, Kōmei had little power to resist the demands of foreign countries, which were backed by threats of aggression, and so had to give approval to the shogunate to go ahead with the treaties (1994: 233). In effect, the emperor was increasingly isolated in the court and had little choice but to take his ultimate recourse to the *bakufu* (Fujita 1994: 234-236). In addition, the earlier friction between the court and the *bakufu* was, to a large extent, defused by a mutual concern of preventing the country from possible division. Without national unification, the two-heads feared that a potentially divided country would invite foreign interventions.

At the end of the *bakufu* garrison, the Japanese question of protecting the *kokutai* equally occupied their minds, since ‘the issue of foreign penetration and residence’ was, as Totman describes, ‘at the heart of the deepest fear and most bitter quarrels’ of the shogunate (1980: 8). Acutely recognising the impossibility of avoiding war and defeat without agreeing to foreign demands, the agenda of the shogunate centred upon the way to defend the Kinai region – areas, including Osaka, Hyōgo and Kyoto, that surround the emperor – from foreign inroads and aggression (Totman 1980: 12). In spite of the sheer effort of the shogunate and the court to hang on, Totman writes that by the mid-1860s:

more and more foreign troops were being stationed in Japan. More and more foreign activities were taking place on Japanese soil: trade, tourism, teaching, religious proselytizing, and arms-selling... Those *bakufu* officials and others who had struggled so hard to stem the foreign assault by measures short of war found themselves repeatedly thwarted, humiliated and discredited. (1980: 12-13)

Had the Japanese question been irrelevant or immaterial to the ethics of life (the way of living), to the standards that tell of the good and the bad of things and matters of the world, and to the guideposts that inform what is common in a shared space of interaction

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<sup>53</sup> At this stage, Chōshū was labeled as *chōteki* (朝敵: the enemy of the court/the emperor).



and communication, it is arguable that the concerns of Kinai defence may not have been so significant for and pervasive among people – ‘at all levels of the samurai class, as well as many of lesser status, and including people throughout the polity, whether members of the *bakufu*, *fudai*, *shinpan* or *tozama* houses’ (Totman 1980: 13). To that extent, there is perhaps no more explicit, demonstrable or powerful example of the manifestation of a political public sphere in the history of Japan than in this *bakumatsu* zenith. The nationwide development and mobilisation of many processes that might justifiably be called *democratic* were – contra-liberal and Marxist proposition – perhaps anchored in a shared apprehension that the liquidation of the *kokutai* (putatively feudal and authoritarian) would deprive people of those ethics, standards and guideposts; that is, that the disappearance of the *kokutai* might sever people from the measures of endurance, such as rituals, culture, language and tradition, with which people’s freedom – deed and word – is interdependent.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the shogunate’s desperate attempts – through the policy of *kaikoku* – to avoid war and to prevent foreign inroads into central Japan, despite many *bakufu* officials’ endorsement of *kaikoku* before any other party in Japan, and despite the commitment of the emperor to the *kōbugattai* approach with the shogunate, the period between 1864 and 1866 marked a symbolic turning-point, in which the actions and ideas of the many key agents – *shishi*, *daimyo* and *kuge* – were channelled towards *the tōbaku movement*, which sought to end the *bakuhan* system with a view to restoring the monarchy. By this time, whether positive or negative, new forms and sites of interaction were flowering: the ports were opening, including Yokohama (the vicinity of Edo); the threat to the Kinai district increased; political participation was developing amongst the wider populace, including peasants and merchants; many lower ranks of samurai were studying Western learning; and emissaries to Europe were returning home (Totman 1980:

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<sup>54</sup> Shimizu Iktarō elaborates further on this point (1980: 106): the Meiji Restoration was a Revolution which was battled by two forces – the *bakufu* camp and the counter-*bakufu* camp. While the event ended with the triumph of the latter, it is important for us to keep in mind the point that, across the event, it was the emperor that both forces struggled to integrate into their camps and to side with. As seen in this effort, despite the fact that the emperor was an existence who had no political power in reality, he traditionally possessed such authority that could *legitimise* power in practice. Hence, the competing two forces at the end of the Tokugawa period for the emperor and his support was an example of the Japanese having learned from their long history the unchallenged effects that such emperor’s authority had, that is, one that could legitimise the power of any competing party.

14; Toyama 2007: 425). Owing to the visible shogunate's inability to protect the much revered land from foreign aggression, not only leading *han* like Satsuma and Chōshū but also many *shishi* began to envision a new unified and centralised polity under the monarchy, which was to be characterised by *fukoku kyōhei* (富国強兵) – the prosperity of the country and a strong military. Although there had been vehement animosity between these *han*, they reconciled over a new ideal of restoring the monarchy and building a country on this basis.

In 1867, Emperor Kōmei died without witnessing the coming into being of the new Meiji state. In January 1868, the Restoration was proclaimed, following the shogun Tokugawa Keiki's restitution of political power to the court (大政奉還: *taiseihōkan*). Lastly, it is politically significant to acknowledge that, as was the case when the alliance between *jōi kuge* and *jōi samurai* seized the court's decision making room, the political movements of the *bakumatsu* apex were, as Webb comments, 'directed more to the emperor as a *symbol* than to the emperor as a *person*' (1965: 185, italics added). In other words, the *bakumatsu* movements confirm Mishima's conceptualisation of the emperor as *Sollen* (see Chapter 2), a medium that enacts the imagination of a body politic (the political structure, government, institutions as well as the form of communities and the ways of interaction). A form of a body politic which the Japanese question carries into the imagination of the people instructs, as it were, the polity formation by way of offering the standards and measures which construct the public of Japan.

In his study of *bakumatsu* crises, Totman argues that the change in the popular stance – the value or attitude shift from the support of *sakoku* to that of *kaikoku* – from the early 1850s after the arrival of Perry in Japan to the demise of the *bakufu* in the late 1860s signifies an 'ethical transvaluation' (1980: 7). Against Totman, however, the analysis in this chapter highlights the extent to which the actions of every party and the shift in values never parted company from the Japanese question, given that the disparate approaches of each agent to the crises rested on the common concern as to the best ways to retrieve and preserve *kokutai*. Furthermore, for this thesis to contest the centrality of the Japanese question is to suggest that what is popularly seen as 'the new or modern polity' of the Meiji state was not entirely new, since the Meiji state can be understood as another institutional mode of *kokutai*, one which emerged not out of a popular will against

authoritarian rule but out of the people's search for perceived loss of legitimacy in the public space and concern over the survival of their body politic – from which the 'ontological anchoring' of the Japanese could be derived (see Chapter 2).<sup>55</sup> Well into the end of the Meiji period (1868-1912), the Meiji leaders' heartache over the Japanese question – the foundation to the body politic – never ceased, since the modern state was not built by the aspiration of the Japanese for modernisation alone. While postwar Japanese historiography suggests the continuance of the Japanese aspiration for modernisation, the modern state was arguably built under constraints which gave the Japanese little room to consider any other alternative. It is these constraints that critical historiographers and political scientists examining Japanese history must investigate further, to the extent that they raise the questions of whether these constraints were an undercurrent in the rise of aspirations to modernise, and of how these coercive forces reconciled themselves with the Japanese question – a reconciliation that would be manifest in the process of nation-building and modern-state building by the Japanese. It may be improper to attribute the reason for the rise of authoritarian oligarchy in the Meiji period to Japanese cultural propensity or ethnicity, as orthodox scholarship has sometimes sought to argue.<sup>56</sup> Rather, this rise may owe its existence to the complexity of

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<sup>55</sup> See Ohara (1982: 42), who substantiates a proposition of this chapter that it was the Japanese question that wove the thread of continuity during the state's transition from the old polity of *bakuhau* system to the new polity of the Meiji state. He explains that for the Japanese who had lived under the feudal system for almost seven hundreds years and been influenced by parochial regionalism, to appreciate the concept of a state would have been very difficult. Ohara argues that the people would not have been able to grasp the meaning of a state earnestly even if the government taught patriotism from top down: hence it needed a medium of sorts for the transcendence of people's consciousness, which could have been nothing and nobody but the emperor.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Ikegami (1996: 195), who argues that the rise of 'romantic' intellectual movements such as *kokugaku* (国学) ('the School of Native Learning' that can be represented by the work of the Mito school) glorified the Japanese cultural heritage in the face of foreign incursions, whose 'nostalgic traditionalism provided fuel for a "nationalist" ethnic sentiment'. She maintains that this 'resulted in the paradoxical situation of a rise of "nationalism" before the establishment of a nation-state'. Also, in the postwar context, Thomas Berger illustrates three aspects of Japanese society that underlay domestic propensities toward remilitarisation: 'its strong sense of ethnocentric nationalism, its peculiar combination of strong group loyalty with a lack of centralized decision making, and the relative absence of a sense of war guilt' (1993: 124). These orthodox views tend to exaggerate the ethnic sentiment expressed by *kokutai* loyalists (although not every *kokutai* loyalist unfolds discussion on the basis of ethnic sentiment), *disregarding* the external factors and threats that invoke domestic reaction, including the rise of ethnic sentiment. In this regard, Totman's analysis is noteworthy (1980: 14, italics added): 'The imperial institution... had also begun to acquire validity as what might be called the core element in a diffuse ethnic consciousness that *had been forced into being* by the imperialist onslaught [i.e. foreign powers] and that was tied to neither the structure of the *bakuhau taisei* [i.e. the *bakuhau* system] nor the more basic integrated cultural construct underlying the Tokugawa social order'. Here, Totman highlights the external

the task to restore a political public realm, that is, to the struggles of political leaders over the survival of the *kokutai* in the face of external pressures that now appeared in the form of the unequal treaties which Japan was forced to make with Western nations across the *Ansei* period.

*The Unequal Treaties and their Impact on the Japanese Question*

As Mauris Jansen (1968: 319), and Sakata and Hall (1956: 33) argue, it is important for critical scholarship not to fall into ‘common fallacies’ underlying the act of generalisation, often associated with concepts such as ‘feudalism’, ‘modern’ and ‘modernisation’, which are often uncritically accepted in historical science. In this respect, although it is Meiji Japan – beginning with the 1868 Meiji Restoration – that has been commonly regarded as the period when Japan’s modernisation began, there is space for debate on alternative premises, such as Atsumi and Bernhofen’s argument that Tokugawa Japan had ‘well-developed economic institutions’ (2011: 3), including large money exchangers, the world’s first futures market for rice, credit systems, regional trade bureaus, and an advanced form of commercial network (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011; Saito & Settsu 2006). If the definition of modernity or modernisation involves the economic well-being of a nation, the work of economic historians – for instance, Susan Hanley and Yamamura Kozo (1971), William Hauser (1983), and Saito Osamu and Tettsu Tokihiko (2006) – provides critical support for the argument that the economy thrived at times under the *bakuhau* system in Japan, insofar as there was a constant ‘rise in the standards of living for most of the population’ (Hanley & Yamamura 1971: 373). This point holds, moreover, notwithstanding the system’s paradoxes which ‘resulted in a lag of scientific method and knowledge in comparison to the West’ (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 3).

More important to the account of the Tokugawa management of the national economy, and concerning this chapter’s focus on *kokutai*, is the fact that the Tokugawa market’s fruition was underpinned by ‘relational contracting’ based on ‘non-market ties and accumulated trust’ (Saito & Settsu 2006: 4). This trust was woven through Japanese ‘transactional relations’ linking market agents such as the wholesaler, the intermediary

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factor that contributed to promoting ‘nativist propositions about the special character and the historic significance of the imperial institution’ (1980: 14).

dealers and the local merchants (Saito & Settsu 2006: 4). Saito and Settsu highlight that Japanese commodity chains were characterised neither by one-off contracts nor by kin-based or community-based enforcement mechanisms (2006: 4). On the contrary, the successful operation of the Tokugawa market was built on ‘continuous and stable’ relations and contracts characterised by recurrent transactions and accumulated trust (Saito & Settsu 2006: 4). Furthermore, as Susan Kitchell writes, the merchant families held ‘rules governing management practices and personal conduct within the *ie*’ (家)(family or household) (1995: 207). Called *kakun* (家訓), the rules of the *ie* were grounded in ethics such as *bushido* (武士道)(samurai ethics) (see Chapter 4) and Confucianism (Kitchell 1995: 207) – longstanding traditions which form Japan’s *kokutai*, and thus central concerns in the Japanese question.

If the *bakuhan* system assured, not absolutely, but to a significant extent, the economic well-being of the nation, which some argue was owed to the success of rural industrialisation and the expansion of inter-regional trade, it is open to question as to whether Meiji Japan actually emerged – as postwar Marxist historiography argues – out of the misery of widespread poverty. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Marxist scholars generally argue that the Japanese modernisation or civilising process had been curtailed by the feudalistic mode of production and authoritarian political rule, thereby delaying the otherwise inevitable modernisation of the nation. But critical or alternative historiography’s illustration of the successful operation of Tokugawa economy challenges such Marxist premise.

This final section examines the international treaties which Japan signed with foreign powers across the *Ansei* period (1854-1859) and onwards into the 1860s – known as the unequal treaties – and proposes the importance of dissecting their impact on the Japanese modernisation project, an impact which has often been underrepresented in the critical literature. The tension between the Japanese need to revise the unequal treaties and the Japanese hope for the survival of the *kokutai* confronted Meiji Japan – whose coming into being was originally for the survival of their body politic – as a critical dilemma in view of the imperative to modernise the polity, without which the country’s sovereignty and independence were at stake. After the signing of the first unequal treaty with America in 1854, it took Japan more than half a century to redress the unequal

provisions built into these treaties and to achieve an equal footing with the Western countries (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 9). This chapter observes that the growth of national consciousness in Japan – the aspiration of the West and modernisation – across the foundation of a modern nation state never proceeded alone but was *in tandem with* the inevitable reality of Meiji Japan which saw the country surrounded by foreign powers and in dire need of redressing the inequalities built into treaties. The onerous clauses of these treaties forced the Japanese modernisation project to progress not autonomously, but in accommodation with them.

First and foremost, concerning the unequal treaties' political implication for Japan's modernisation, we need to start with the acknowledgement of the shogunate's ignorance – almost until the Meiji Restoration – with regard to the onerous and arbitrary nature of the treaties which impinged on the sovereignty of the nation. Michael Auslin's book, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (2006), outlines this problem. Above all, Japan never entirely closed off contact with foreign nations either before the Tokugawa era or after the official inauguration of *sakoku* in 1639 (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 2). The windows were kept open, albeit slightly, during the Tokugawa-*sakoku* epoch, symbolised by diplomatic relations and trade with representatives of Korea, China, Ryūkyū, Portugal and Holland (Auslin 2006: 15). Hence the initial problems lay on the part of Japan in its incomprehension of the mechanics of unequal treaties. But attention needs to be given to the fact that the problems may be attributed less to the poverty of its diplomatic experience than to the different notions and practices of diplomacy which East Asia in general and Japan in particular adopted from the Western world.<sup>57</sup> Auslin writes that 'legal compacts between states were all but unknown in the region', given that in East Asia, relationships and diplomacy with other nations not only reflected strategic concerns but also were part and parcel of 'the sanctity of ceremony', namely, rituals (2006: 13, 15-16). Taking the example of the language of diplomacy, Auslin demonstrates that terms like 'consul', 'tariff' and 'extraterritoriality' had neither specific counterparts nor

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<sup>57</sup> That said, however, almost half a century separated official recognition that foreign ships began to appear more frequently along the coasts of Japan and Perry's arrival in 1853. There was enough time to prepare Japan's defence and to study the world. It seems that the *bakuhau* system cannot escape its own failings, given that some Mito scholars had already warned of the forthcoming crises.

analogous meaning in Japanese (2006: 25). Likewise, domestic practices in managing international affairs were different. The *bakufu* set aside particular areas for foreigners and their residence, and criminal cases occurring in these fixed areas were subject to internal handling by these residents (Perez 1999: 52). Where self-administration and self-governance had been an accepted form of *bakufu*'s foreign policy, notions like consular jurisdiction and extraterritoriality were, indeed, 'alien in form, theory, and application' (Perez 1999: 56). Without, accordingly, recognising the international treaties' ruinous effects on national sovereignty, the *bakufu* and the Meiji government remained indifferent to foreign residents across the Meiji Restoration. But the number of foreign residents gradually increased after the Restoration, combining with an increase in the number of sailors who passed through the treaty ports. Perez writes that 'it is hardly surprising that the incidence of crimes committed by foreigners in Japan rose dramatically. Concomitantly, the opportunities for the Japanese to experience consular jurisdiction increased proportionately' (1999: 53).

Louis Perez's examination of the unequal treaties of the time sheds light on the triadic tension between the Japanese project of modernisation, the unilateral force of international protocols, and the Japanese question. Although, as described, the inequalities were hardly appreciated upon Japan's signing,<sup>58</sup> the 1854 Treaty of Kanagawa (the Perry Convention) with the United States contained the most-favoured-nation (MFN) clause. This was one of the most taxing Ansei treaties in the long run, prescribing that 'any and all concessions made by Japan to any treaty nation were automatically given to all the powers' (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 5; Perez 1999: 62). The US's application of the MFN clause to Japan, but never to the Western nations, was based on the European consensus that the international agreements were to be equal except when one party was uncivilised (Auslin 2006: 16; Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 6). The negotiation between American Consul Townsend Harris and Japan for commerce and trade treaties (the 1858 Treaty of Amity and Commerce) four years later was clearly

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<sup>58</sup> These inequalities were hardly noticed because, in addition to the *bakufu*'s incomprehension of diplomatic codes, the Perry Convention was not a treaty that sought commercial interest; 'the treaty provided for the opening of two ports in Shimoda and Hakodate, secured supplies of coal and guaranteed Japanese assistance to ship-wrecked US crews' (Atsumi and Bernhofen 2011: 5). Although the inequality was not recognised, Japan was nevertheless reluctant to sign the Convention. Abe Masahiro accepted Perry's treaty (opening the ports) in order to avoid war at all costs; the *bakufu*'s refusal to sign would have dragged Japan into 'a catastrophic war' (Totman 1980: 3).

unequal in its demands, which included consular jurisdiction and a reaffirmation of the MFN clause. The Austro-Hungarian Treaty of 1869, which Perez holds was the most adequate exposition of the general principles of consular jurisdiction, states that

all questions in regard to rights, whether of property or of person, arising between Austro-Hungarian citizens residing in Japan shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Imperial and Royal Authorities. In like manner, the Japanese shall not interfere in any question which may arise between Austro-Hungarian citizens and the citizens and subjects of any other Treaty Power. (cited in Perez 1999: 52)

One after another, Japan granted consular jurisdiction, extraterritoriality and the MFN clause to foreign countries, observing, at one time, almost 16 different systems of consular jurisdiction in operation (Perez 1999: 53). Auslin points out that both consular jurisdiction and the MFN status ‘raised no Japanese objections’ until the 1870s, because, influenced by the Chinese practice of diplomacy, it was appropriate for the Tokugawa shogunate to take the ‘balance of power alliance’ approach, a strategy to prevent the outnumbering oppositions from jeopardising Japan all at once (2006: 28).

For Totman, ‘the major accomplishment of Japanese diplomacy’ in the *bakumatsu* period was ‘the preservation of Kinai immunity’ which, however, cost Japan inordinately in monetary terms. Not only did the *bakufu* pay millions of dollars in indemnities in exchange for allowing foreigners to open a port in the Kinai district (1980: 12), but the shogunate also lost tariff autonomy absolutely in the mid-1860s, after Western powers like Britain, America, Holland and France progressed trade-relationships with Japan, setting the tariff rate for Japan at 5 percent, in contrast to the international rate at 10 percent (Perez 1999: 56-57). Perez writes that ‘the Tariff Convention of 1866 had several far-reaching effects on Japan’: ‘it deprived Japan of at least half of the customs revenue that it should have expected’; this forced the government to rely on an agricultural land tax to the detriment of the economy; and it denied Japan the benefits of a tariff with which to protect developing native industries (1999: 57-58). Furthermore, Japan was entrapped in ‘the ultimate double-bind’ because no treaties which the *bakufu* signed specified expiration dates or procedures for their termination. More perniciously, the MFN clause kept Japan tied to these inequalities, regardless of whether it were able to



renegotiate any individual agreement. As Perez explains, ‘even when [an] original treaty ceased to exist, the concessions from that treaty continued to exist in perpetuity as long as one nation... continued to claim them as part of its most favored nation rights’ (1999: 62). In order to revise any particular provision, in other words, Japan needed the agreement of *all* the powers with whom it had signed a treaty (Perez 1999: 62). Accordingly, it would not have been inappropriate for the early Meiji political leaders to seek ways to build a modern state that would be capable of ‘renegotiating the unequal treaties’ (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 8).

In the context of the Japanese question and the monumental watershed from the *bakumatsu* epoch to the early Meiji period, the impact of the unequal treaties merits further discussion, because the *kokutai sui generis* which this question concerns began to erode incrementally across the course of that period. Firstly, the *kokutai* – the emperor-predicated polity – was renewed with the radical reorganisation of political institutions, from the decentralised, multi-tiered system to a centralised administration; and secondly, on the back of these changes, Meiji political leaders started to pursue the revision of the unequal treaties as a priority of the national affairs. Both the early pressures of foreign powers backed by threats of force to open Japan, and Japan’s determined pursuit of equality in the international sphere in the subsequent decades diluted, as it were, the *kokutai* by degrees. A diligent study of the West began among the Japanese, including the Iwakura mission of the early 1870s, through which a cluster of government officials and scholars visited the US and some European countries and studied the means and institutions of modern society and political life. The underlying motive of their mission to the West was to standardise institutions and administrations so that Japan could renegotiate the unequal treaties (Perez 1999: 67). As Perez notes, American Secretary of State Hamilton Fish underwrote such Japanese anticipation of revision, insisting that ‘none of the treaty powers would agree to revise the treaties until Japan had modernised and reformed its political institutions’ (1999: 69).

Within the process of standardising institutions, the area of modification which the Japanese found most distressing and confronting was the legal system. For example, both the inchoate Japanese Diet as well as the Japanese public stumbled on the notion of ‘individual rights’, when they were pressed to include the French theory of such rights in

the civil codes of Japan (Perez 1999: 70).<sup>59</sup> But seen from an Arendtian viewpoint, freedom owes its possibility to the guideposts that endure in time; and hence each public sphere is a realm governed by the laws which draw upon the history of the deliberations and agreements of a political community. This is to hold that the public space of Japan has its own standards of ethics, virtues and customs that have been legitimised by its history, as is the case with the public space of any other country, and in the case of Japan these standards were born out of an emperor-predicated polity. Following the Iwakura mission that had touched, preliminarily, on the issue of treaty revision during their diplomatic trip to the West, foreign minister Terashima Munenori suggested to the US that Japan retain its tariff autonomy (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 9). Perez highlights that Britain was ‘the single greatest hurdle to revision’ among other countries, and that, in particular, Sir Harry Parkes became ‘Japan’s nemesis’ (1999: 57, 71). While Japan was able to gain in principle support from the US, Terashima’s attempt to renegotiate the unequal treaties was hindered by the refusal of Britain and Germany, under the MFN clause, which continued to bind Japan to the status of being unequal to the West. Indeed, it appeared that Japan’s achievement of redress to the unequal treaties depended on how fast and closely it could convert its native institutions and their functions to mirror those of the West.<sup>60</sup>

As Atsumi and Bernhofen note, Japan’s determined pursuit of revision and equality with the Western nations was relatively accomplished, in practice, by 1920 when the Empire of Japan became ‘an initial permanent member of the security council of the League of Nations’ (2011: 9). But to point out Japan’s success in achieving an equal footing with the West by no means suggests that political life or a public sphere – understood both in terms of the possibilities of action and in the processes and institutions that filter them – was devoid in Japan, prior to the modernisation of the structures and

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<sup>59</sup> As Perez writes, ‘they were never actually promulgated because they were supplanted by a German-inspired civil code in 1898’ (1999: 70).

<sup>60</sup> The history of Japan’s struggles for revision shows a number of features (Atsumi & Bernhofen 2011: 9; Perez 1999: 75-76):

- Ōkuma Shigenobu’s attempts to revise the extraterritorial rights of Westerners in Japan
- The 1882 treaty conference: Japan’s proposal to abolish consular jurisdiction
- The 1886 treaty conference: approximation between Britain and Japan and further discussions
- The abolition of extraterritorial rights in the 1894 Japan-British Commerce and Navigation Treaty

institutions of its polity. Indeed, this chapter's analysis of the *bakumatsu* movements – of the emergence and vigor of action – lends no support to the mainstream proposition that political life or the experience of freedom was incapacitated prior to the modernisation of the polity. It may be worth referring here to the critical observation of literary critic Yasuda Yojūrō (1910-1981), who recognised a gradual transfiguration in the ontology of political agency – or the mode of being – occurring in the social realm of the 1920s. Yasuda states that, because of the way the people related to the lands, Japan's *kokutai* was such that the cooperation of the people was imperative for building the country, for working together for life, and for complying with and preserving ethics (1999: 168). He argues that the Japanese ethics of cooperation developed from the experience in which life and rituals were interwoven, and suggests further that such experience is the history of a country and that Japan's *kokutai* is formed neither by ideologies nor by notions (1999: 168). For Yasuda, the Japanese question held in early Meiji Japan did not foster such an approach to life that people considered their lives to be the matters of an individual. By the 1920s, particularly, after the popularisation of Marxism following the success of the Russian Revolution, Yasuda writes that the stature of a classical, glorious personality that had been observed at the time of the Meiji Restoration began to fade away, a phenomenon which corresponded to university students' tilt to the left which for Yasuda indicates a spiritual separation of the people from the mental attitude held by heroic figures traditionally known in the East (1999: 65-67, 164-165). Heroic figures had such mental attitude in that they did not hesitate to risk their lives and thus could courageously engage with the act of rebellion or revolution (1999: 65). But such heroic virtuosity in Japan's public realm was gradually replaced by social, humanistic thoughts attached to romanticism and sentimentalism (Yasuda 1999: 164-165). Education, Yasuda argues, became an institutional carrier for the spiritual transfiguration of the Japanese.

### *Conclusion*

The preceding analysis of the *bakumatsu* movements, of those actions as manifestations of concerns over the foundation to the body politic, and of the Meiji political leaders' desperate catch-up with the West in order to redress the unequal treaties, leaves us with

critical questions: was not the imperative to modernise Japan essentially impelled by a contra-political rationale, favoured by the super powers, which sought the expansion of commerce? And if so, has not the Japanese modernisation project been impregnated with contra-political elements from the start, with the result that the communities in Japan would inevitably be divested of political life? If seen from the perspective of Japan's contemporary public sphere, has not the wholesale standardisation of a country – particularly, modifications in the realm of the legal system – resulted in the privatisation of a public space, given the treaties' prioritisation of the economic – hence private – objectives of expanding commerce and trade?<sup>61</sup> Alternatively, do not the *bakumatsu* movements suggest a period in the history of Japan in which human plurality or democratic experience was already found, importantly, as that which was fostered by those enduring representations of a body politic – tradition and culture – whose existence preceded the advent of the 'modern polity' in Meiji Japan?

It was when the objective of founding the new polity or the new state took backstage to the task of rectifying the disparity between Japan and the West, it seems, that the autonomy and distinctiveness of *kokutai* was swallowed into the relentlessly expanding orbit of international capitalism (Ishii cited in Auslin 2006: 20). Mauris Jansen comments that the presumed goals of modernisation – rationality, progress and scientific judgment – by no means necessarily lead us 'toward progress in the sense of better and happier lives' (1968: 328-329). By contrast, the pre-modern form of *kokutai* – the *bakuhan* system, while by no means free from structural paradoxes and uprisings (*ikki*) from the lower orders, can be seen to have offered a degree of peace and order in its assurance of self-sufficiency or self-sustainability for more than two centuries. In view of this argument, then, the premises and findings of mainstream Japanese historiography, and in particular its Marxism-inspired presumption that Japan's feudal age was authoritarian and rigidly hierarchical, appear problematic. Indeed, the *bakumatsu* crises of Tokugawa Japan, as a critical historiography and an alternative political philosophy derived from Hannah Arendt's work can show, arguably displayed a vibrant political life, one animated by those enduring measures of the *kokutai* that underlie the focus of what I

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<sup>61</sup> Further, do these questions not speak to the course of modernisation escalating in many parts of the world – South East Asia, Latin America and the Middle East – in which there has been an increased deliberation of the reconstruction of political institutions on the basis of secularisation?

call the Japanese question, despite this period preceding the establishment of those instruments that turn states to modern polities.

The question of the foundation to Japan's body politic continues to be an essential question for postwar Japanese society and the consideration of Japan's future. For the reevaluation of the meaning of political life or a political public space, which is essential to the community of human beings, Jansen's reflection on the modern history of Japan is noteworthy:

Japan's experience sheds new light on the common fate and predicament of twentieth-century man; a situation which includes an abundance of material goods, an atomization of ancient relationships in the new megalopolis, and loneliness in an international order haunted by the fear of the atom. (1968: 330)

This chapter has begun such a reevaluation of the meaning of political life in Japan by exploring the *bakumatsu* movements in which the experience of freedom was not dissociated from the concerns with the foundation to the body politic, namely, the emperor. The emperor's centrality in forming Japan's public space can be seen in his catalyst agency that enabled the communicability of a public space – in his status as a source and factor that unified the divergent approaches of multiple actors – rather than in his existence as a despotic or authoritarian ruler over a human community. This argument is expanded in the next chapter by turning to an analysis of those practices emanating from the emperor system that serve to construct the body politic by drawing the borders of Japan's public sphere.

## CHAPTER 4

### *The Borders of a Public Space in Early Modern Japan: the Political Significance of Culture, Tradition and Authority*

Since the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future the mind of man wanders in obscurity.  
(Tocqueville cited in Arendt 1993: 77)

Disappearance of practically all traditionally established authorities has been one of the most  
spectacular characteristics of the modern world.  
(Arendt 1956: 414)

私たち日本人は、占領軍によって初めて“民主主義”を教えてもらったわけではありません  
The Allied Occupation was not the first to teach the Japanese about democracy.  
(Sakamoto 2001: 197, mt)

#### *Introduction*

Tainted by the memory of the Second World War, postwar Japanese society has been considerably reluctant to look back on bygone days even when such moments of opportunity and crisis as require political judgment arrive. Postwar Japanese society seems to be no longer interested in deciphering what Arendt would express as the ‘broken thread of tradition’ (1993: 14). The Japanese question, with its skepticism over the course of modernisation, challenges this trend, the very mood and condition of postwar Japan by questioning whether the mere institutionalisation of democratic systems necessarily builds and sustains a space of authentic politics. This question is underpinned by Arendt’s argument that the political public space cannot be actualised and cannot endure in time through freedom or human plurality alone, but needs the guardrails of measures that work to counter the contingent and boundless nature of human action and deed. Such guardrails are receding in the modern age, and this recession is accelerating in our days. As the previous chapter elucidated, a symbolic public space was observed in *bakumatsu* Japan with movements – action and deed – having engaged with the question of the form of the government as well as a search for the ways to ensure the survival of a source of authority and tradition, which may in turn safeguard the realm of freedom. This chapter aims to explore the enduring measures of Japan’s archaic public space – namely, those features of Japan’s polity that helped to define the borders between the private space and

the public space (see Chapter 2) – and to clarify their characteristics and significance by investigating the practices and components that construct the Japanese question.

Firstly, building on Arendt's political thought, this chapter reviews the enterprise of tradition and authority which work to transport the past to the present. Secondly, it unpacks the prevailing notions and meanings of the term *the public* in Japan. This is followed by three sections which dissect, in turn, a key institution, tradition or practice that has historically, if variably, served to secure the space and meaning of Japanese political life prior to Japan's loss in the Second World War in 1945: the system of the Japanese emperor, the foundation to Japan's body politic which provides what Arendt would describe as an element that endows 'political structures with durability, continuance and permanence' (1993:127); the political practice of *yoriai* (gathering or meeting), which, as shown by Miyamoto Tsuneichi's anthropological studies, attests the democratic exercise of participation, deliberation and discussion in Japan's archaic public realm; and the principles of action in *bushidō* or samurai ethics, an emblematic manifestation of *kokutai*, that is, a practice which points to the Japanese question.

Miyamoto's anthropological investigation of *yoriai* practice and a border of Japan's public sphere, *bushido*, are privileged for analysis in this chapter over other practices, owing to their potential to shed new light on the possible vitality of the public sphere in the living institution and spirit of *kokutai*. In contrast to the field of political scholarship in postwar Japan that has been dominated by the orthodoxy of modern historiography, Miyamoto's anthropological analysis of *yoriai* dynamics before the full progression of Japan's industrialisation after the Second World War help to demonstrate that the mere institutionalisation of democratic systems by no means promotes the realm of authentic politics. Further, one of the key traditional ethics and principles in Japan, *bushido*, needs examining for it is a symbolic incarnation of *kokutai*, while it has been expelled from the position of social reverence after the War, in which it is charged as an instrument of political indoctrination (Mishima 1977: 40). Not only did it teach the members of Japan's public the standards and virtues of this common sphere but also it fostered 'a political science of the heart' (1977: 60), given that *bushido* practitioners became highly conscious of the public light and hence of their external reflection – the beauty of their appearance and demeanors – a disposition which has much in common

with Arendt's notion of political public space. The institutions and practices introduced in this chapter under the theme of the Japanese question are thus discussed as the components and borders of the political public realm in Japan.

*Towards the Borders of the Public: Revision of Authority*

The extent to which the borders of the political public realm essential to human life remain in modern states and have survived their project of secularisation is open to question. One of the major factors which Hannah Arendt ascribes to the decline of the public realm in the modern age is the ebb of authority in the form and experience of religion and tradition. Arendt argues that in the modern age the battle of liberalism – which measures a process of receding freedom – and conservatism – which measures a process of receding authority – has revolved around a concern for restoration, that is, for 'restoring either freedom or authority or the relationship between both to its traditional position' (1956: 414-415). This conflict raises the question of what it would mean for postwar Japan to walk away from the Japanese question, that is, to isolate the source of authority – an absolute – which prescribes the borders of Japan's public from the people's political life – participation, discussion and deliberation. This question concerns whether authority is actually not part of democracy, and whether democracy in modern states is sustainable only with institutional systems such as parliament, party politics and suffrage?

As noted in Chapter 2, Arendt draws the definition of authority from Mommsen's notion of authority that is 'more than advice and less than a command, an advice which one may not safely ignore' (1993: 123). By authority here, she means neither the power of institutional politics nor the power of the ruler. Arendt writes that the word *auctoritas* (authority) comes from the verb *augere* – augment (1993: 121). Given the notion of authority addressing its roots in the past, the role of authority was hence considered to 'augment the foundation' (1993: 120, 122). *Auctoritas* is closely related to 'the religiously binding force of the *auspices*... which reveals merely divine approval or disapproval of decisions made by men' (Arendt 1993: 123). For the Romans who were the first to address the notion of authority, the *gravitas* – the ability to bear the whole weight of the past – suggested in *auspices* 'keeps things in a just equilibrium' (Plutarch



cited in Arendt 1993: 123). Robert Mayer's study of Arendt's notion of authority and of the distinctive case of Leninism in twentieth century Russia highlights the institutional locus of *auctoritas-gravitas* (1992). Mayer demonstrates that in Rome *auctoritas-gravitas* was lodged in 'the Senate' (1992: 402). For the Americans, authority has been appropriated to 'the Supreme Court' (1992: 404). Lenin endeavoured to establish authority in socialist politics, which was unfolded in his attempt to institutionalise *auctoritas* in 'the Party' (1992: 400). In the case of postwar Japan, not only has that nation aspired to a path of modernisation whose development depends, partly, upon secularisation, but also its Constitution has been never amended to date. Thus the nation has bypassed the discussion and deliberation of the role and function of authority, which would lead the public to the reassessment of the emperor's role and status as specified by the Constitution, and of the system that had provided instructions for the formation of Japan's body politic. Given this lapse, it appears that the political question of both the source and the institutional locus of *auctoritas* has been hardly identified, despite the indispensable role of authority in the public realm, which keeps things in a just equilibrium.<sup>62</sup>

In the course of clarifying the meaning of authority and tradition in the public realm, Arendt argues that, for the Romans,

the past was sanctified through tradition. Tradition preserved the past by handing down from one generation to the next the testimony of the ancestors... to act without authority and tradition, without accepted, time-honoured standards and models, without the help of the wisdom of the founding fathers, was inconceivable. (Arendt 1993: 124)

According to Habermas, the rationale of secularisation stems from positive liberty rather than from negative liberty, for it seeks to enable citizens to continue to exercise and

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<sup>62</sup> This question may be pointedly responded by Sakurai Yoshiko. She illustrates the contra-political existence of the *Cabinet Legislation Bureau* (内閣法制局: *naikaku hōseikyoku*) in Japan's political system, the institution that is known as 'the shadow authority'. This institution is situated outside the Constitution, and the Bureau exerts its power as supra-constitutional (Sakurai 2000: 165, 172). It is this Bureau that provides the Japanese government's official interpretation of Japan's Constitution as the government's agreed interpretation (政府統一見解: *seifu tōitsu kenkai*). Sakurai points out that there has been no case in the history of postwar Japan, in which legislation that the Bureau has scrutinized is claimed to be unconstitutional. In effect, the Bureau holds even higher authority than the supreme court (Sakurai 2000: 172).

pursue their own faiths (2006: 3). In order for the members of a public space not to violate the interests and faiths of others, he argues that the modern liberal state is entrusted with tasks to ensure its secular positions (2006: 5-6). Contra-Habermas, Arendt contends that the modern project of secularisation bereaved the political realm of its authority and ‘with it that element which... had endowed political structures with *durability, continuity and permanence*’ (1993: 127, italics added). She maintains that authority is indispensable in the political public realm, ‘precisely because [human beings] are mortals – the most unstable and futile beings we know of’ (1993: 95). If Arendt is right, then what would it mean for postwar Japanese citizens to dismiss the Japanese question, that is, to jettison an inquiry into the political significance of *kokutai*, namely, ‘the synthesis of existential structures such as the notion of monarchy, the ethics of people, law, political system, as well as aesthetic culture, customs, art and religion’ (Inoue cited in Ohara 1982: 29, mt)?

In the 1980s, Tanaka Michitarō stated that ‘the discussions of the state and the polity continued to be a matter of taboo in Japan, except that the articulation was formed by the theory of Marxist progressives’ (1983: 191, mt). At the end of the twentieth century, Saeki Keishi summarised the polls taken by *Dentsū Sōken, Yoka Kaihatsu Centre*. The data shows that 17 percent of the Japanese answered *yes* to the question: would they fight for the country if war were to break out? This result contrasts with 69 percent in the US, 69 percent in Russia, 89 percent in China and 43 percent in Germany (Saeki 2008: 23).<sup>63</sup> By contrast, as to the question: should the state be responsible for the life of people? 71 percent of the Japanese responded *yes* in comparison to 27 percent in the US and 54 percent in China. The eccentricity of Japanese consciousness regarding the role of the state is particularly marked in the gap between the high expectations for the state to look after the welfare of the people, and the indifference and non-commitment of the Japanese to their country when it faces dangers. Further data supporting such social consciousness can be found in Tadokoro Masayuki’s review of a 2000 World Values Survey, which indicates that:

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<sup>63</sup> The data was taken in 1995 from 23 countries (Dentsū Sōken; Yoka Kaihatsu Centre – *Kachikan Data Book*).

The Japanese are one of the least ‘nationalistic’ people in the world: of 74 countries ranked from highest to lowest in terms of nationalist sentiment, Japan came in seventy-first, a ranking similar to other high-income countries such as the Netherlands (fifty-seventh), Belgium (sixty-seventh), and Germany (sixty-eighth). (2011: 62-63)

In the early twenty-first century, Nakanishi Terumasa writes that in postwar Japan, the people tend to consider what is antiquated as insignificant, wicked and something that needs overcoming (2005: 13). He comments that this attitude has grown, and the Japanese have never taken time to deliberate on it. As the past, which may support the present through the threads of authority and tradition, erodes, it seems that the citizenship of a public space – that is, the Japanese people’s sense of responsibility for their public realm – dissipates (see Chapter 2).

Building on the previous chapter, this chapter further unpacks the Japanese question, in particular its components that demarcate the borders of Japan’s public, in light of Arendt’s account of the crisis of authority. Agreeing with Arendt, this chapter demonstrates that the institutional appropriation of democracy – or its systems – does not reinforce political life alone, as the public life of early modern Japan attests to a vigorous political space. But first, the dominant notions of the public and the private held by contemporary Japanese need exploring, prior to the critical assessment of the components (borders) of the public which give rise to the Japanese question.

### *Traditional and Contemporary Meanings of the Public*

Among recent socio-political studies in Japan, *the Public Philosophy Joint Research Forum*<sup>64</sup> (公共哲学共同研究会) delivers perhaps the most eminent and creditable of studies, from comparative and historical perspectives, of the notions of the public and the private. As these studies show, the period between the seventh and the eighth century saw the Japanese concept of the public modified, defined and crystallised into a tradition. Mizubayashi Takeshi (2002) examines this critical period with the aim of reviving the historical meanings of Japan’s archaic public. Before the mid-seventh century, the

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<sup>64</sup> *Kōkyō Tetsugaku Kyōdō Kenkyūkai* (The Public Philosophy Joint Research Forum) was hosted by the *Institute for the Integrated Study of Future Generations* under the sponsorship of the Future Generations Alliance Foundation (Kim 2001: ix).

Japanese language featured no equivalents to the semantic opposition found in the English terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ (2002: 5). In the *Yamato* language – the old name for the Japanese language – the term most commensurate with today’s usage of the word ‘*kō*’ (公) (the public) was ‘*ohoyake*’: a big *yake*, where ‘*yake*’ signified a segment of managed facilities within the premises and housing complexes of a powerful clan or family (Mizubayashi 2002: 6). The term opposite to *ohoyake* was ‘*woyake*’ – a small *yake*. While *ohoyake* and *woyake* were contrasting notions, their relationship was structured like the layers of an onion – one fitting inside another – rather than as an antinomy: the power structure of the time was built by the stratification of *ohoyake* and *woyake*, and the polity was governed by the chiefs of these *yake*.

Mizubayashi explains that in the seventh and the eighth centuries, the period in which Japan began a dynamic reception of Chinese culture, the Japanese polity was still a monolithic form (一元の国制: *ichigenteki kokusei*) composed of the laminations of *yake* (2002: 6). Unlike the Western world, in which countries, following civil revolutions such as the British, French and American Revolutions, were founded on a dual order based on civil society and state, the monolithic structure of the Japanese polity continued until the end of the Meiji period (2002: 6). For Mizubayashi, the primary characteristics of Japan’s traditional distinction between public and private rest on the aspect that the public is seen no more than as a form of state-power (2002: 13, mt). Secondly, the notions of the public and the private in Japan suggest a continuum and mutual penetration. He argues that agents extended their private realms by way of using their public positions, as was seen for example in the movement to cultivate the lands by starting from their bases, *yake*. This expansion presupposed the incessant intrusion of the private into the realm of the public. Both public positions and public lands (property) were often converted into private assets as the private terrain of *yake* was used as a foothold for expansion (Mizubayashi 2002: 13). In this regard, Mizubayashi acknowledges the dual aspects to underlie the Japanese (traditional) notion of the public and the private.

In the beginning of the eighth century, the *ritsuryō* system (律令制 *ritsuryōsei*) – the general administrative legal codes and provisions – was introduced into Japan as part

of its comprehensive cultural intake from China.<sup>65</sup> This system's fiat (大宝令: *taihōrei*) officially divided agricultural fields into two: 'kōden' (公田), the lands which the state had at its disposal; and 'shiden' (私田), the lands allocated to individuals. It was with this division that the new notion of the public and the private – the lands which do not belong to the representative public like the emperor but to private individuals – emerged in Japan (Mizubayashi 2002: 10). Although *shiden* was not initially a type of land which a family could permanently own, a new law in 743 (墾田永年私財法: *konden einen shizai hō*) permitted families to possess the land permanently as their private properties. Since the law allowed families to own their family lands which they could hand down to their posterity, those lands which had been previously re-collected by the state after the master's death, that is, the lands which used to be defined as *shiden*, were no longer considered as *shiden*, private lands, but began to be called as *kōden*, public lands (Mizubayashi 2002: 12).

Further to this, an alternative interpretation of the Japanese notion of the public and the private may be possible (Mizubayashi 2002). Mizubayashi argues that it is possible to interpret the whole apparatus which constructed the polity as the public. According to him, in parallel with the notional change following the division of rice fields, the word 'kōmin' (公民) (the public people) – which was, at the beginning of the eighth century, exclusively used for the status of the *peerage*<sup>66</sup> – started to change its meaning, beginning to include the peasant who served in *kōden* (2002: 12). Each social apparatus which had made up the polity was incorporated into the public and the private concepts. For instance, with regard to the position of *daimyō* (a feudal lord) which was below shōgun, the former was characterised as private 'shi' in relation to the latter *kō*. By the same token, the shōgun's status which ranked below the emperor was *shi*, private in relation to the latter *kō*, public. Mizubayashi argues that the Japanese notion of the public and the private is symbolised not only by the hierarchical notion of *kō-shi* but importantly by the existence of coercion which upholds the structure of the public and the private in that the higher rank would expect the lower rank to be *kō* (2002: 17). For instance, the

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<sup>65</sup>According to Haley, the political leaders of Japan at the time welcomed many aspects of Chinese culture – not only legal traditions but also religion, language, arts and science. Haley specifies that the importation started with the *Taika* reform (大化の改新) of the mid-seventh century (1995: 29).

<sup>66</sup> See Kojiki (古事記): the word *kōmin* (公民) indicates the aristocrat (Mizubayashi 2002: 11).

*buke shohatto* (武家諸法度) – the laws for the military houses – forbade marriage at the private level, an affair which was seen as crucial not only to the diplomatic relationship between the families but also to the body politic. The higher ranks of the polity (e.g. shogun in relation to *daimyō* or *daimyō* in relation to his vassals) would expect the lower ranks to live up to their expectation and hence to perform their role as the agents of the public, leaving only the realms unimportant to the higher ranks as the dimensions that could be dealt with under the management of the individual or the private (Mizubayashi 2002: 17). The traditional form of Japan's polity, that is, the laminate structure of the public and the private was, accordingly, consolidated at this time in the mid-eighth century and continued until the mid-nineteenth century in which the *bakuhan* system collapsed.

Watanabe Hitoshi points out that contemporary Japanese use the terms public and private, *kō* and *shi*, in a blending and juxtaposing manner (2001: 153). English, Chinese and Japanese-traditions form three different linguistic backdrops which contemporary Japanese conflate when they use the term, the public. In English, the semantics of *the public* recognises *people*, not only the state, because the English notion of the public originates in the Latin etymology of *publicus*, people (Watanabe 2001: 146). By contrast, the traditional concept of the public in Japan refers to the higher body of authorities such as public officials, bureaucrats and the state. While Japan received much of its influence from China, Watanabe illustrates that Japanese *kō* has many differences from the Chinese concept of *kō* (2001: 148). The Chinese meaning is composed of multiplicity and discursiveness, including public projects, the cooperative work of regional elites and social movements. He explains that anything to do with the matters of commonality, cooperation and coordination – from the position of the ordinary people to the apex of the emperor – is enclosed in the Chinese meaning of the public (2001: 149).

In comparison to the English and Chinese concepts of the public, the Japanese usage of the terms the public and the private in the Edo-Tokugawa period (1603-1868) is formed of *relative* notions: below and above, in and out, and front and back. In addition to the ancient-medieval notions of the public and the private just discussed, Watanabe highlights the new concept of the public and the private in the Tokugawa era, in which the dichotomy between the public *ohoyake* and the private *watakushi* was associated with

the form of social interaction, especially with the demeanour of people expressing modesty and humility towards each other (2001: 151). In contrast to the ancient epoch, there was an advent of an oppositional concept between the public and the private in the Tokugawa epoch, in which the private was no longer interpreted as *shi* but as *watakushi* (私) (me, myself). For example, a person indicates himself or herself as the private *watakushi* so that he or she shows his/her *decency* and *propriety* to others. The word *watakushi* demotes a person's position with respect to others. The appearance of the private in the public – that is, from in to out or from back to front – thus implied a matter of *disgrace* or of *embarrassment* in the Japanese language. In this regard, the concept of the public and the private in the Tokugawa period was a vertical structure or the structure of nesting boxes (i.e. multiple privates within a big public), not the horizontal one implied in the European concepts of the public (Watanabe 2001: 150-152).

*The Fountainhead of Public Borders – the Emperor System*

In *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, progressive intellectual Maruyama Masao denounces 'one of the most important heritages that modern Japan received from feudal society' (1969: 18). He contends that this legacy was the method by which arbitrary power was exercised, the method through which the sense of oppression was transferred from people above to people below. By the 1930s, the feudal remnants which practised this method embraced, in his view, 'the psychology of ultra-nationalism' (Maruyama 1969: 19), making Japanese expansionism different from that of other countries. For Maruyama, then, the Japanese difference was ascribed primarily to the failure to draw 'any clear line of demarcation between the public and the private domains' (1969: 6), assimilating the domain of private individuals into the realm of the public, the emperor. In this view, Maruyama supports Mizubayashi's interpretation of the notions of the public and the private in Japan. While the modern Meiji government introduced, in part, democratic instruments in the form of a parliament and a constitution, its retention of the law of the land – the emperor – as the pinnacle of social, cultural and political authority and as the pivot of the public, putatively dismissed the private realm to exist apart from this national order (1969: 6).

Japanese nationalism suggests that the emperor means the embodiment of the good, one who represents absolute values (Maruyama 1969: 8). Maruyama thus argues that the Japanese never questioned the morality of their actions and derived their standards from the affairs of the nation, because the Japanese presumed moral value to stem from the system of the emperor (1969: 10). Maruyama contends that until 1945 the Japanese believed that the emperor was the embodiment of ultimate value, which was identical with the Divine Land, the Japanese state where the law was condensed (1969: 13). In contrast to this anti-political polity of Japan, he argues, national power in the West was predicated after the Reformation on formal, external sovereignty, with monarchs having been freed from the limitations of medieval natural law (1969: 5, 19). In this regard, Maruyama concludes that secularisation is indispensable for political life in Japan. He maintains that from this imperial centre, considered to be the source of value and morality, a sense of oppression was transferred in a downward direction. Till the end of World War II, Japan was therefore a country that was sterile of public, political life.

While Maruyama's argument represents mainstream postwar historiography, namely, the Marxist narrative in which Japan's emperor-predicated polity is seen to preclude the possibility of a public, political space, it is open to debate as to whether the polity of *kokutai*, with the emperor being the foundation to a body politic, worked to undermine the political life of the people. First and foremost, the Japanese emperor is, traditionally, a sacerdotal authority (祭祀: *saishi*) (Titus 1974: 34, 37). The imperial lineage was presupposed to originate from the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu*, and the emperor played the role of transmitting God's words to the people. It was through ritual ceremonies that the emperor mediated the interaction of his people (公民/臣民: *kōmin/shinmin*) with his ancestor, the God *Amaterasu* (Titus 1974: 47). The emperor was thus 'sacred and inviolable', and his authority was enacted upon his divinity, as codified in the Imperial Constitution (the Meiji Constitution, promulgated in 1889) (Titus 1974: 44). *Shintōism* (神道) – a Japanese indigenous, public religion – was formalised as the religion of the imperial household, and the emperor became the executor of state ritual. David Titus describes that the *shintō* ritual which the Japanese emperor performs is equivalent to the state rituals which Western monarchies operate: for example, the head of Anglican Church is represented by the Queen of England. The inviolability of the



emperor's authority prescribed that the natural will of the monarch was sovereign: his subjectivity was coordinate with legal personality (Minear 1970: 60). Today, those Japanese who claim to belong to a particular religion are small in number, in comparison to people abroad, most of whom – around 80 percent of the world's population – follow a specific religion (Tokoro 2012: 120). Nonetheless, many Japanese mores, customs and rituals – including festival events (e.g. 七五三: *hichigosan* – a traditional rite of passage celebrating girls who turn three or seven years of age and boys who turn three or five years of age for their growth; and 神嘗祭: *kannamesai* – an event to appreciate a harvest by presenting freshly harvested rice to the God *Amaterasu*), and the custom of worshipping at shrines – are those that emanate from *Shintōism* (Tokoro 2012: 120). The Japanese today are not aware of the fact that their everyday lives are not entirely disconnected from the emperor system, that is, from the past or the historical threads of tradition and authority which the emperor system gave rise to, despite their sense of connection to religion and tradition being low. The political implication of this gap means that the contemporary Japanese are disconnected from their history, being incapable of identifying the borders of their public space which work to protect and sustain their freedom as well as to stem the overflow of private activities and epistemologies into the realm of authentic communication (see Chapter 5).

Addressing sovereignty, religious authority, and legal and ethical sources, this foundation – Japan's emperor system – provided what Arendt would describe as elements that endow 'political structures with durability, continuance and permanence' rather than taking the form merely of a political institution and abstract authority (1993: 127). According to John Haley, one of the influential legal experts on East Asia, however, 'the all-pervasive authority of the state as embodied in the office and person of the emperor was... "totalitarian" in scope' (1995: 27). Referring to Benjamin Schwartz, Haley maintains that its political culture was 'unambiguously authoritarian and based on a positive evaluation of hierarchy and status' (1995: 27). Furthermore, he adds that traditional East Asian societies in general could neither develop a concept of a natural law nor the idea of a rule of law which checks the arbitrary power of state authority (1995: 27). Had this been the case, then why is it that there was, as explored in Chapter 3, a rise in individual actions and collective movements in the *bakumatsu* period (e.g. the

actions of lower and middle class samurai, and the political statements and submissions of *daimyo* to shogun for the *bakuhau* reform) in the face of endogenous and exogenous crises? Put differently, was the freedom of the public space – participation, deliberation and discussion; ‘public happiness’ which consists in ‘having a share in public business’ (Arendt 1990: 119) – absent or precluded in Japan’s emperor-predicated polity?

Furthermore, did not the emperor system function to produce the enduring measures of tradition, rituals and authority that became the aegis and the ethics of the public realm, thereby providing standards of judgment, principles of action, and a source of communicability?

Arendt’s work on the political public realm, which understands politics by the fundamental human activities of the *vita activa* and emphasises the uniqueness and differences of each territorially specific public realm, highlights the potential flaws in the methodology of analysis which modern scholars like Maruyama and Haley adopt. To a large degree, the methodological flaws of their studies can be seen to stem from the way in which modern scholars conduct comparative studies, overriding Japan’s particularity with the historical models and experiences of the West. Put differently, comparative studies are skewed when researchers transplant the standards of analysis from one to another without attending to the specificity of a given public space, in which there is a *historical sedimentation* of the people’s or the citizens’ ‘judicious exchange of opinion’ (Arendt 1993: 223). By contrast, a prescription to decode the multiplicities of particularity may be found in Arendt’s work on judgment, a process which engages us in critical thinking – in an enlarged mentality – and has us draw meanings out of the public phenomena of discussions and persuasions.

In this regard, Sakamoto Takao’s counter-argument against conventional propositions about Japan’s public realm, put forward by mainstream Marxists and by orthodox comparative studies, makes a credible appeal to the political faculty of judgment. He challenges such propositions by exploring further the relationship between the emperor and the people in the Meiji period, while discrediting the transplantation of standards to examine a public realm. For Japanese Marxists, for any nation a course of modernisation starts with the advent of the class, that is, when the revolutionary forces were formed upon such social division. While a great volume of Marxist writing proposes

that the French Revolution is a paradigmatic historical point and event in which the principle of people's sovereignty was propounded for the first time in human history and that every other nation is to undergo the similar event, Sakamoto questions why deliberations on the issue of people's sovereignty and the emperor in Japan must defer to the example of the French Revolution (2001: 166).

For Sakamoto, the Japanese experience of conflicts between the people and the ruling authority never revolved around the relation between the people and the emperor (Titus 1974: 44; Sakamoto 2001: 188). In the case of France, for example, the conflict between the people and the monarch occurred over the principle of the political system. Sakamoto explains that there were many political creeds, such as monarchist, republican, Napoleonist, and Bourbonist, whose battles were in relation to this principle.<sup>67</sup> Taking the example of the *People's Rights Movement* (自由民権運動: *jiyū minken undō*) in Japan, which began in 1874 and has been widely regarded as an incipient democratic movement, Sakamoto emphasises that, in contrast to the French experience, the issue of the people's rights movement was not over *kokutai*: the principle of the polity and the political system (2001: 187). Although the people's rights movement eventually surrendered to the arbitrary power of the Meiji government, their battle was directed to the oligarchy of *Meiji Sacchō* (薩長) government (the factions comprised of political leaders from *Satsuma* and *Chōshū han*), which was considered to be obstructing the implementation of the *Emperor's Charter Oath* of 1868 (五箇条の御誓文: *gokajō no goseimon*).<sup>68</sup> The movement criticised the Meiji oligarchs and their arbitrary exercise of the authority of the emperor, and hence its opposition was neither against the emperor nor against its polity

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<sup>67</sup> According to Izawa Motohiko, the religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are monotheistic: People worship one absolute God, under which everyone is equal, including the monarch. Under monotheism, accordingly, an event such as the French Revolution is possible, because, under God, people can subvert the authority of the monarch (cited in Tokoro 2012: 17). While monarchs in the medieval age would assert their power by resorting to the theory of the divine right of kings, the entities of God and monarchs meant different things to people. In this regard, it is possible to attribute the reason for the historical absence of conflicts between the people and the emperor in Japan to the fact that the Japanese emperor is overlapped with religion (God) (Izawa cited in Tokoro 2012: 17).

<sup>68</sup> Alternatively called *the Five Article Charter Oath* (McLaren 1979: 8): 'An Assembly widely convoked shall be established, and thus great stress shall be laid upon public opinion'; 'The welfare of the whole nation shall be promoted by the everlasting efforts of the governing and the governed classes'; 'All subjects, civil and military officers, as well as other people shall do their best, and never grow weary in accomplishing their legitimate purposes'; 'All absurd usages shall be abandoned; justice and rightness shall regulate all actions'; 'Knowledge shall be sought or all over the world, and thus shall be strengthened the foundations of the Imperial Polity'.

(Sakamoto 2001: 183, 187). Neither the Meiji government nor the people disagreed over the imperative of parliament and the governance of the emperor. Sakamoto writes that parliamentary politics under the governance of the emperor is not a contradiction in the historical experience of Japan (2001: 189). In this regard, Japan's emperor can be seen as a guidepost or medium for the people to imagine the public and its borders, the experiences of which were seen in their call for a parliament and in their identification of the problem of *Meiji Sacchō* government. As seen in arguments such as Haley's, the reduction of the emperor system or Japan's *kokutai* to an 'authoritarian' entity misses the important balance found in the Japanese experience of freedom and their support of the emperor system.

Moreover, postwar Japanese historiography often elides the fact that the origin of Japan's parliamentary system harks back to the 1868 Oath. The Oath endorsed the importance of public participation, deliberation and discussion before matters of common concern were to be decided. The emperor declared he would conduct his governance in accordance with the opinions which were submitted to the meetings that were widely held in the public realm (Sakamoto 2001: 182-183). Freedom of the public space was thus endorsed by the emperor. Furthermore, between the mid-1910s and the mid-1930s, subsequent to the breakout of popular controversy about the interpretation of the Imperial Constitution, Sakamoto contends that it was the theory of constitutional law scholar Minobe Tatsukichi (1873-1948) that was the official interpretation of the government rather than that of Uesugi Shinkichi (2001: 173). On one side, perceiving the emperor system from the viewpoint of a personal relationship between the master and the loyalist, Uesugi interpreted the key polemic – the assumption of governing-right (統治権の総攬: *tōchiken no sōran*) – as imputed to the emperor, the monarch (Sakamoto 2001: 173). On the other side, Minobe, who laid out the theory of the emperor as an institution (天皇機関説: *tennō kikansetsu*), argued that the sovereignty of modern Japan rests on the *totality* of the state. Minobe's theory explained that among all the institutions of the public, the emperor sat as the topmost institution, exercising his sovereignty which was accountable to the totality of the country (Sakamoto 2001: 174). Until the mid-1930s, it was Minobe's theory that the Imperial Constitution was predicated upon.

In the history of Japan, few emperors have taken the administrative seat of politics in practice. While until 1945 the sovereignty of the country was traditionally assumed by the emperor, Nakanishi writes that politics – administration and governance – was, for the greater part of Japanese political history, virtually delegated by the emperor, as the emperor insulated himself from the direct governance of the country (2005: 35). From the emergence of the *ritsuryō* state in the seventh century to the end of the Tokugawa epoch, it was the department called *dajōkan* (太政官) that took charge of administration in sitting at the highest rank of the state apparatus.<sup>69</sup> During the Tokugawa era, the shogunate carried out political administration, while the emperor conferred legitimacy on the shogunate's exercise of political authority. As seen in Chapter 3, represented by the *bakuhan* system, the existence of two heads to the state – the emperor and the shogunate or the government – allowed for a form of polity in which multi-tiered political authorities and agents could co-exist, underpinned by an emperor system which served as a latent and visible unifying medium. It was in this polity at the *bakumatsu* period that there was an increasing scope and space for ordinary people to take part in the business of the public, the space which was also witnessed over the aforementioned People's Rights Movement in the early Meiji period.

The question arises again, then, of whether Japan's *kokutai*, prior to the establishment of modern democratic institutions after the 1946 Constitution, necessarily took the form of an authoritarian polity in which Japan's emperor arbitrarily exercised political rulership. Semantics offers a clue. The 1889 Imperial Constitution was based on the drafts of Inoue Kowashi (1844-1895), one of the prominent statesmen of the Meiji period, and Hermann Roesler, a German legal scholar. While Article 1 stated that the Empire of Japan was governed by the imperial lineage, three meanings of the verb *to govern*, were at their disposal. The term, *shirasu* (治ス), was used in the original draft of Inoue, although the word was later replaced with the generic term *tōchisu* (統治ス) (Sakamoto 2005: 35). Sakamoto construes that the classical word *shirasu* is a specific word and a grammatical verb which takes the emperor only as its subject. *Shirasu* stands

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<sup>69</sup> The political authority and power of the Japanese emperor was much more limited than that of the Chinese emperor during the period of the *ritsuryō* state. The governance was, largely, handled by the officials of *dajōkan* (Sakamoto 2005: 59; Mizubayashi 2006: 9). John Hall (1968: 20) also argues that 'the head of the Japanese imperial family did not often exercise political power'.

against the term *ushihaku*, which indicates a ruling, but one which is exercised as though the ruling were a property of the private individual (Sakamoto 2001: 180). In contrast to *ushihaku*, then, *shirasu* suggests that the emperor appreciates that the right of governance is one that he takes care of as a property of *the public* (Sakamoto 2001: 180). In this view, an emperor-centred polity by no means signifies that the right of governance conferred upon the emperor arbitrarily parts company from the concerns of the commonweal.

In *Shōchō Tennō Seido to Nihon no Raireki (The Emperor System as a National Symbol and the Genealogy of Japan)*(1995), Sakamoto examines the Bill of Rights in the context of Japan's Imperial Constitution. Referring to the dictionary which provides the official interpretation of the Imperial Constitution (憲法義解: *kenpōgige*), Sakamoto stresses that the stipulation, *the right and duty of the people* (臣民權利義務: *shinmin kenri gimu*), in the Imperial Constitution does not directly suggest that the Japanese people were passive receivers of this provision (1995: 180). According to the dictionary of the Imperial Constitution, the Japanese idea of people's rights and duties is predicated on the notion of *reciprocity*. This point, as seen in Chapter 3, upholds the notion of 'consensual hierarchy' binding the relationship between the master and the loyalists. For Sakamoto, the notion of reciprocity means that the emperor has cherished his people as a treasure since time immemorial and that the people should appreciate their happiness and promise compliance to the emperor (1995: 180). While philosopher Nakae Chōmin (1847-1901) translated the notion of people's rights in the Constitution as *gifted rights* (恩賜の民権: *onchō no minken*), the idea of gift is fundamentally different from the idea of human rights assured by the natural law of the West (Sakamoto 1995: 180). Sakamoto writes that in the Meiji period, the right to participate in matters of politics in exchange for the payment of levies was a common understanding among the members of the general public (1995: 180). This understanding existed within the traditional ways in which rural villages managed their communities. For instance, it has been increasingly recognised that peasant uprisings – *ikki* (百姓一揆: *hyakushō ikki*) – in the Tokugawa period were occurrences arising from people's consciousness of rights – vested rights or interests – rather than the natural outbreaks out of human miseries and woes (Sakamoto 1995: 180). In this regard, the awareness of a 'right' to participate in the political public space was by no means absent in the history of Japan, particularly, in the history of practice,

notwithstanding the fact that this Japanese experience differed from that of the West, where people's rights were endorsed by natural law.

Sakamoto argues that historian Yamaji Aizan (1865-1917) sharply criticised the dominant historiography in modern Japan which posited the idea of human rights as no more than the product of the West, and thus presumed that Japan's *kokutai* was bereft of political life and was rather a place where people were thoroughly subject to political authority. For Yamaji however, since the ancient epoch, the Japanese have appreciated their capacity to defend their rights and hence have actively participated in the reforms of government once they found political authorities to be unjust (Sakamoto 1995: 181). The *ritsuryō* state, Yamaji maintains, was an example of how the imperial court established the new state in response to the protests of the people against the despotic rule of large clans that had made their lives a struggle. For Yamaji, the political rulers of Japan could not have sustained the reign if they diminished the rights of people (Sakamoto 1995: 181).

In short, Sakamoto's examination of the characteristics of Japan's emperor and the emperor system which form the country's body politic challenges the orthodoxy of comparative studies, which frequently apply standards drawn from the experiences of the West to the analysis of political life in a disparate public space. Sakamoto's study of Japan's political public space demonstrates that the political confrontations between the people and the ruling authority were never confrontations between the people and the emperor. The foundation to Japan's body politic, the emperor system, was that which endowed the political structures of Japan with durability, continuity and permanence by mediating the practice of customs and tradition, rather than the emperor's expedient and monopolistic usage of political authority for his ruling. Delegating the task of administration and governance to a separate political body is an example which substantiates this characterisation of the emperor system. Moreover, in exchange for the payment of levies, it was a Japanese custom in rural villages to access what Arendt may describe as a freedom that consists in 'having a share in public business' (1990: 119). The dissolution of village life implies hence the loss of this elemental public realm for the Japanese. Furthermore, as Yamaji maintains, and as Sakamoto reiterates, even without the importation of the European notion of people's rights and the institutions that put these rights in practice, the phenomena of Japan's archaic public realm reveals that the

Japanese possessed a notion of rights, and were capable of acting on these rights, when their vested rights and interests were thought to be endangered. In this view, the emperor system served as the fountainhead of public borders not only in providing the people with the everyday practices of ritual, tradition and customs which work to unite a political community, but also in defending the common welfare and facilitating the political activities of participation and discussion, although such emperor's role in building the borders of the public should be considered separately from government's approaches to the space of freedom in Japan.

*Yoriai and Toshiyori – Public Discussion in the Village Communities of Early Modern Japan*

To the preceding account of the emperor system as the foundation to Japan's body politic and the fountainhead of Japan's public borders, the scholarship of Japan's leading anthropologist Miyamoto Tsuneichi adds considerable insight, in the form of his description of those facets of cultural practice which characterised public life in early modern Japan. Born in 1907, Miyamoto lived for 73 years, relying on his sturdy feet to travel throughout the archipelago of Japan. His travel totalled almost 160,000 km, the distance equivalent to four times round the earth (Sano 2010: 11). As Miyamoto travelled, he examined Japan. His studies reach beyond the field of anthropology to include folklore, oral-narrative, life-lyric, agricultural technology and economy, archaeology, history of the frontier and theory of Japanese culture, to name a few. From prewar times, through war to post-war: from the period of high economic growth to its bubble, the Japanese archipelago was thoroughly inspected (Sano 2010: 10). His photography archive amounts to almost 100,000 pictures, and the compilations of his writings total over 100 volumes. From his depth of experience and observation, Miyamoto illustrates a critical change in the life styles of the Japanese, expressing that the Japanese mindset is no longer that of a self-employer (自営の民衆: *jieiteki minshū*) but is that of an employee (雇用の民衆: *koyōteki minshū*). Behind the decline of spontaneity and independence, he found a flood of American culture, the onslaught of a culture with which the Japanese could have no dispute (1982: 30-31). For him, the rift that began in 1945 has shrouded the public realm that once existed in Japan.



In *Wasurerareta Nihonjin (The Forgotten Japanese)*(2011) and *Shomin no Hakken (the Discovery of the People)*(1961), Miyamoto describes a once rich and abundant public sphere made up of Japanese particularities. Miyamoto was primarily interested in the everyday lives of ordinary people, not those of the privileged or the aristocrat. In examining the life of people in rural areas, particularly in the islands of Southern Japan – the islands around Setonaikai; the sea surrounded by the main island of Japan; the Shikoku and Kyūshū regions; and the islands around the West Kyūshū – he discovered societies that were interwoven more by shared territory than by blood relationship. In these communities, a public space was built not by a collective of people related to the same family or clan but by people who mixed with other families. In this type of society, Miyamoto notes, there was a wide development of gatherings and meetings named *yoriai* (寄りあい) through which people deepened their mutual ties. For example, *Matsuura ikki* (松浦一揆), which emerged in the medieval period in the West Kyūshū, exemplified the existence of authentic politics or the political characteristics of a Japanese public sphere that was underpinned by a form of equality. The more diverse the families that began to join the meetings, the more the hierarchy previously attached to the Japanese family system atrophied.<sup>70</sup> Miyamoto explains that if the status of participating families was markedly different, a group which formed a public space could not exert leverage as the group. Hence the members of the group – insofar as they joined the public realm – had to discard their concerns with the position and status of each family (2011: 53). This *yoriai* experience substantiates the fact that a public sphere – the condition in which citizens participate equally in the business of what they commonly share – was lively in Japan’s emperor-centred polity. Although *Matsuura ikki* was made up of the samurai representatives from each village, it did not follow that *yoriai* was confined to the samurai class, as other public spaces were also organised by the different classes or the different occupations. In the Setonai region, diverse groups were created by the lower class of *bushi* or samurai, townsmen-fishermen and producers-guilds, and these groups were called *shū* (衆) (Miyamoto 2011: 46). Miyamoto presumes that the term *shū* (衆) harks back to the word *ikkeshū* (一結衆) – a group of people who assemble in order to

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<sup>70</sup> 本家 (*honke*) and 分家 (*bunke*): the mainstream family, and the families which establish their own families in leaving the mainstream one.

read the Buddhist scriptures – which is found already in the literature of the Kamakura epoch (1185-1333).

While the context of meetings – discussions and decisions – varied depending on the temperament of each *yoriai*, Miyamoto records that the discussions of *mura yoriai* (village meetings gathered by the masters of households) covered issues such as collaborative work (a type of work which required the labour of a whole village), the allocation of public service work (jobs demanded for the regional domain or the state) as well as the affairs of government (2011: 56). Although it is unknown exactly when *yoriai* was established as a culture, Miyamoto presupposes that the *yoriai* custom, equivalent to today's system of regional autonomy, was already seen in each village between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (2011: 57).

Unique to the antiquated public sphere of Japan was the role of the *toshiyori* (elder person) who joined the *toshiyori* cohort after retirement from public service into a life in which their work was limited to the agricultural production of the household (Miyamoto 2011: 55). *Toshiyori* remained – despite retirement – closely connected to the events of ritual ceremonies as well as to village *yoriai*, representing, in many cases, those households whose master could not attend the meetings (Miyamoto 2011: 37, 55-57). *Toshiyori* supervised the process of public events and meetings, and provided consultancy for villagers. Hence most villagers trusted *toshiyori* as reliable figures who had comprehensive skills and knowledge of the daily lives of villagers. They were regarded as great elders whose advice was informed by morality and humane values, and attentive to important human relationships. Villagers believed that this role could only be played by *toshiyori*, who had withdrawn from the frontline of social jobs so that they could insulate themselves from the responsibilities which incumbent workers still had to bear. When conflicts were kindled between the people of a village and those of other villages, it was the *toshiyori* who saw to the negotiation and resolution of inter-village problems. Miyamoto writes that *toshiyori* – who could address their viewpoints firmly and gain the respect of villagers – were known for their trustworthy character often more in other villages where they went for the resolution of inter-village disputes (1961: 92).

Discussing the social changes which followed the over-arching introduction of laws, Miyamoto recalls the stories of an elder who took on diverse rows and disputes in

the villages of Sado Island (located in the Northern Hokuriku region). From the Meiji period (1868-1912) to the Taishō period (1912-1926), there were frequent civil suits in Sado Island. According to this elder, most of these disputes occurred when the people who took advantage of laws asserted their rights against the people who did not know them (Miyamoto 1961: 112). Before the full introduction of laws, most conflicts – often between villages – were resolved by the adjudication of *toshiyori*, who carefully listened to the reasons of each party and made fair judgment on the issues in question. Miyamoto describes how the nature of inter-village disputes was often so complex and grave that rural people needed the assistance of a mediator who used ways of resolution which took into account the realities and reasons of villagers' everyday life, in the course of making their judgments (1961: 113). This elder of Sado Island, who was frequently drawn into the role of mediation, explained that many conflicts emerged because of the misinterpretations of each party: as long as there was a space in which each party could discuss the issues further with the help of mediators, most disagreements could be undone (Miyamoto 1961: 113). However, once laws were applied to the cases as a sole means to resolve problems, the conflicts were removed from the province of mediators, and the real causes of problems were left untouched. Miyamoto points out that the time when the peasants started to realise the problematic aspect of laws, one which they felt increasingly regimented their lives, was almost coeval with the government's implementation of a controlled economy (1961: 114). For Miyamoto, the social order could not be maintained by laws alone as there were many cases in which laws were used as a weapon, facilitating further conflicts (1961: 112).

After 1945, Miyamoto observed a gradual metamorphosis to this type of traditional public realm in Japan, an observation which attests to the increasingly transformed characteristic of Japan's *kokutai*, the emperor-predicated polity, which had previously fostered the people's standards of judgment and served as a source of communicability. In the early postwar period, people began to ignore the archaic form of authority which was built on the nexus of experience and knowledge and, instead, put their faith in a new form of authority which was, often, based on theories and logics (Miyamoto 1961: 99). Around the same time, terms such as democracy and democratisation began to percolate into every corner of villages (Miyamoto 1961: 99).

Miyamoto indicates that although the people in possession of the new form of authority could unfold logical arguments brilliantly, they would lack confidence in their actions and resort to violent critiques of others and the assertion of their own viewpoints. By contrast, the discussions held by the *yoriai* custom were not of such a nature that they were used as a weapon to attack the opinions of others or as expediency for particular groups to consolidate their personal relationships. In Miyamoto's view, words and speeches were authenticated not only by human actions but also by their ability to integrate disagreements and oppositions. Discussions and dialogues conducted in this manner were a medium in which participants gained the fruit of expanding individualised worlds (1961: 100).<sup>71</sup> In this view, the *yoriai* practice and *toshiyori* governance of rural villages in Japan can be seen to evidence not only a vibrant political life in Japan's archaic public space, which has gradually withered away as modern democratic instruments took hold, but also the fact that authentic politics declined as the *kokutai* lost its form. Traditional Japanese communal life was in part animated by the enduring customs, traditions and ethics of which the Japanese question concerns.

Importantly, not all aspects of Japanese communal existence can be characterised as a fertile political life that included diversity, liberty from parochialism, and active political participation. In communal societies, Miyamoto notes, individuality was largely constrained so that a community was able to maintain order (1961: 109). People who transgressed the order of the community were ostracised from their village (村八分: *murahachibu*), and some people had no choice but to relocate to a new village. But at the same time, a community which was no longer united by the power of mutual help was deprived of cohesion, resulting in the dissolution of its totality. Moreover, Miyamoto notes that many rural people were reticent and not necessarily expressive of their opinions (1961: 90). But this did not necessarily mean that people lacked their own viewpoints. What must be understood, Miyamoto maintains, is that the rural village environment, where the life of peasants was encapsulated in an agricultural mode of production, was monotone. As far as one of the village members expressed a viewpoint, it was often the case that those of other peasants were akin to the viewpoint of the former.

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<sup>71</sup> It should be noted that Miyamoto's examination of the change in the character of human speech accords with Hannah Arendt's political thought – see 'Understanding and Politics' (1953: 378).

For Miyamoto, the plain-spoken nature of village communication was part of this reality, in contrast to societies that were composed of people of different occupations and classes, in which the expressions of individuals were more demanded and cultivated.

When these conditions of village communities are considered, how far has postwar Japan gone in terms of realising authentic politics in comparison with this archaic model? Miyamoto believes that a much more vivid and vigorous public space existed in the archaic model. Because people's lives were dependent on agriculture and, largely, on the collaborative work of an entire village, Miyamoto argues that one of the essential things which affected the survival of a community was the public realm – the space to discuss (1961: 109). In the villages where there was a development of groups in relation to the activity of Buddhism, the frequency of *yoriai* was relatively higher, 60 to 70 times annually (Miyamoto 1961: 109). This amounted to around 300 to 400 hours in a year. Miyamoto writes that people participated in *yoriai* as often as six times a month, equivalent to once every five days. When it came to young people, because they often stayed overnight for the *yoriai* meetings, a custom of accommodation prevailed throughout rural areas in Japan. Miyamoto explains that people strove for mutual understanding far more earnestly in the old days than in the present (1961: 110). In these respects, Miyamoto Tsuneichi's anthropological study of Japan's public realm contributes to the study of Japanese political life, illustrating to a significant degree the existence of authentic political public space in early modern Japan.<sup>72</sup> Further, the vigorous characteristics of Japan's archaic public realm which we may be able to find from Miyamoto's investigation was the public space of these periods in which the public relevance of the emperor system was far more conspicuous and deeper, in comparison to its relevance to the public space of contemporary Japan.

Miyamoto's studies thus provide important evidence to counter the Japanese Marxist arguments, represented in this chapter by Maruyama Masao, that the fact that class consciousness did not develop in Japan meant that the country saw little development of its political life until sometime in the postwar period. Even as recently as the Tokugawa era, Miyamoto shows, village headmen (庄屋: *shōya*), who worked for the

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<sup>72</sup>In his study of Miyamoto's work, Sano writes that: '民主主義はアメリカの専売特許ではなく、日本にも昔から民主主義はあった' – 'Democracy is not the patent of America. There has been also democracy in Japan since time-immemorial' (2010: 198, mt).

lord and for the lord's rule of a village by looking after taxation and administration, were representative of the voices of villagers and would take role of assisting the uprisings of villagers against their lords in village litigation (村訴: *sonso*)<sup>73</sup> (1961: 92). Cases where village headmen deceived villagers for their benefit were few compared to those where village headmen stood by the side of villagers in order to fight against the corrupt lord. Needless to say, there was a class difference between village headmen and villagers, but the former were rather of the personality who was respected by peasant villagers and would assist the submission of villagers' discontents. Miyamoto's anthropological study of Japan's public realm thus provides a stark contrast to postwar Japanese historiography, painting a picture of how an authentic politics can be understood to have thrived upon the foundation of *kokutai*. Workable interactions and authentic communication in communities were realisable by virtue of the existence and stability of the foundation to a body politic, centering – in the case of Japan – on the emperor.

### *Bushidō – the Principles of the Political Agent*

Chapter 1 of this thesis explored Arendt's idea of political agency. The citizen is an agent who is equipped with a set of political virtues such as glory, courage and responsibility. The chapter argued that Arendt defines citizenship in this way, that is, not in relation to the right or qualifications given by the state institutions or system but rather as a kind of ontology – a way of living as *being* political. Hannah Arendt's notion of public space qualifies the attitudes, approaches and commitments of the subject who enters into the sphere. Highlighting the virtuosity of human action, Arendt contends that there are standards of appropriateness in each public realm – for example, the beauty of artwork and the principles of actions which form virtues such as glory, courage and responsibility – which build upon the historical sedimentation of the citizens' exchange of their opinions. By the same token, Japan's public realm prescribes what political action and speech is virtuous in Japan. This section sheds light on *bushidō*, or samurai ethics (武士道) – an emblematic manifestation of Japan's emperor-centred polity or *kokutai* – which

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<sup>73</sup> Miyamoto writes that among uprisings that are called *hyakushō ikki*, there was a riot classified as *yonaoshi sōdō* (the riot to reform society) in which lower class of people and village headman attacked a wholesaler; on the other hand, there was a riot or uprising classified as *village litigation* in which all the residents of a village waged a battle against their lord (1961: 92).

this thesis argues demonstrate the principles that inspire the action of the political agents in Japan's archaic public realm. It addresses the spiritual criteria which guide the agent's actions in a shared realm and his or her communication with fellow citizens. It is worthy noting that *bushidō* has a number of characteristics that are parallel to the virtues of citizenship celebrated in ancient Athens.

Nitobe Inazō's *Bushidō*, translated into English at the turn of the twentieth century, is a renowned text that familiarised the world with Japanese *bushi* ethics. In the introduction to this book, William Griffis – a pioneer educator who introduced the American public-school system in Japan after his arrival in 1870 and who was acquainted with Nitobe – declares his esteem for *bushidō*, writing that 'it was too much alive, and it died at last only in its splendour and strength' (in Nitobe 1974: xx). Griffis writes that Japanese feudalism was 'the plant and flower of light' to him, a historical experience which died without a convincing defender (in Nitobe 1974: xviii). Applying the term chivalry to *bushidō*, Nitobe defines this ethics as the code of moral principles to which *bushi* (samurai or warriors) submitted themselves (1974: 5).

*Bushidō* arose, in the twelfth century, in tandem with the ascendance of Miyamoto no Yoritomo, the founder and first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate. It inherited the teachings of three religions: Zen Buddhism, *Shintōism* and Confucianism (Nitobe 1974: 11-15). Zen Buddhism teaches *bushi* the importance of meditation as human thought is considered to be able to reach the domain of the Absolute through this practice. *Shintōism* advises loyalty to the sovereign imperial lineage, through which *bushi* reveres ancestral memory and cultivates filial piety (Nitobe 1974: 12). Nitobe explains that *Shintōism* believes in the innate goodness of the human soul and keeps the human heart in a perfectly placid and transparent form (1974: 12). For *Shintōism*, knowledge has an ethical rather than scientific nature. Presupposing the emperor as the bodily representative of Heaven on earth, *Shintōism* teaches *bushi* the most essential virtues – patriotism and loyalty. Confucianism explains that the ethics of human relationships is based on five relations: master/servant, father/son, husband/wife, elder/youth and friend/friend (Nitobe 1974: 15). Overall, *bushidō* consists of seven principal virtues: rectitude or justice (義: *gi*), courage (勇: *yū*), benevolence (仁: *jin*), politeness or respect (礼: *rei*), veracity or honesty (信 or 誠: *makoto*), honour (名誉: *meiyo*) and loyalty (忠義: *chūgi*).

In the context of this discussion, it is worth highlighting that the spirituality of Japanese *bushi*, inspired by *bushi* ethics, bears some affinity to the political virtues of ancient Greece. Nakae Chōmin's translation in the Meiji period of the French term *citoyen* for the Japanese words *shi* (士) or *kokujin* (国人) – both of which refer to *bushi* – (Sakamoto 2002: 2) is a noteworthy instance of the *bushi*-citizen analogy. The important spiritual parallels between the two cultural dispositions can be elaborated further, with reference to Mishima Yukio's work on *Recorded Words of the Hagakure Master*, better known, simply, as *Hagakure*. *Hagakure* is a transcription of Yamamoto Jōchō's oral philosophy of *bushidō*. Yamamoto was a *bushi* of the Saga domain (1659-1719) who lived in seclusion for 20 years after his industrious service to his lord Nabeshima Mitsushige, the second *daimyo* of the Saga *han*. Mishima identifies three major characteristics of *Hagakure*: a philosophy of action, a philosophy of love and a 'living philosophy' (1977: 39-43). *Bushidō* provides neither codified teachings nor absolute moral orders which indicate the standards of good and evil, or right and wrong. It is a compilation of adages which contain many discrepancies and contradictions, and whose wisdom is believed to be acquired only through the practice of action (Mishima 1977: 42).

*Hagakure*'s philosophy of action prescribes the daily demeanour of *bushi* while at the same time encouraging them to transcend the limitations of their minds and to acquire such virtues as glory, excellence and courage. The captivating aspect of *Hagakure* teaching is that it emphasises the importance of modesty, while it never teaches one-dimensional ethics. The ethics teaches that for 'human energy [to bring] about great action according to the physical laws of energy', *bushi* should not confine their lives only to the virtue of modesty but should seek development in the way that their virtuous actions can transcend the training (Mishima 1977: 44).<sup>74</sup> When it comes to judgment in

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<sup>74</sup> As seen in the example of *bushidō* whose teaching addresses ethics in the way of presenting discrepancies and contradictions, the public space cannot be stabilised and sustained by the authority's dictation of moral goodness. For example, Arendt discusses the condition of the political public space by drawing guidance from Machiavelli's teaching which advises 'how *not* to be good' (1958: 77). Arendt writes that 'when [Machiavelli] insists that in the public-political realm men "should learn how not to be good", he of course never meant that they should learn how to be evil... he opposed both concepts of the good which we find in our [Western] tradition: the Greek concept of the "good for" or fitness, and the Christian concept of an absolute goodness which is not of this world' (1993: 137). She explains that 'the specifically political human quality' of *virtù* does not possess 'the connotation of moral character... *Virtù* is the response, summoned up by man, to the world, or rather to the constellation of *fortuna* in which the world opens up, presents and offers itself to him, to his *virtù*' (1993: 137). Forming political agency in the



contemporary life, it is not, arguably, as extreme as judgment in the life of *bushi* whose resolution stakes nothing less than his life. For Mishima, ‘the Way of the Samurai is death’ (1977: 44). As a form of spiritual training, *bushidō* confronts the *bushi* with death, which can arrive at any moment, and prepares him for it. But further, this preparation also aims to prevent them from taking ‘mistaken action’, given that such action means the ceasing of their lives (Mishima 1977: 45). Mishima construes that even if actions fail, samurai’s ‘resolution’ to death or ‘self-destruction’ protects their honour (1977: 46). For the *bushi*, that is, a mind that is ready for death at any time underlies the act of making correct decisions or judgments, and to this extent, samurai can discern the right time to cease their lives. By virtue of constantly preparing themselves for the possibility of death, ‘time is insignificant’ for the *bushi*: the notion that ‘there is no truth except from moment to moment’ has the *bushi* think each day is their last and live their lives to the full (Mishima 1977: 43).

Such *bushi* ethics of death is not unique to the context of Japan’s public space, with that of a counterpart being also found in the philosophy of ancient Greece. Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot, who examine the ethics of the Hellenic and Roman periods, argue that the later Stoicism (Epictetus, Marcus-Aurelius) taught the principles of the human soul which are equivalent to Friedrich Nietzsche’s idea of the active spirit which affirms life and Being (Foucault 1987: 9).<sup>75</sup> The proverbs of Montaigne and Seneca illustrate the importance of envisioning death as a spiritual exercise which constantly pulls human ontology over to the present moment: ‘keep death before your eyes every day... then you will never have any abject thought nor any excessive desire’ (Epictetus cited in Hadot 1995: 96). For Hadot, training the mind to imagine death in everyday life elevates one’s thought to the apex of the Whole, which eventually fosters the greatness of the soul (1995: 97). An excellent spirit is, according to Nietzsche, an active, powerful soul that affirms his existence, regardless of losses, deprivations and disgraces, with ‘a

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public realm is not equivalent, that is, to the agency’s adoption and absorption of the two concepts of the good which Arendt describes (i.e. The Greek and Christian concepts): Rather, as *bushidō*’s contradictory adages suggest, political agency can be fostered through one’s training of the mind to respond to the world – not in the way in which one follows morality or its standards (of the good or the bad) but in the way in which one’s response can differ – for example, by transcending such teachings – depending on the situation.

<sup>75</sup>The theme of death was however upset later by Christianity’s introduction of salvation.

greater fullness and powerfulness... and with a new increase in the blissfulness of love' (1968: 532).

In a similar vein, *Hagakure* is a living philosophy that 'holds life and death as the two sides of one shield' (Mishima 1977: 42). Mishima's study of *Hagakure* suggests the analogy between *Hagakure* and Epicurean Stoicism, given *Hagakure*'s assertion that 'human life lasts but an instant. One should spend it doing what one pleases...' (Mishima 1977: 42). Although *bushidō* accedes to the teachings of three religions – Buddhism, *Shintōism* and Confucianism – which instruct disciplined actions, the dynamics of *bushidō* lie in its nurturing in trainees of the principles which invoke the actions of independence, vigour and valour. In view of this, progressive intellectual Maruyama's argument that the Japanese were unable to draw any clear line of demarcation between the public and the private domains and never questioned the morality of their actions because they incorporated the private domains into the domain of the public, the emperor, does not appear to provide an adequate account of *kokutai* and the people within this body politic. *Bushidō* is a symbolic example of an ethics developed from Japan's emperor system, a tradition which taught loyalty to the imperial lineage (as Maruyama holds) and a practice which served as a source of communicability in Japan's archaic public realm. However, as mirrored in the fact that its teachings consist of adages that contain discrepancies and contradictions, such as with the tension between 'modesty' and living life to the fullest, *bushidō* arguably fosters in the minds of people the standards of judgment or taste, as it were, to evaluate, to re-evaluate and to discern matters of quality (and *among* qualities), rather than being a practice of *kokutai* which directs people away from moral questions and concerns.

Here, Arendt's analysis of culture – in which she posits a critical connection between moral and aesthetic or reflective judgment, which enables, for example, people to discern the right moments or exceptional matters amid their submersion in the mundane everyday lives – may help to highlight the significance of traditions, such as *bushidō*:

We can *rise above* specialization and philistinism of all sorts to the extent that we learn how to exercise our taste freely... we shall be able to understand that even if all criticism

of Plato is right, Plato may still be better company than his critics... what the Romans... thought a cultivated person ought to be: one who knows how to choose his company among men, among things, among thoughts, in the present as well as in the past. (Arendt 1993: 225-226, italics added)

*Contra* Maruyama, without such yardsticks of judgment as *bushidō*, which forms a border of Japan's public space and which derives from the emperor-predicated polity, it is arguable whether people are not more likely to fail in their moral deliberation when confronted with occasions that call for their judgment. These standards represent the historical sedimentation of deliberations and decisions made by a public, as to 'what the world *qua* world is supposed to look and sound like, how it is supposed to be looked at and listened to' (Arendt 2007: 200). Moreover, without such standards of judgment, it is also arguable whether people can discern the time that asks them to *rise above* the general judgment, in other words, to discern matters of quality. Put differently, without these standards, it is questionable whether people are able to make exceptional decisions in the face of significant moments – a leap from the general to the exceptional. *Bushidō*, as a form of authority seems to provide people with an essential *reservoir* from which the principle of action springs. Furthermore, it is arguable whether the claim for freedom of thought, action and speech must inevitably be accompanied by the recession of traditions, which may offer a guidance for overcoming those ills, such as consumerism and conformism, that have hastened the decline of the public space in the modern age. *Bushidō* is an example of a tradition that is particular to the public space of Japan and of a standard of judgment that makes actions and communications in Japan's public realm possible. A phenomenal characteristic of this ethics rests on its teachings consisting of adages that unfold discrepancies and contradictions, which train the human mind to discern the time of exception, that is, which equip one with an ability to make right decisions in discerning the difference in situations and conditions.

Crucial to *Hagakure*'s teaching is that its ethics is fundamentally not introspective but concerns external reflection (Mishima 1977: 60) and thus the beauty of appearance (1977: 66). In other words, it concerns the public realm where the self is manifest, not in the form of the private but with the concerns of the public and its light. Mishima

perceptively argues that ‘the samurai ethic is a political science of the heart’ (1977: 60). In this view, Mishima’s study of *Hagakure-bushidō* parallels Arendt’s political phenomenology which concerns human praxis or action, particularly, its appearance in the public space. For Mishima, the spiritual principles which form *bushi* agency and give rise to his action is an ideal model of citizenship, providing guidance to the way of living for many contemporary Japanese who have distanced themselves from Japan’s past (1977: 73). Although *bushidō* has been linked to wartime political indoctrination and publicly scrutinised in the postwar period as a dangerous ethics (Mishima 1977: 40), it appears that the postwar isolation of traditions in Japan corrodes the public space rather than develops it, since it eliminates the principles of action which would form political agency, inspire communicability and revitalise Japan’s public space. Furthermore, it casts a shadow over post-1945 society because the meanings of citizenry action cannot be found or derived after tradition disappears, and its decline dissolves the memory of Japan’s history.

### *Conclusion*

The Japanese question concerns the inalienable relation between the emperor in Japan and a body politic, namely, the synthesis of existential structures, including the ethics of people, the way of governance and the interactive mode of communities. The Japanese question is significant because its proposition establishes an analytical cornerstone to answer the question of whether modernisation of the structures and institutions of a polity – e.g. parliament, political parties and suffrage – necessarily turns a human community into a political community. In pursuit of the Japanese question, this chapter’s discussion of three of Japan’s particularities – the emperor system, Miyamoto Tsuneichi’s anthropological investigation of Japan’s archaic public realm and *bushidō*, the principle of political action – has demonstrated the extent to which a lively political public sphere was evident in Japan, *prior* to its modernisation which accelerated in the years immediately following Japan’s defeat in World War II. In Part III of this thesis, the discussion turns to the political realm of postwar Japan after 1945, in order to explore the vitality or otherwise of Japan’s postwar public realm, primarily by dissecting the

characteristics and narratives of those diverse social movements which most appear to represent public political action on the part of the Japanese citizenry.

## CHAPTER 5

### *The Early Postwar Period: The Ephemeral Political Role of Labour Movements*

The capitalist development has altered the structure and function of two classes [the bourgeoisie and the proletariat] in such a way that they no longer appear to be agents of historical transformation. An overriding interest in the preservation and improvement of the institutional status quo *unites* the former antagonists in the most advanced areas of contemporary society. (Marcuse 1972: 11, italics added)

#### *Introduction*

A founder of the Japan Communist Party (JCP), Nosaka Sanzō, was warmly welcomed by a number of people upon his return to Japan in January 1946 as a hero of the time. After 16 years abroad advancing his political activism in Russia and China, upon his return to the home country Nosaka maintained an inconclusive and peculiar attitude towards Japan's emperor system (Kanda 1983: 118-122). His attitude differed from that of the JCP, which was adamant in its objective of abolishing the emperor system entirely. As 'the popular front' (Carlile 2005: 65) was being organised, Nosaka became silent on this subject, appearing to accede to the Party objective. The popular front, which culminated in calling for the revision of the constitution on the basis of people's sovereignty in early 1946, never achieved consensus among supporters on whether the major principle of the movement was the abrogation of the emperor system (Kanda 1983: 122). Nosaka's silence and the popular front's ambiguity on this issue are examples of how postwar Japan's social movements began to unfold their unique characteristics in departing from the Japanese question. Despite the labour movement's early engagement with a political role in the immediate aftermath of Japan's war defeat, their political missions and ideals began to erode once the American Occupation made a change in its policy known as the 'reverse course', which saw the Occupation to shift the priorities from democratisation of Japan to the economic reconstruction and growth of Japan.

This chapter aims to critically explore whether calls for the revival of democratisation stipulated within the Potsdam Declaration contributed to any realisation of political life in early postwar Japan. The pivotal argument of this chapter is that labour movements in Japan subsumed, in the end, their political agency into the goals of the

*animal laborans* – affluence and the good life – despite the fact that they had begun with political visions and ideals. The *political* endeavours of Japanese labour movements became increasingly compromised as their primary concern with economic security lessened. This compromise was owed also to their failure to situate early concerns over widespread poverty within the Japanese question. This chapter proposes that this failure was a decisive factor in preventing the labour movements from keeping their political role, and hence from pursuing the political question of a form of government which enables as well as protects freedom in postwar Japan.

Firstly, this chapter reviews Arendt's work on the public space, in particular, her theory of what realises political action and what does not. Then, it explores the political role which labour movements demonstrated in the very beginning of the American Occupation of Japan. Here it is argued that the labour unions ruled out the Japanese question notwithstanding their pioneering political role in early postwar Japan. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the Occupation's change in strategic objectives for postwar Japan's reconstruction and the result of this change: Japan's success in attaining 'miraculous' economic growth. Then, the chapter draws on Arendt's distinction between labour and work in order to examine the political implications of the technological revolution and workers' reaction to the change in the production process in Japan. It is argued that the issues of workers' loss of identity and of their workplace were under-discussed topic in political labour movements, exacerbating the atrophy of their political role. Lastly, the chapter critically examines enterprise unionism and productivity movements as aspects of an enterprise culture and an ideological program which divested labour movements of political agency.

#### *For Liberation or Freedom? Action's Inspiration*

Liberation and freedom are not the same; ... liberation may be the condition of freedom but by no means leads automatically to it; ... the notion of liberty implied in liberation can only be negative, and hence, ... even the intention of liberating is not identical with the desire for freedom. (Arendt 1990: 29)

In *On Revolution*, Arendt argues that liberation and freedom are not the same, despite the fact that the difference in their meanings is often forgotten, and that many historical circumstances have attested to the difficulty of drawing the line between them (1990: 29, 33). Arendt thinks it is important to remind political scientists, researchers and scholars of this axiom, because the supposed goal of revolution – in which human actions dynamically spring up – is not liberation but freedom, that is, ‘public happiness’ (1990: 119). However, the history of revolutions frequently evidences the fact that collective actions have ended with liberation. On the one hand, the notion of liberty implied in liberation is *negative* because it suggests a wish or desire to be free *from* ‘unjustified restraint’. Such liberation includes being free from want and fear (Arendt 1990: 32), which are inherent in one of the fundamental modes of human existence – the labouring and consuming being, for which Arendt appropriates the name ‘the *animal laborans*’. Arendt construes that the body of *animal laborans*, which toils restlessly in order to sustain its biological life, is driven by necessity, ‘an overwhelming urgency’ (1990: 59). Building on Marx’s definition, Arendt sees in the twofold activity of labour and consumption ‘man’s metabolism with nature’ (1958: 98). Because ‘the absolute dictate of necessity’ (Arendt 1990: 60) is so relentless, Arendt argues, men of action are often confused as to whether the end of revolution is *life* – the highest good – and, hence, the liberation of ‘the life process of society from the fetters of scarcity’ (1990: 64), or *freedom*, which consists ‘in having a share in public business’ and is inspired by ‘the passion for distinction’ (1990: 119).

Life, the elemental nature of *animal laborans*, is satisfied with the fruit of abundance. By contrast, freedom, on Arendt’s account, is a political phenomenon in which man is not merely a performer in the public space articulating the distinctions and differences of his personality but also a spectator recognising the particularities of his fellow men (Arendt 1990: 30). In the ancient Athenian city-state, the agora thus represented the realm of ‘inter-subjectivity’ (Hinchman & Hinchman 1991: 447). Unlike the necessities, urgencies and wants which underlie human nature, Arendt argues that the public space was not a natural condition, but artificially created and reserved, in view of the mortal existence of human beings and their search for immortality. In order to emphasise the difference between the notions of liberation and freedom, Arendt



reintroduces the term *the social question* which she describes as a ‘reality’ (1990: 59- 60). It is the reality that shows the ‘existence of poverty’, ‘a state of constant want and acute misery’, which subjugates ‘men under the absolute dictate of their bodies, that is, under the absolute dictate of necessity’ (Arendt 1990: 59-60). For her, it is a phenomenon which has gained a new currency since the eighteenth century in which the carriers of the private – the social – entered the realm of politics with concerns over ‘a state of constant want and acute misery’ (Arendt 1990: 60). The French Revolution symbolises the triumph of this social question for Arendt, because the inspiration of action – freedom – was forgotten in time, surrendering its essential orientation to the end of liberation. That is, freedom lost its power of articulation in the face of the absolute dictate of necessity, which held the multitudes captive, notwithstanding the fact that the initiators of actions such as Robespierre were able to discern the difference in the notions of freedom and liberation (1990: 60-61).

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt expounds on the criteria of what constitutes political action and what does not. As discussed in Chapter 1, Arendt’s work on the public realm addresses the differences in the characteristics and roles of collective movements (e.g. revolutions, insurgencies and disobediences) in terms of the activities, epistemologies and ideals of the agents. Through her investigation into the history of labour movements in the West, Arendt finds that although no movements since the rise of capitalism have engaged as vehemently in political battles as labour movements have, the political role of labour movements, in which she contends the economic activities and interests of the members is ‘incidental’, is always short-lived (Arendt 1958: 219). In respect of political movements, she states that the agents in these movements generally articulate ‘their own ideas about the possibilities of democratic government under modern conditions’ (1958: 216). For Arendt, insofar as they play a political role, labour movements – even though their constituencies are labourers – seek the creation of conditions on which a form of government may be founded, that is, a form of government in which freedom is preserved, including the preservation of the means to secure it. Recognising the existence of authentic politics in labour movements at the very incipient stage of their action, Arendt writes that ‘when the labor movement appeared on the public scene, it was the only organization in which men acted and spoke *qua* men – and not *qua*

members of society' (1958: 219). Therefore, when labour and union movements abandon their search for freedom and yield their agency to the elemental nature of those activities which concern life and the satisfaction of it – the good life – Arendt contends that labour movements lose their political stature:

The labour movement, equivocal in its content and aims from the beginning, lost this representation [of the people as a whole] and hence its political role at once wherever the working class became an integral part of society... or where it 'succeeded' in transforming the whole population into a labor society... Under [such] circumstances ... the withering of the public realm... may well find its consummation. (Arendt 1958: 219-220)

Arendt's critical analysis of the characteristics of collective movements provides a basis for identifying the principles that turn collective actions into political movements, but also for problematising those movements which deform the principles and goals of political action and hasten the decline of a public realm. Often, the distinction between political movements and non- or contra-political movements is not as clear as might be expected. In this thesis the focus is on the extent to which a set of movements may disturb the harmony or balance between the ideal of economic security and the ideal of political security, rather than on whether such political movements are present or absent as such in postwar Japan. This focus is complicated by the fact that labour movements, the most publicly conspicuous of political agents, tend to carry a paradox in that these movements can hardly discern the meaning of the political public realm. Put differently, the notion of politics starts to liquidate when the objective of action is reduced to the labour movement's unequivocal aim of satisfying bodily necessity. The following sections explore this point in the context of the public space of early postwar Japan, paying particular attention to the labour movements which pioneered the actualisation of political public space in the first three decades after Japan's defeat in the Second World War.

*The Early Postwar Labour Movements: The Political under the Social Question*

The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of

thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.  
(Koschmann 1996: 11)

It was the statements of the July 1945 Potsdam Declaration indicating the objectives of the Allied Powers that primarily outlined the institutional framework of the new polity of postwar Japan. In the lead-up to the end of the Second World War, prewar political leaders such as Konoe Fumimaro and Yoshida Shigeru agonised over how to redeem the *kokutai* of Japan. However, the extent to which their desire to accomplish this feat was realised is debatable, and is, indeed, a topic which demands further discussion in twenty-first century Japan. In *Senryō to Minshushugi (The Occupation and Democracy)*, Kanda Fuhito illustrates the critical moment when an important clause in the original draft of the Potsdam Declaration was effaced, due to the replacement of the major administrators who had been in charge of the US Occupation of Japan (1983: 36-38). According to the 12<sup>th</sup> Clause of the unpublished original draft which had been handled by pro-Japan statesmen such as the Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius, the statement would accept the reconstruction of Japan's polity upon the principles of a constitutional monarchy (1983: 37). After Stettinius resigned from the post because of illness he was replaced in July 1945 by pro-China statesman James F. Byrnes, who officially publicised the Potsdam Declaration, in which the 12<sup>th</sup> Clause of the original draft had disappeared. On 15 Aug 1945, World War II ended with Japan's acceptance of its defeat and its compliance with the Declaration which stipulated the full integration, for the first time in the history of Japan, of democratic principles (as quoted in Koschmann above) in the national polity (Shiota 1982: 153).

Issued by the General Headquarters (GHQ), a series of reformation guidelines named as the Great Five Reforms was subsequently announced: universal suffrage (women included), liberalisation of education, emancipation from dictatorship, economic democratisation, and the legitimisation of unions and their activities (Kanda 1979: 110; Shiota 1982: 154). Though the policies of the US Occupation appeared, at glance, progressive, Koschmann expresses scepticism over the liberal conception of democracy that these policies upheld (1996: 15). For him, the minimalist approach of the Allied Powers to Japan's democratisation – underscored by the Potsdam Declaration – was 'generally consistent with a liberal notion of democracy defined as guaranteed rights in

the private realm plus free competition in the marketplace and representative government...’ (Koschmann 1996: 15). By referring to the critical view of Joe Moore, who posits that liberal democracy is a social philosophy that ‘leads to emphasis on questions related to “access,” both to a free market and to government by way of the vote’, Koschmann points out that a country’s adoption of liberal democracy potentially denatures the public category of citizenship towards that of the private, that is, towards a conception of citizenship modeled on an ideal of ‘the consumer’ and based on ‘the right to pursue one’s interests, without hindrance, in the marketplace’ (1996: 15).

While the authoritative directives of the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) guided the course of Japan’s democratisation, it should be noted that the majority of the Japanese – 80 to 90 percent<sup>76</sup> – supported the preservation of the emperor system, a public sentiment which left the Japan Communist Party (JCP) in an isolated position among all the political parties, since their political objective was the outright destruction of that system (Kanda 1979: 117).<sup>77</sup> Although there was visible adherence among the Japanese populace to the emperor and the emperor system, as evidenced by the polls, an important part of the Occupation’s policies was the implementation of the *Shintō* directive in which any form of state support for or interaction with the *Shintō* religion was to be abolished (Ohara 1989). The *Shintō* directive enacted an ‘absolute divisionism’, which not only gave Buddhism and other religious sects a separate corporate body but made every ritual ceremony related to *Shintō* shrine-temples (customs, etiquettes, ceremonies, beliefs, teachings, myths, legends, philosophies) separate from the state, thereby establishing a level of state-church separation beyond any put into place as part of the secularisation process in Western countries (Ohara 1989: 111). Although the principle of secularisation under the Occupation was, on the surface, applied equally to

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<sup>76</sup>A number of polls conducted in December 1945 attested to overwhelming support for the emperor system amongst the population: the Tokyo Imperial University Shaken Poll recorded 80.1 percent of the members of the general public living in Tokyo in favour of the emperor system in contrast to 5.1 percent who opposed it; the Nihon Yoron Kenkyujo Poll measured support at 94.8 percent, as against 4.9 percent against the emperor system; and Tokyo Imperial University Bungakubu Shakigakuka Shaken showed support for the maintenance of the emperor system based on partial or fundamental change of the constitution reaching 75.4 percent, as against support for the abolition of the system at 6.3 percent (see Kanda 1983: 113-114).

<sup>77</sup> Kanda (1979: 117) writes that overseas journalism reacted immediately to the advocacy of the JCP which proposed the abolishment of the emperor system and began to charge the emperor with responsibility for WWII. The *New York Times* in the US applauded the fact that it was not foreigners but the Japanese themselves who had begun to criticise the emperor system.

every religion, in effect *Shintō* received the harshest treatment, while Buddhism was treated relatively moderately, and Christianity received tacit support (Ohara 1989: 111-112). The implementation of the directive, Ohara writes, brought severe turmoil to the spiritual life of the Japanese (1989: 113). As a result of widespread social disturbances, after 1949 GHQ itself began to relax the application of the *Shintō* directive (1989: 113). With the end of the Occupation in 1952, despite the lapse of the *Shintō* directive, Japanese constitutional scholars maintained the Occupation's early interpretation of the directive, applying it to their interpretation of Article 20 – the principle of state-church separation – of the postwar Constitution, and standing as the defender of an absolute divisionism (Ohara 1989: 112, 115).

The Occupation policies which transformed Japan's body politic have brought far-reaching consequences. Drawing on the principle of secularisation, left-wing citizens and Christians have launched a number of civil suits against local governments and the state throughout Japan's postwar history (1989: 118). Accordingly, Japanese citizens have become negative and reactionary to occasions when the state interacts with religions or rituals, including ceremonies related to the death of an emperor and the enthronement of a new one. Secularisation – the principle of state-church separation – does not literally mean that a state is prohibited from any interaction with a particular religion. Fundamentally, it prescribes the need of the state to be neutral to religions (Ohara 1989: 115). Japan's *kokutai* – which centres upon the emperor and thus makes *Shintō* a major state religion – does not have a history of persecuting and oppressing heretics and other religions (Ohara 1989: 109). The postwar culture of divisionism in Japan, however, has uprooted the citizens' lives from faith. For example, one of the great traditional rituals is 大嘗祭 (*daijyosai*) which is held at the event of the succession, in which the emperor offers God freshly harvested crops and eats them (whereby he receives life as the emperor). This ritual symbolises the characteristics of Japan and the Japanese that are affiliated with the ethos of agriculture (Ohara 1989: 87, 98). Without any interaction of the state with these symbolic rituals, the Japanese are deprived, to a great extent, of occasions and events which speak to their identity born out of sharing a specific territorial space. In other words, the decline of those media and occasions which construct the realm of their interaction divests the Japanese of common sense (see Chapter 2). The loss of

such threads of culture and tradition overtly or covertly affects the public realm where the freedom of citizens is at stake.

The effects of the Occupation policies were sweeping. On New Year's Day 1946, Emperor Hirohito broadcast a statement on the radio declaring that he was a human being and not a deity (人間宣言: *ningen sengen*) (Shiota 1982: 154). In the context of the Japanese question, the significance of this declaration lies in the reality that the democratisation of postwar Japan depended upon the formalisation of secularisation – whether the people liked it or not. Since the majority of the Japanese upheld the emperor system even after their defeat in the war, it can be suggested that the survival of the Japanese question was in their minds, but in reality this question gradually began to be submerged in the recesses of the people's consciousness, as the Potsdam policies entered the everyday life of Japanese society.

As part of the democratisation project in Japan, the SCAP released the Japanese communists who had been incarcerated as political prisoners during the war (Carlile 2005: 64). Pre-war political agents then speedily assembled and resumed work on building unions in collaboration with the JCP. Carlile states that in tandem with union-building, party-building was driven by both the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and the JCP, whose activity was far more expansive than that of the JSP (2005: 62).<sup>78</sup> Labour

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<sup>78</sup>The JCP, which predated the JSP, was founded by Japanese who had studied Marxism overseas by drawing instructions and supports from the *Comintern* headquartered in Moscow (Hayashi & Kuzuoka 2007: 27; Carlile 2005: 65). It was the Marxist organisations that took the helm of mass mobilisation: 'Marxism wielded a considerable influence on labour movements and intellectual circles in Japan until the middle of the 1970s' (Koshiro 2000: 144). The JSP was founded in November 1945 as a working-class political party by the surviving social democrats and socialist leaders of pre-war movements. It is important to note that the policies and objectives of political parties on the left interacted closely and complementarily with the labour unions. With the exception of the JCP, the political parties – the JSP, the Japan Liberal Party (JLP) (*Nihon Jiyūtō*) and the Japan Progressive Party (JPP) (*Nihon Shinpotō*) – upheld constitutional monarchy as a national policy in 1945, aiming to sustain *kokutai*, to say the least, to sustain *kokutai* in reducing the power of the emperor (Yamamoto 1977: 88). The JCP clearly differed from the other political parties, in proposing the policy of abolishing the emperor system and building a new republican, democratic government. According to Umeda Tetsuji, the JCP hardly had the opportunity to achieve its goal of establishing a democratic government before the 2.1 general strike in 1947, because not only did the Allied Occupation exercise virtual authority – albeit in an indirect manner – but also the authority of the Japanese government (soon after the war) was too weak to respond to the new reality of a lost war – i.e. of how to respond to the country's devastation in every aspect (Kanda 1979: 104). In respect of the economic policy, the JCP wanted corporations to relinquish management rights and to relegate it to labourers (Yamamoto 1977: 92). In comparison with the JCP, the central aim of the JSP was to build a 'socialistically planned economy' which, Yamamoto argues, meant no more than a particular type of *regulatory* economy. The nationalisation of main industries such as steel, coal, manure and electricity formed the JSP's economic policy, which stood in opposition to the JLP's and the JPP's reconstruction projects which tried

movements surged immediately and rapidly in response to widespread poverty in early postwar Japan. According to Shiota Shōbē, Japan's industrial production in the immediate aftermath of the war's end decreased by 10 to 20 percent in comparison with the prewar level of production based on averages over 1934 to 1936 (Shiota 1982: 156; see also Shimizu 1975: 161). The rice harvest plunged to its lowest yield in forty years, which barely met around the half of the nation's needs (Shiota 1982: 156). Moreover, the import of foreign products was halted while transport and attendant systems were severely paralysed. Shiota writes that the government of the time estimated that, without food aid from the SCAP, 10 million people would starve to death (1982: 156).<sup>79</sup> In a severe environment where malignant inflation and food shortages were rife, the JSP and the JCP, unable to compromise on the building of one unified national union centre, formally inaugurated two national centres: Sōdōmei<sup>80</sup> and Sanbetsu (the National Congress of Organisations)<sup>81</sup> in August, 1946 (Carlile 2005: 68). To a large degree, the social climate of the time moved in favour of labour movements, including the SCAP's overriding democratisation project which mandated the Japanese government's passing

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to empower the light and civilian industries. The JSP also stressed the need for the participation of labour in industrial management, which differed from the JCP's policy which wished to vest the right of management fully in the hands of labourers (Yamamoto 1977: 91).

<sup>79</sup>According to Shiota, commodity prices also kept rising and inflation escalated, while wages declined by 20 to 30 percent in comparison with prewar averages. He writes that capitalists who lost control over their businesses started dismissing their employees, and approximately 4 million workers were left without jobs. Including ex-military personnel and returnees from the colonies, it is estimated that the total number of unemployed reached 13 million people (1982: 157) out of a total population of 72,147,000 (Kokusei chōsa hōkoku at hōmushō tōkeikyoku 2008)(the Census Bureau report at Ministry of Justice, the Statistics Bureau 2008).

<sup>80</sup> Sōdōmei was established prior to 1945, but was renewed after the war with a view to building a unified national labour-union organisation (Carlile 2005: 62). The majority of its members were workers who were employed in small firms, and their union activities were organised through prefectural federations (i.e. regional organisations). Sōdōmei represented 850,000 workers in 1,700 locals, with social democrats dominating the organisation's executive (Carlile 2005: 68). The organisation incorporated unions based in small firms from four broadly defined industries – transport and communication, tobacco, textiles and mining.

<sup>81</sup>Sanbetsu was formally known as *Zen Nippoin Sangyobetsu Rodo Kumiai Kaigi* and, represented 21 industrial organisations with 1.62 million members, which was 'a liason body of industrial federations, rather than a formally centralized union along the lines of Sōdōmei' (Carlile 2005: 69).

of the Labour Union Law (in December 1946).<sup>82</sup> By 1948, ‘union density peaked at 55.8 percent’ (Carlile 2005: 66) – the highest in Japan’s postwar history to date.<sup>83</sup>

Relatively speaking, the political stature of Japanese labour movements was more visible in the first two decades immediately following the end of the war. During this time, the Japanese government was acutely faced with its own institutional vulnerability and the loss of power over governance. By interpreting every government policy as opposing to union activity and an ‘infringement upon the freedom of thought, expression and association’, the voices of labour movements often overrode those of the government, which was stumbling on the foundation of a new constitution and on the diffusion of traditional institutions (MOFA 1965: 3). In other words, the vacuum created in the central institutions and authorities by the Occupation left the people considerable space to muster power in the public space of early postwar Japan.

The political role of labour movements was clearer in the early stage of the movement’s development, as seen in their pursuit of the ideal of a new society. Their political movements – actions and speeches – were not yet disengaged from the quest for a form of a society in which the ideal of democracy could be actualised. After the return from abroad of communist Nosaka Sanzō who ushered in the call for a popular front,<sup>84</sup> labour movements radicalised their actions, making their opposition to the government manifest in party conferences, street demonstrations and political strikes. At the beginning of 1946, political activist-philosopher Yamakawa Hitoshi – through the re-appropriation of Marxism to the Japanese context – mapped out a new conceptual framework that would open and consolidate a popular front. Carlile observes that the Yamakawa call, which received immense support from a wide spectrum of the politically conscious population, including journalist and future Prime Minister Ishibashi Tanzan on the right, created ‘the functional equivalent of what had evolved through the armed

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<sup>82</sup> Abreast of the passage of this law, the SCAP ordered the Japanese government to enact two other basic labour laws: the Labour Standards Law and the Labour Relations Adjustment Law (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1965: 1)

<sup>83</sup> Sheldon Garon writes that ‘union membership soared to nearly five million by December 1946’ (1984: 449).

<sup>84</sup> Communist Nosaka mapped out 9 goals in order for Japanese society to overcome the immediate crisis: the defence of the nation’s life; the dismantling of the Shidehara cabinet; the creation of a coalition government with political parties committed to democracy; the abrogation of the emperor system, and the enactment of the new constitution based on the principles of democracy; and so forth.



resistance struggle in Western Europe' (2005: 70). With a view to establishing the Democratic People's League (DPL)(民主人民連盟: *minshu jinmin renmei*), Yamakawa announced: 'Only with the establishment of this new government will the people themselves be able to promote the democratization of the new Japan, only then will our democratic revolution be put on the right track' (cited in Carlile 2005: 70). For Yamakawa, it was important for labour movements to re-shuffle the political leaders in the government because they were still the 'remnants of the old ruling class', those who prevented 'a political revolution' and hence prevented the democratisation of Japan (Carlile 2005: 70). While the proponents of a popular front – despite attracting support from the Japanese intellectuals – ultimately failed to win sufficient support from political parties and unions, and were thus unable to reach their revolutionary goal (Kanda 1979: 125), it should be acknowledged that labour movements led by Yamakawa showcased an elementary political movement in early postwar Japan.

Along with the popular front, moreover, the political labour movements in general took on not only the government but also the Japanese question. Kanda writes that between April and May in 1946, from the resignation of Prime Minister Shidehara Kijyūrō and that of all his cabinet ministers to the inauguration of the Yoshida Cabinet, labour union movements escalated markedly (1979: 125). On 1 May 1946, May Day – which had been withheld for a decade owing to the war – was revived as the 17<sup>th</sup> May Day, with two million people nationwide rallying in a cry for subsistence (Shiota 1982: 167). Shiota states that popular or mass meetings were frequently held at a public square in front of the Imperial Palace after the revival of May Day, and the May Day meeting was held in the same place annually until 1950 (1982: 168). On 12 May 1946, the labour union, worried about the food shortage of the people, took a mob to the Palace under the leadership of communist Nosaka, who there raised his voice, 'the only way left for us now is to walk to the emperor... it is high time that we came to the emperor!' (Kanda 1983: 155, mt). For the first time in Japan's history, Kanda writes, 'the red flag entered into the premise of the Imperial Household through the Sakashita Gate' (Kanda 1983: 155, mt). The conference of the people held on 19 May approved an appeal to the emperor, asking for his solution to the issue of food shortages (Kanda 1983: 156). But with the JCP dominating the mobilisation, its tactics – including the appeal – were

focused on ways to denigrate the sanctity of the emperor (1983: 157). Despite the fact that across the 1946 May Day, popular movements ascended considerably, the popular front was unable to form an institutional foundation, and after this time it began to die down.

It is worth unpacking the equivocal attitude which Nosaka maintained towards Japan's emperor system across his return to Japan and reengagement with political activism in this country. The left-wing-led political movements reveal the distance which the phenomenal public began to take from the Japanese question. However, the contradiction of the early political movements is that either Nosaka or the popular front more generally could not succeed in founding and institutionalising their democratic movements, *without* resolving the question of Japan's *kokutai* or the issue of the emperor system. Nosaka's speech in China in May 1945 clarifies this point. It demonstrated the communist vision of how Japan was to be democratically constructed. He castigated the reactionary-autocratic politics that had prevailed in Japan in the past, a mode of politics which he argues was developed by collaboration between the *zaibatsu* (financial combine), the court, the military and bureaucrats (Nosaka 1947: 37). Nosaka defined Japan's emperor system as a feudalistic-autocratic political organisation that was obstructing the JCP's goal of founding democracy in Japan, that is, the democratic republic of Japan. The emperor institution, hence, had to be immediately abolished, Nosaka argued (1947: 44-45). But he acknowledged, on the other hand, that the liberty league of communists in Japan could not include in its platform the aim of overthrowing the emperor or the court. Nosaka stressed that the JCP had to be more attentive to the aspect of the emperor in which he is considered among the populace as a living deity, that is, a semi-religious persona, rather than to the aspect that defines him as the head of autocratic political organisation (1947: 44-45). Although the communist liberty league centered their approach on the three key slogans of opposition to war, overthrow of the military and construction of democratic Japan, Nosaka expressed his apprehension that the people may start to disengage from the league if the latter included among its slogans the abolition of the emperor system (1947: 46). Nosaka insisted that he was by no means suggesting that the Japanese communists welcome the sustenance of the emperor or the court in postwar Japan, given that the Japanese communists considered the emperor to be

one of the figures responsible for the war and a representative of reactionary politics and restoration philosophy. Nevertheless he reiterated that if the majority of the people keenly pursued the maintenance of the emperor system, the JCP needed to concede to the opinion of the people (1947: 46). In sum, the search of Japanese labour movements for a new form of government – represented by the popular front – was ambiguous, to a large degree, as to the conception of democracy. As exemplified by Nosaka's trenchant critique of the emperor, they cut their search adrift from an inquiry into the Japanese question.

Accordingly, as commodity prices kept surging, labour movements focused on challenging the government with demands for labour regulations to protect them, such as wage increases, reduced labour hours, bonus hikes, increased retirement pay, and freedom of union activities, among others (MOFA 1965: 3; Hyōdo 2000: 19). As for strategies, they exercised power over enterprises at local and national levels by way of production control tactics (生産管理戦術: *seisankanrisenjutsu*) which were designed 'to disrupt factory production on the one hand and to sharpen a sense of class-consciousness among the worker, on the other, ... prompted by labour's negative views toward the private property system per se' (MOFA 1965: 4).<sup>85</sup> Equally, a tactic of general strikes was harnessed as a form of labour action. Carlile explains that not only did the term 'general strike' increasingly begin to appear in party pronouncements and deliberations, but also that the nation's largest unions, like those of the Japan National Railway and the seamen, used the term as a 'label for planned strikes' (2005: 76). In view of a plan to rationalise dismissal (首切り合理化計画: *kubikiri gōrika keikaku*), which the capitalist camp sought to adopt in order to restructure the Japanese economy, Sanbetsu together with the JCP launched a series of offensives in which the industrially organised unions, mostly in the private sector, were engaged in a wave of strikes, known as 'the October warfare' (産別10月闘争: *sanbetsu jūgatsu tōsō*), in the summer and fall of 1946. Shiota writes that 560 thousand labourers participated in the Sanbetsu October warfare, and 320,000 labourers engaged in strike actions (1982: 173). Importantly, the sector-based united front of labour movements won many provisions from the government, including a double

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<sup>85</sup>The government was not silent on the revolutionary character of production control tactics of labour movements. Shiota (1982: 171) writes that four cabinet ministers set forth an official declaration that transgressive activities such as violence, threats and the infringement of property rights were to be strictly regulated.

wage increase (1000 yen/month), freedom of union activities, veto of unilateral decisions on human resources, and a seven-hour daily labour system (Shiota 1982: 173).

In the current context which explores the political role of labour movements, the emergence at the end of 1947 of the *Sanbetsu Minshuka Dōmei* (the Sanbetsu Democratisation Alliance) (産別民同: *sanbetsu mindō*) in reaction to the visibly disintegrating Sanbetsu is of significance, as it shows a picture of internal struggle over the identity of labour organisations as political agency. In ‘Sanbetsu Mindō ga Mezashitamono’ (The Ideals of Sanbetsu Mindō), Mito Nobuto sheds light on the spirit which the history and movement of Sanbetsu Mindō carried through in its new unionism. For Mito, Mindō (spiritual) ethics pursued in its ideals a type of movement which wins autonomy in labour unionism, especially the independence of a body from power, from capitalist management, as well as from political parties (2000: 196). Because Japanese labour unionism developed as part and parcel of the Occupation’s democratisation project, Mito argues, it is characterised by such structure as top-down order, authoritarian management and centralised governance; which is the reason for Japanese labour unionism to be alternatively named Potsdam unionism (2000: 158). In retrospect, Mito maintains that the Sanbetsu Mindō movement aimed to establish its independence from political parties and to develop labour-unionism on the basis of Sydney Webb’s industrial democracy, which called not only for labour’s right to speech and to participate in management but also for the ethics of democracy within its enterprise (2000: 186, 196). By the time the Mindō movement ascended, many had recognised that Sanbetsu and the JCP were in a complicit relationship, overriding labour unionism with an anti-political trend (Takahashi 1988: 187).<sup>86</sup> Takahashi points out that, by 1947, when Sanbetsu members began to exercise self-critique, the decision-making process of the JCP was so authoritative and sweeping that many members considered that union activities were being dominated by party voices (1988: 190).

Shiota writes that the ‘philosophical and political immaturity’ of labour movements was debunked over the injunction of General Douglas MacArthur against a

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<sup>86</sup> The Sanbetsu Mindō prefigured the advent of Sōhyō (日本労働組合総評議会) – the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (1950-1989) – which was founded as a result of growing internal criticisms within Sanbetsu for the unions’ political radicalism. Takahashi (1988: 187) argues that a problem of Sanbetsu was its foundation of an un-official conduit between the JCP and labour-unions, creating the revolving door for the party members to walk into the latter’s committee.

planned 2.1 (1 February) general strike in 1947 (1982: 178). On the first day of 1947, at his New Year greetings, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru criticised the initiators of labour movements by depicting them as an ‘unfaithful band’ (不貞の輩: *futei no yakara*), which followed his appeal to the urgency of the reconstruction of the national economy and the revitalisation of industries (Kanda 1983: 220). Many citizens rose up in rage against the prime minister’s defamation of the leaders of labour movements; this indignation prepared the united front to launch the 2.1 general strike nationwide. Notably, at this point, no political demands, such as the overthrow of the Yoshida Cabinet, were addressed (Kanda 1983: 221).

Over the planned event of the 2.1 general strike, two critical aspects concerning the political stature of labour movements should be noted (Hyōdo 2000: 14; Shiota 1982: 178; Kanda 1983: 225). The first aspect regards the arguable greenness or naivety of labour movements about *Realpolitik* in general and of occupied Japan in particular. In the wake of the October warfare, in which labourers seemed to enjoy seamless triumphs, labour movements pushed demands for economic betterment further, such as a rise in the basic wage. Upon the government’s refusal of their extended economic demands, labour movements shifted their emphasis to political demands. This was particularly so after JCP’s national conference, which posited the coming 2.1 general strike as a political battle that would restore political power by overthrowing the Yoshida Cabinet and would found the new government of the democratic people (Kanda 1983: 221-222). On 1 February 1947, just hours before the strike which would have engulfed the whole nation in a maelstrom, MacArthur preempted the planned movements with an order to call them off. For Shiota, the political labour movements had uncritically accepted the Occupation as a liberation army (1982: 178). Given the labour movements’ philosophical and political immaturity (Shiota 1982: 178), they could not question whether the Occupation would unconditionally approve such revolutionary movements in the occupied territory.

The second aspect which concerns the political role of labour movements is their equivocation over the notion of democracy, and what might be meant by democratic politics. Hyōdo argues that:

When the term ‘democratic revolution’ is referred to, the term by no means constrains its meaning to the establishment of institutional systems such as universal suffrage; a

parliamentary system based on plural political parties; and freedom of speech, assembly and association. (This is because these system reforms were forged by the Allied Occupation, and thus reforms were carried out on a different dimension from the intent of labour movements. Democratic revolution by the mass movement, including labour movements, was not supposed to be limited to system reforms). Nonetheless, the mass movement never elucidated clearly an image of a social condition which reflects the achieved democratic revolution. This is a key bearing in relation to the mass movement which never contextually clarified its meaning beyond their practice of the terminology ‘the establishment of democratic government’ ... (2000: 14, mt)

With the promulgation of the new Constitution in November 1946, it should be said that political labour movements gained at least the notion of democratic politics at the institutional, systemic level. The postwar Constitution relegated the emperor to the status of a symbol of the state, guaranteed basic human rights, endorsed Japan’s renunciation of war, established a bicameral parliamentary system, and upheld the sovereignty of the people (Kanda 1983: 159).

Overall, despite their relative lack of understanding about the principles of democratic politics or the idea of democratic revolution, the political stature of labour movements was conspicuous in the first few years of Japan’s post-war period, given that they tried to seek a form of democratic government, and as such their pursuits manifested in actions and advocacy towards building unionism. Although the labour union movements ascended in a social environment where poverty was widespread, they had little understanding of the *Realpolitik* which underpinned occupied Japan. In the years immediately following this early rise of political life, however, Japan’s public space began to metamorphose as a result of a critical shift, from 1948, in the SCAP’s project on Japan’s democratisation.

*The Public Space after 1948: Zoon Politikon or Animal Laborans?*

Painful as MacArthur’s sudden injunction against the planned 2.1 general strike would have been for labour movements, this Occupation’s intervention was a watershed for the rising political public space in postwar Japan. This event became a historical turning-point, after which time the key political actors – the Occupation, the Japanese

government and the labour class – began to lean towards what an Arendtian analysis would discern as contra-political policies, aims and attitudes. This new turn *en masse* demonstrates considerable political implications, for the state and the people abandoned, as it were, their initial objectives to carve out a civic, democratic front. What steered the direction of the political machinery in Japan so powerfully was the rise of power politics on the international stage. The US now began to take what is popularly known the *reverse course*, exchanging the original project to democratise Japan for the new goal of setting up Japan as a strategic, anti-communist front in Asia – a capitalist bulwark in the Far East against the advancement of Soviet-led communism in the world. It was at this point that the Japanese government regained authority and power – under the tutelage of the SCAP – particularly through patronising and fostering the capital-owning and managerial classes. In 1948, *Nihon Keieisha Dantai Renmei* (The Japan Federation of Employers' Association), or *Nikkeiren*, united with the government over the reconstruction of a powerful national economy, for example, by researching and submitting a number of policy and legal provisions: 'the Trade Union Law, the Labour Relations Adjustment Law and the Employment Security Law' (MOFA 1965: 11).

The onset of the Korean War in 1950 raised the curtain on hereafter skyrocketing Japan's national economy. From 1952 until the 1973 oil shock, Japan experienced unprecedented economic growth, with its GNP recording a growth rate of around 10 percent every year (Tokunaga 2001: 5).<sup>87</sup> In the backdrop of the intensifying Cold War, the US hurried to stabilise the Japanese economy and attempted to centre its strength around corporate monopolies. Calling in Joseph Dodge who was then Chairman of the Detroit Bank, the US forced Japan to carry out torturous economic policies such as the three wage principles and the nine economic principles (Yamada 2006: 61).<sup>88</sup> Although the Dodge economic policies left in their wake considerable casualties, including many personnel dismissals and private sector bankruptcies, there were also many benefits to the

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<sup>87</sup>From 1954 to 1958, Japan's GNP grew at the average rate of 7.0 per cent per year. From 1959 to 1963, the GNP growth escalated to 10.8 percent. From 1964 to 1968, the average was 10.9 percent, and from 1969 to 1973 it was 9.6 percent.

<sup>88</sup>The nine economic principles which were set in order to stabilise the Japanese economy included balanced finance (super-balanced budget), tax-collection reinforcement, loan restriction, wage stabilisation, price control, trade improvement, export promotion, major raw-materials increase, and the improvement of food supply (Hayashi & Kuzuoka 2007: 54).

Japanese, such as the decline of inflation and the rise of a surplus in national finance (Yamada 2006: 61; Hayashi & Kuzuoka 2007: 55). Despite the slump which followed the implementation of Dodge policies, the Japanese economy kept accruing wealth on the back of massive armament-related orders throughout the Korean War, resulting in a near doubling of Japan's foreign currency reserves (McCreery 2000: 17). In a July 1956 Economic White Paper, the Japanese government issued a symbolic statement: 'We are no longer in the "postwar" period... Japan has seen the end of growth based on recovery. Hereafter, our future will be sustained by modernisation' (cited in Hayashi & Kuzuoka 2007: 57, mt).

In effect, the level of consumption kept rising on a mass scale. Since the opening of the first supermarket in 1957, for example, the distributional revolution swept across the Japanese archipelago throughout the 1960s and the 1970s (Ivy 1993: 247). Television ownership, which accounted for 51 percent of the population in 1960, rose to 94 percent in 1965. Television became the most effective of social mass media, and an extraordinary ascendance in the activities of advertising and publishing accompanied to its widespread permeation. Between 1955 and 1980, the portion of annual advertising expenditure directed towards television advertising rose from 1.5 percent to 35.2 percent (Fukutake 1986: 118-119). According to Marilyn Ivy, the television revolution discursively promoted the *image*, especially the image of middle class life-style which the US channelled to the dinner tables of the Japanese through its tight control on Japan's public broadcasting network (NHK) in the 1950s (1993: 249). Ivy's study records that the Japanese understood the middle class as a social apparatus which is equatable to ownership of a telephone, refrigerator and Japanese style-bath (1993: 249). Until the 1970s, the proportion of the population who considered themselves middle-class kept rising: 87 percent in 1964; 88 percent in 1967; and 90 percent in the 1970s (Hara 2000: 182).<sup>89</sup> In 1963, Japan acceded to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which was followed by the hosting of the 1964 international Olympics in Tokyo. According to Miyamoto Tsuneichi, there was a visible shift in social

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<sup>89</sup> Also see *Kokumin seikatsu ni kansuru seron chōsa* in 1987 [the statistics of Japan cabinet office] in *Shakai Keizai Kokumin Kaigi* (1988: 36).



phenomena in the agricultural villages of West Japan, subsequent to the changes in the modus operandi of their lives. In 1968, Miyamoto wrote

Some time after 1960, the cooperative work of villagers got increasingly harder... In the old days, the villagers trusted that the welfare of each household was not separable from the welfare of a village. Hence, when I consider my interactions, I would say that I saw no one who thought that his or her family was fine as far as his or her life had no problems... But each individual could begin to support his or her life through income by virtue of high economic growth. In the regions where television was owned by more than 50 percent of the population, the sort of passion with which people tried to work out the problems of a community collaboratively began to disappear. (cited in Oguma 2002: 552, mt)

This shift in the attitudes of ordinary people which Miyamoto attests to might be understood in terms of Arendt's account of the radical rise of consumer society in the modern age and of *animal laborans*'s pursuit of affluence and good life. It evidences the point at which the public realm began to erode significantly and to turn into the social. Following the shift in the policy of the American Occupation from democratising Japan to making it the bulwark of the Far East against the communist forces, that is, which necessitated a steep rise in Japan's economic performance, early postwar Japanese society experienced remarkable economic growth and significant surge in the living standards of its population (Hyōdo 2000: 28).

On Arendt's account, the rise of consumer society has considerable implications for the political public space. In Chapters 1 and 2, Arendt's distinction between labour and work was explored, and her argument that across the course of European modernisation, the nature of work and its outcomes changed as the production process transformed from specialisation of work (understood as artisanship) to the division of labour was illustrated. With this transformation, the space of work, which had once been populated by artisans and animated by their specialisation of work, was no longer characterised by the latter's activities and spiritual attitudes. Rather, this space began being substituted and overridden by the new actor of *animal laborans* whose end products are those that must be incorporated into the body and hence ephemeral and consumable. The transformation of the production process vulgarises both the quality of

man-made objects as well as the process of production, deforming them through repetition, resemblance and standardisation. On Arendt's account, the objects of artisans and artists – *homo faber* – assert objectivity, because of their relative permanence that stands in opposition both to the mortal existence of human beings and to the transience of human deed and word (1958: 137). Their products thus serve to sustain and stabilise the public realm in contrast to those of *animal laborans*. In this way, Arendt observes a political implication in the shift in the production process. Arendt indicts, therefore, the technological revolution, the event which emerges in correspondence to the development of industrialisation. The technological revolution – and, in particular, automation – introduces *deskilling* into the production process. The technological revolution is the process by which *homo faber* turns into the *animal laborans*, dismantling the conditions of work and hence the identity of the worker. It tears asunder the principles and faculties of workers and artisans which rest on their sense of confidence, achievement and professionalism.

In tandem with the significant rise in the Japanese economy and the living standards of its population, the Japan Productivity Centre, which was inaugurated in 1955, commenced its influential activities. The Centre glorified the idea and progress of productivity (生産性: *seisansei*) as essential to the growth of industrial society (Tsutsui 1998: 144). Tsutsui writes that productivity, 'like science, was thus portrayed as common sense rather than as political construct, and was naturalized by its proponents as the neutral and unalterable motive force of progress in the industrial age' (1998: 145). Far from being neutral, however, the 'gospel of productivity' (Tsutsui 1998: 144) played a critical role in transforming the nature of work to that of labour, together converting the role of Japanese labour movements from a political one to an economic one. The changes in the production process galvanised by the ideology of productivity brought about misgivings and demoralisation among workers, influencing – to an extent – the political role of Japanese labour movements across the course of this country's phenomenal technological revolution.

Uchiyama Takashi's study of workers consciousness and perspectives in postwar Japan is noteworthy in this context. He quotes sentences from reports on labour conflicts compiled by workers in Yamashina Tekkō (Yamashina steel mill):

In the old days, workers learned their skills in harsh work conditions, were acknowledged for the growth [of their skills] by others, and then finally claimed their professionalism. It was such [cumulative] experience that guaranteed the quality of a worker.... But workers' consciousness began to be refuted as outmoded or inappropriate in the postwar period. Then people did not think labour issues except in the form of conflicts between capital and labour.... In postwar democracy, I feel that workers were deprived of something essential... (cited in Uchiyama 1982: 73, mt)

Uchiyama points out that the technological revolution between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s dynamically changed the structure of the production process (1982: 76). Owing to the technological revolution, workers were confronted with severe realities, including the devaluing of experienced work and the dumping of accumulated skills and expertise, which facilitated the standardisation of work and the rearrangement of labour power (Uchiyama 1982: 76). Nevertheless, labour movements in the 1960s hardly touched this quintessential issue – the fact that the identity and place of workers were transforming and disappearing – in the intensified political movements (1982: 77). For Uchiyama, workers' struggles with the new reality of the technological revolution are an important issue that has been under-discussed in discursive labour debate that was focused on labour's conflicts with capital-management. He argues that across the 1950s and 1960s, labour movements paid excessive attention to issues concerning the admission of labour unionism, the conclusion of labour agreements, wage increases, and unions' right to participate in dismissals, rather than to the need for workers to reclaim the production process for the preservation of their identities (1982: 78).

The events of the Miike Coal Mine dispute<sup>90</sup> and the Amagasaki dispute<sup>91</sup>, for example, reveal the symbolic moment of the disappearance of both the space and identity of workers in the wake of the technological revolution. These events resulted in the utter defeat of grass-roots labour politics, in spite of the reputation of the Miike Labour Union at the Mitsui Mines as being 'the mecca of these organizing movements' (Kumazawa 1996: 66; Uchiyama 1982). Kumazawa observes a ramification of the revolution which

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<sup>90</sup> Between the 1950s and the 1960s.

<sup>91</sup> In 1954, the labourers of Amagasaki steel company in Hanshin industrial area struck for 77 days for a wage increase.

‘reduced scope for workers to make decisions on the job’ (1996: 68). Uchiyama cites a paragraph from the report of the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of Sōhyō in 1954:

A significant point which was overlooked in the battle of Amakō [the Amagasaki dispute] was the decline of an environment in which workers’ passion to innovate and fabricate was encouraged from the bottom up. Although workers could carry out their work faithfully listening to the instructions and orders of executives, they were not like the workers of Yodokō [Yodogawa Seikō: steel mill] who did not submit to the critiques of managers, who fearlessly hung onto their fighting spirit and discipline, demonstrating that they were the masters of a workplace. That was why the battle of Amakō was lost, permitting the managers’ policies and oppressions to become central in the workplace... (1982: 78, mt)

For Kumazawa, Japan’s technological revolution erected a hierarchy inside companies by selectively deploying a few people with high skills at the apex of a pyramid of job classifications, while most of the labourers were left at the middle or bottom of the ladder, and had no choice but to submerge themselves in the deskilling work (1996: 68).

Under such conditions, workers found themselves divested of confidence and authority that rested on their ability to produce quality, enduring objects. Seen from an Arendtian perspective, such divestment leads to a weakening of public space, albeit indirectly, because the (consumer) objects of *animal laborans* do not supplement the world of the political, which is as ephemeral as the world of *animal laborans*. In addition, workers’ disappearance from workplace and labourers’ replacement threaten the world of the political.

The Metamorphosis of Labour Movements: Enterprise Unionism and Productivity Movements  
From the end of the 1940s, the labour union movements’ advancement of their interests was increasingly frustrated by a Japanese government which acted in accordance with an Occupation policy. By this time, its policy had taken a turn away from the initial vision of democratising Japan. The Japanese government introduced a number of measures and policies aimed at countering the actions of organised labour: the 1948 Law which prohibited strikes in the public sector; the August 1949 *red purge*, which saw the expulsion of communists and workers who supported them – estimated to be more than

12,000 workers – in the public and private sectors (Shiota 1982: 212); the 1952 Anti-Subversive Activities Act; and the 1953 Strike Regulation Law (MOFA 1965: 3, 11).<sup>92</sup> Aside from the external factor of the government's counter policies, the political role of labour movements began to atrophy, owing to a rise of enterprise unionism, the structural effect of which was to thwart labour movements' political activism, particularly from *within*.

After a certain period of decline in union membership between 1949 and the mid-1950s, membership regained a steady growth rate in the subsequent decade (MOFA 1965: 17). According to MOFA, the expansion of union membership was 'a result of an increase in the number of organized firms' (1965: 17). Given that the unions in Japan are organised around the individual plant or multi-plant company or enterprise, rather than around a profession or industry,<sup>93</sup> the issue in question would be less the number of members than the extent to which labourers could take part in political actions within their firms, while maintaining their subscriptions. Kumazawa argues that authentic concerns of labourers are hardly addressed in Japanese workplaces. The success or failure of labourers or workers (in general) are measured internally on the basis of *nenkō joretsu* (年功序列)(the promotion system based on the employee's seniority: the length of

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<sup>92</sup> In 'The Imperial Bureaucracy and Labour Policy in Postwar Japan' (1984), Sheldon Garon highlights 'the prewar and wartime origins of today's [i.e. postwar labour] policies' by 'the imperial bureaucracy' with criticisms (1984: 441). At the same time, she appreciates the 'liberal features' of the postwar social bureaucrats, represented in their legislation of the 1945 Trade Union Law which 'guaranteed the rights of unions in both the private and public sectors' and 'prohibited employers from discriminating against union members' (1984: 442, 448). In this work, however, she emphasises, time after time, the postwar government's bearing on 'the complex legacy' of the prewar labour programs, alluding the characteristics of postwar Japan to remain 'in the rubble of a feudalistic imperial state' (1984: 441, 442). Either in recognising the progressive features of the postwar bureaucrats or their authoritarian features, Garon's work contributes to the maintenance of the mainstream left-wing discourse which overlooks a critical interface between the American foreign policies towards Japan and the condition of postwar Japan which was devoid of sovereignty up to 1952, including the centrality of the Occupation policies in the reconstruction of postwar Japan: put differently, the analysis should be served to the extent in which early postwar Japan held the power of self-governance independent of the American Occupation directives. A critical question should be posed as to what extent it was 'the complex legacy of these earlier [i.e. prewar] labour programs' (1984: 442) that influenced the early postwar government's labour policies or what extent it was the SCAP's policies towards postwar Japan, particularly, after the rise of the Cold War that influenced the imperial social bureaucrats' labour policies. As Garon writes in her work, indeed these *recessions* of liberal labour policies set in motion, as the Occupation authorities and the Japanese government took the 'reverse course' (1984: 448). 'The Yoshida Cabinet completed the overhaul of labour legislation in 1949, with the revision of the original Trade Union Law... *SCAP and the Ministry of Labor* viewed the legislation as a valuable means of denying trade union rights and representation on labor relations commissions to politicized unions' (Garon 1984: 451, italics added).

<sup>93</sup> Union and company are identified sometimes as the same entity because of their close association.

service) and the merit system (an evaluation of ability and performance)(1996: 69). Nonetheless Japanese labour movements were focused on the issue of wage increases, being enchanted with the ideal of ‘a fair distribution of shares among capital, labour and consumers’ (Miura 2008: 168).

In Japan, the *nenkō* and merit systems are the components of what Kumazawa names ‘flexible deployment’ which ‘refers to fluidity in the nature of the work to be performed and the assignment of workers to given tasks’ (1996: 67). As innocuous as the word flexibility may sound, both systems contain intractabilities in the culture of Japan Inc. While the *nenkō* and merit systems actually deploy employees in a setting of harsh competition and allow a very small number to reach a position of success, Kumazawa stresses that Japanese unions have ‘made few efforts’ to redress the work conditions of labourers in the postwar period (1996: 70). Under these conditions, employees must continually improve their performance and demonstrate merit in an environment of severe competition, if they are to avoid being pressured to retire early or remaining at the bottom of the job hierarchy within an enterprise, a place where they are able to gain little autonomy in relation to their work (Kumazawa 1996: 68, 71; Yamashina 1984: 290).

Uchiyama explains that because the vertical managerial structure in the culture of Japanese corporations was equally applied to the production process, labourers gradually succumbed to the vertical managerial system, foregoing the horizontal ties which they used to enjoy with their fellow workers and beginning to transform their relationships to those of individual rivalry (1982: 82-83). The vertical managerial system – when applied to the production process – manifested as meritocracy, which in effect systematically imbued the spirit of competition among workers (Uchiyama 1982: 82-83). For Kumazawa, the drawback of post-war enterprise unionism was, in fact, labourers’ terrible indifference to flexible deployment, not only because they accepted it as an unchangeable reality, but worse still, precisely because it sustained and complemented a workplace which was vertically organised. As a consequence, the first thing to evaporate from the production site was political activism, as unions at the enterprise level as well as at the national level – Sōhyō – believed that ‘political strikes contain greater risks *to the union...* than do economic strikes..., [weakening] intra- and inter-union solidarity’ (MOFA 1965: 14, italics added; see also Kumazawa 1996: 67).

The withering political stature of labour movements has been further evident since the 1960s in which the ‘second union’ (*daini kumiai*) was established and located itself in the middle point between the first union and the employer. When confronted with the economic crises of companies, it was presumed that the original union lacked flexibility to respond to exigencies, while producing a range of organisational and structural problems.<sup>94</sup> Koshiro Kazutoshi suggests that the second union hence emerged as a more powerful and cooperative force that could look after the leadership of labour movements (2000: 185). But as firms grew, and a certain share of profits was distributed among employees, Koshiro argues, the interests of unions overlapped, more often than not, with those of managers. In practice, labourers and managers shared so many ‘common interests’ as to form ‘essentially a conservative, protective and sometimes collusive partner of the employer’ (2000: 186). Seen from this viewpoint, Andrew Gordon is justified in suggesting that the ‘price of affluence’ was bought at the expense of (the disappearance of) democratic activism in the workplace, the course of which was facilitated by the collusion of the second union of labourers (cited in Koshiro 2000: 185; see also Suzuki 2003). In this vein, it should be noted that labour disputes were more frequent until the mid-1970s in Japan, when the nation enjoyed its highest economic growth (Tokita 1985: 10). Not only capitalists but also labourers attained an ideal of good life and abundance through the battles for wage increases which continued until 1975 (Miura 2008: 168).<sup>95</sup>

The surge of living standards nationwide resulted not only in the rise of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the continuity of its reign, but also in extended popular apathy towards issues of collective concern. According to Shimizu’s

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<sup>94</sup> Koshiro Kazutoshi argues that a series of labour disputes from the 1940s and the 1960s and their eventual failures – e.g. the secession of Sanbetsu Minshuka Dōmei from Sanbetsu Kaigi in the late 1940s, the Nissan dispute in 1953, and the Miike Coal Mine dispute in 1959-60 – may have been due to the strategic rigidity of first unions (2000: 185).

<sup>95</sup> Lizabeth Cohen (2003), offers a complementary analysis of a similar metamorphosis in the United States from the 1960s to 1980. Assaying the rise of a ‘consumer’s republic’ across the first half of post-war US, Cohen contends that the task of third wave consumer movements – in comparison with the early waves of the 1930s and the 1950s – was to hold the political body accountable to the ideal upon which the consumer’s republic was founded, the ideal in which ‘a flourishing mass consumption economy could be safe, democratic and equitable’ (Cohen 2003: 385). Seen from the political realm, the most astonishing feature of this third movement compared to the early ones is, she contends, an impetus to blur the line regarding the public, political category of citizenship by replicating the citizen as an economic consumer – in other words, by presupposing the insatiable activity of consumption as an incontestable right of the citizen under political movements (Cohen 2003: 387).

data taken from the survey conducted in the first half of the 1960s, the electoral support for the progressive parties from younger voters – particularly those in their twenties – declined, and more educated voters began to support the conservative parties.<sup>96</sup> Shimizu's survey is supported by Hara Yoshihisa's study of the changing political consciousness of labourers (2000: 182).<sup>97</sup> In 1955, although 50 percent of industrial workers had supported the JSP, support dropped to 30 percent in 1975. In 1955 while the coalition of the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party gave birth to the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japanese government was thereafter monopolised by a thirty-eight year long LDP leadership. In September 2014, a coalition government between the LDP and its junior partner New Komeitō manages the administration, with the LDP supporter reaching almost 50 percent, but the rate of the people who do not have any particular party preference amounts to around 33 percent (*'Poll seronchōsa'*, September 2014).

What may be worth noting in terms of Japanese sociological eccentricity is that the votes of population and the voices of the people have been in apparent contradiction since 1968. For one thing, a growth in support for the governing party, the LDP, was evident. For another, a considerable segment of the population disagreed with a survey question which asked whether the Japanese government is 'reflecting public interest' (Shakai Keizai Kokumin Kaigi [SKKK] 1988: 54; Shinohara 1982: 216).<sup>98</sup> It is notable that, concomitant with the rise of the conservative party, there has been a spectacular increase in the number of non-party affiliated electorates since the end of the 1960s (SKKK 1988: 55). Moreover, Shinohara Hajime's exploration of labourers' political

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<sup>96</sup> Shimizu Shinzō's survey is based on the three sources of data: the report of *heiwa keizai keikaku kaigi* (the conference for peace economy plan) which examined the general electorate in Tokyo and Chiba prefecture; a survey of the political consciousness of union members; and a survey of general consciousness conducted by Hosei university as well as other universities (1966: 101). For Shimizu, the result of these surveys indicate a reversal of the presuppositions which were held in the 1960s: that more men than women, more younger than older, more educated than less educated, more urban residents than rural residents, were believed to vote for the progressive parties. The reversal of this hypothesis began to be conspicuous after the 1960 *Anpo* event (1966: 101). An increase in the support of the LDP does not indicate the support of a nation as a whole. It is an increase among the surveyed group. The votes for the LDP kept declining as a whole in the 1960s.

<sup>97</sup> Support for the LDP dropped from 36 percent of industrial workers in 1955 to 34 percent in 1975, a slight decline, whereas salary workers supporting the LDP grew from 37 percent in 1955 to 41 percent in 1975 (Hara 2000: 182). From 1969 to 1993, the JSP could not regain more than 30 percent of seats in the Diet. At the 1976 and 1979 elections, although the LDP did not obtain 50 percent of seats, it by no means meant that the JSP was successful in winning the majority seat, retaining just above 20 percent of seats (Hara 2000: 279).

<sup>98</sup>In 1968, disagreement was 37 percent, but it surged to 75 percent in 1980.



consciousness highlights that Japanese political constituents are not divided over the *issues* of politics as much as over their preferences of political parties (1982: 219). It is evident that the interests of electorates in general and of labourers in particular were increasingly concentrated on matters related to daily life, with the labour class leaning more towards the conservative parties (Shinohara 1982: 220, 224). Many scholars hold that the new Japanese middle class became the linchpin of conservatism in an affluent age, because they wished to maintain the status-quo, that is, to maintain the party which provided electorates with the level of living standards they had become accustomed to (SKKK 1988: 243; Murakami 1984: 166; Shimizu 1966: 102; Takahashi 1997: 77, 78).

Furthermore, Yamashina Saburō's examination of changing consciousness among adolescent labourers substantiates a decline in public political consciousness. During the high growth era in which Japan stimulated international competitiveness through high investment and technological innovation, the public policies of the state promoted *happiness* as a pinnacle of social aim, while conflating terminologies such as the merit system, competition and consumer gratification (Yamashina 1984: 292). The term 'my-homism' (*my-home-shugi*) was embraced by the young generation and farmers who had abandoned agriculture in their home districts. This expression held that my-home – a private realm – was a space where a person could finally emancipate him or herself from the pains of labour, where one could enjoy leisure, consumption and individualism. The term represented the supreme value of individuals, who were however uprooted from the old customs and mores of communities and dwelt in the abysmal loneliness of the cities (Yamashina 1984: 294). It appears that as the economy of the nation grew, Japanese labourers strayed away from the earlier search of authentic politics – the experience of public happiness in action, speech and resistance – and succumbed to the basic nature of labour, namely, to the security of biological life, once again by returning to the original space of labour, that is, my home – the realm of the private.

Further to the decline in the political role of labour movements that was symbolised by the enmeshment of labourers in enterprise unionism in postwar Japan, the studies of Tsutsui William and Miura Mari about the critical impacts of productivity movements upon labour unions support the fact of a withering political public space in an affluent society. Their analyses suggest the political implications of labourers' defection

to the province of liberal capitalism through their participation in, collusion with, and support of productivity movements. In their respective analyses, both scholars criticise the *Keizai Dōyūkai* (The Association of Economic Friends), which was formed in 1946 by a group of young and middle-ranking managers (Tsutsui 1998: 124; Miura 2008). Tsutsui writes that *Dōyūkai* emerged with a progressive outlook, proffering a new vision that would stabilise and preserve ‘the capitalist system, albeit in a form consistent with Occupation democratization and labour activism’ (1998: 124). He stresses, however, that *Dōyūkai*’s confident middle road approach to labourers was not so new given that this *neutral* approach had already been propounded by the revised Taylorite and progressive businesses in 1920s Japan (1998: 138).

Following the US strategy on the global economy which Charles S. Maier suggests is an attempt to ‘*supersede* class conflict with economic growth’ (Miura 2008: 167, italics added), the Productivity Centre, encouraged by President Dwight Eisenhower, emerged in Japan. Although the Ministry of Industrial Trade and Industry (MITI) had failed to find a solution for labour-management frictions, *Dōyūkai* was successful in facilitating the foundation of the Japan Productivity Centre in 1955 (Miura 2008: 167). While Miura’s article largely pays attention to the critical ideological shift of labour politics after the mid-1990s towards the politics of consumption, her examination of labour politics in early postwar Japan is also important in our current context. The ‘politics of productivity’ envisioned that: ‘*constructive industrial relations* would enhance productive efficiency, which would lead to capital formation as well as economic growth (Miura 2008: 168, italics added).

Crucially, Japanese labour movements included a wide spectrum of political constituents and institutions, from right-wing unions such as Sōdōmei and Sanbetsu Mindō to far left-wing unions such as Sōhyō (日本労働組合総評議会: 1950-1989)(the General Council of Trade Unions of Japan). Nonetheless, after the nation’s economic-growth rate exceeded 8 percent from 1955, the labour movements were subject to a wholesale domino effect, collapsing one after another into the politics of productivity. Without hesitation, the right-wing union, Sōdōmei, leaned towards the Centre’s strategic program that sought ‘*seisansei* (productivity) to bring increased living standards and economic independence’ (Tsutsui 1998: 141). As for the far left Sōhyō, Tsutsui illustrates

that Sōhyō had been particularly skeptical of the JPC movements, which was represented by the voice of the Marxist journalist Horie Masanori: ‘Productivity was just the latest attempt to cloak capitalist exploitation in the mantle of objectivity and science’ (1998: 142).

Notwithstanding, the final stronghold of labour movements, Sōhyō, appeared to find maintaining resistance difficult as the productivity movements gradually coopted its members into the Centre’s programs in the early 1950s (Tsutsui 1998: 145). It is open to question how far the goal of productivity movements and those of labour movements were different. Appreciating the logic of productivity, Sōhyō argued: ‘Increasing the productivity of labour is what we desire above all. Raising efficiency, increasing production, and assuring its abundance, sending out inexpensive commodities in large quantities, and pulling up the standard of living are the joys of labour’ (cited in Tsutsui 1998: 145).

The Centre’s objective of locating the politics of productivity at the centre of Japan’s economic policy was perfected at the point when the left wing unions acquiesced to its programs by the end of the 1950s (Miura 2008: 168). Tsutsui argues that, by the end of the 1950s, ‘the once dogmatic opposition of organized labour’s politicized left had been transformed into tacit approval and active cooperation’ (1998: 146). ‘The unions’, he continues, ‘actually ended up among the movement’s most dedicated participants, embracing business unionism and the technocratic, materialist appeal of productivity in an environment where the scope for political activism was increasingly constrained’ (1998: 146). By the end of the 1950s, Oguma writes, the Japanese had already lost a sense of what was meant by postwar democracy (2002: 568).

The Occupation’s change in policy objectives for the rebuilding of Japan engulfed the Japanese nation, including political labour agents, into the vortex of a consumer society. When not only the right wing labour-unions but also the left wing labour federation acceded to the rationality and aims of liberal capitalism, the political role of labour movements arguably evaporated, yielding to the reality of affluent Japan. Furthermore, enterprise unionism structurally diffused the political passions and activities of labourers within firms. Labourers’ indifference to the culture of Japanese corporations – symbolised by the merit system – as well as to the issue of workers’ identity which is to

be maintained through autonomy in the workplace and production process were other factors contributing to the direction in which the political stature of labour movements was dismantled. Overall, a social landscape in which labourers acquiesced to productivity movements contrasted with the landscape in the immediate aftermath of Japan's defeat in the Second World War, in which labourers waged the popular front in search for a better form of government in order to solve the pressing problem of widespread poverty. Put differently, the emergent political public space evaporated as what Arendt calls 'the social question' receded.

### *Conclusion*

As the living standards of the whole population significantly improved, the political role of the labour movements was submerged into the concerns of economic security, despite their search for a more democratic form of government in the early postwar period. Forgotten in the growth of a consumer society were the essential experience of freedom and the political concern over how to protect it. The failure of labour movements in claiming and maintaining political agency was due, largely, to their marginalisation of the Japanese question in their search of a new form of government. Without being able to clarify the concept of democracy except by linking it to the improvement and sustenance of economic security, labour movements lost control over their political role in the wake of the rise of a consumer society. They surrendered their political agency to the interests of the labouring, consuming body of *animal laborans*, for whom economic security, leisure and affluence are the goals of life. By contrast, the concerns of political agency centre on securing a public political space in which both freedom and tradition balance each other, because the lives of individuals are as transient as the activities of *animal laborans*, and thus need the support of enduring measures of culture, tradition and authority to retrieve the reality of human's mortal existence. Put differently, by way of pursuing efforts to conserve such measures, citizens enact their *responsibility* for their world where the new generations – including their offspring – come to join and enjoy the experience of freedom, while beginning from the point in which they do not have any knowledge of a common space and thus of how to live with fellow citizens.

The following chapter examines the question of whether postwar Japan witnessed the rise of a political public space in which the concerns of the citizens are engaged with the common good or concern, such as state sovereignty and autonomy. These conditions are the fundamentals of a public realm which were, nonetheless, deficient in early postwar Japan under the Occupation and the post-Occupation control. These aspects are examined by exploring the origin of the postwar Constitution and the student movements of the 1960s.

## CHAPTER 6

### *The Exchange of Unexchangeables: the Postwar Constitution, Student Movements and Sovereignty*

*Peace and democracy* have been the *leitmotifs* of intellectual discourse in postwar Japan since the day of defeat in 1945.  
(Kersten 1996: 164, italics added)

It was inconceivable that a sovereign nation should forego the right of self-defense, the sine qua none [sic] of independence and autonomy.  
(Kataoka 1991: 85)

Schmitt's notion of the exception encourages probing of the 'unrealism' of Article 9. Exceptions do occur. Any constitutional order that assumes that such exceptions will never happen is living on borrowed time.  
(Williams 2006: 53)

#### *Introduction*

The renowned political pluralist Hannah Arendt does not believe in trans-territorial freedom nor trans-territorial equality. For her, the public spaces are 'oases in a desert' (1990: 275), because freedom of citizens is spatially delimited. That is, the freedom which citizens can enjoy only in the public realm is conditioned by the fact of this space that is territorially delimited, with the measures such as tradition and authority which endure in time drawing upon the historical sedimentation of the judicious exchanges of a given people's opinions. Since the freedom of a spatially-bounded people gives rise to a common, public realm – a space for participation, dialogue and decision-making – 'every such space has its own structure that changes over time and reveals itself... in a public context as laws, constitutions, statues, and the like' (2005: 106). Similarly, five centuries before Arendt's seminal work, Niccolò Machiavelli propounded the legal entity of public space in his attempt to revive the political life of the Athenian city-state in medieval Italy, defining sovereignty in its relation to a territory and the subjects who inhabit it (see Foucault 1991: 93). In a nutshell, territorially defined freedom endows a public realm with sovereignty.

Since the promulgation of Japan's postwar Constitution in 1946, many Japanese have held dear the pacifist principle embedded in the Constitution for more than six

decades. But since the beginning of 2013, a move to amend Japan's hitherto untouched postwar Constitution has grown, with re-elected Prime Minister Abe Shinzo indicating to the parliament his intention to revise the Constitution ('Japan PM flags change to postwar Constitution', 31 January 2013). Why is it that Japan's postwar Constitution has never been amended to date, and why is it now that the Constitution debate has intensified? By exploring the student movements of the 1960s, this chapter investigates the extent to which postwar Japan has succeeded in restoring the autonomy and sovereignty of the state – a precondition of a political public realm. Examining the struggles of political leaders over the non-Japanese made pacifist Constitution in the 1940s and 1950s offers a major clue to gauge the extent of any such success. In 1960, Japan's public sphere underwent a monumental upheaval with the collision of convictions to defend the public realm, created by the protests of students and citizens and by the anguish of statesmen. Political life of postwar Japan remains polarised over the issue of the state's sovereignty and national security to date, owing to the collision of faiths for the freedom of their political public space.

This chapter focuses on two major events of the 1960s: the student battle against the 1960 revision of the US-Japan security treaty (the *Anpo* treaty), which was to redress the unequal provisions underlying the original security treaty signed in 1951 in San Francisco; and the 1968-69 revolution in which student radicalism and violence spread in many universities. Regarding the former, this chapter argues that although the student-based social movements over the *Anpo* treaty made a political public realm manifest, these movements failed to engage with the Japanese question, with the result that the political potential of these movements was significantly curtailed. Regarding the later event, this chapter contends that student radicalism ascended, to a great extent, as a sequel to the public denial of the Japanese question which had culminated by the time of the 1960 *Anpo* battle. In the wake of these events and the denials they manifested, Japanese new social movements, which have ascended since the end of the 1960s, found the compass of a common public realm to be defined neither by the Japanese question nor by the Marxist politics that had been in vogue throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

This chapter is divided into two major sections, with each section examining and analysing these events of the 1960s. The first section is divided into four sub-sections.

The initial sub-section describes the battleground of the *Anpo* event. The second sub-section dissects, at length, the process of constitution-making in the immediate aftermath of Japan's war defeat, and its background, the difficulties and struggles faced by the political leaders until the revision of the US-Japan security treaty, which still linger in the present day of Japan's public space. The third sub-section overhauls the anti-political character of Japanese pacifism, whose narrative was the major motivation of the student social movements. The last sub-section comes back to the question of sovereignty and re-evaluates Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke's decision to revise the security treaty, which was castigated by the public as an authoritarian act. In the light of this analysis of these events, the second major section then analyses the political implications of student radicalism and their break with Marxism at the end of the 1960s.

*A Division of the Political Public Sphere: Student Dissent over the Anpo Treaty Revision*

The *Anpo* Battle and the Emergence of the New Left – the Bund *Zengakuren*

On 27 November 1959, one of Japan's most radical student factions, the Bund, knocked out the police blockades surrounding Japan's Diet and surged inside. Subsequently, students and labourers who had been watching these student clashes rushed into the premises. The day after their forceful entry, militant student groups received reprimands from the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), yet they continued to demonstrate their opposition through a sit-in in the front park of the Diet for five hours (Oguma 2009: 186). Six months later this protest culminated in a month-long militant mass movement, one of the largest collective actions in the history of postwar Japan.

The Bund was a mainstream radical group of *Zengakuren* – an abbreviated appellation of the *Zen Nihon Gakusei Jichikai Sōrengō* (the All Japan Federation of Students) – founded in September 1948 and composed of student governments in university campuses nationwide, rather than of individual students (Shimbori 1963: 62). In the 1950s and 1960s, the *Zengakuren* was at the forefront of Japanese social movements, exercising violent radicalism for their political objectives. What plagued this national organisation from the early stage and eventually determined their fate was the ongoing strife among the left-wing factions within the Marxist body (Sunada 1969: 458;



Shimbori 1964; Oguma 2009). Although the *Zengakuren* was at first under the considerable influence of the JCP, the Bund (共産主義者同盟: *kyōsanshugisha dōmei*) (the Communist League) which emerged in 1958 signified a watershed for the Federation, with this radical faction forming an incipient major anti-JCP force. Against the Stalinist bureaucracy of the JCP, which was criticised for its collusion with capitalism, the Bund – arguably the origin of the new left in Japan – advocated, following Trotsky, a new internationalism to unite the world against the imperialism of capitalism (Oguma 2009: 179; Sunada 1969: 461). For them, communism was an avant-garde force for the ideal of world peace. But the Bund was lacking, to a significant extent, in ideological and organisational foundations, despite their outstanding energy and determination to seek world-wide revolution and to oppose the JCP group.

In the late 1950s, the *Zengakuren* was dominated by the abundant power of the Bund. Although the Bund dissolved in 1961, the anti-JCP groups continued to exert their influence on the student movements and to own the capacity for mass mobilisation (Sunada 1969: 459, 466). According to the data taken from the Japan Education Association survey in January 1969, the JCP group of *Zengakuren* outnumbered the anti-JCP groups, with the former controlling 326 associations of which almost 460,000 students were a part, in contrast to the latter embracing approximately 390,000 students. However, the actions and tactics of the JCP group largely relied upon moderate peaceful demonstrations, while those of anti-JCP groups were focused on militant radicalism, inducing wider student support and thus demonstrating superior mobilisation strength (Sunada 1969: 465).

On the night of 19 May 1960, the legislation for the revision of *the US-Japan Security Treaty* (安保条約) (the *Anpo* treaty) was passed in the Lower House. The passing of the bill was secured by means so forceful that it was frequently called an undemocratic outrage. In order to prevent its passage at all costs, socialist politicians had barricaded the Speaker of the Lower House in the chamber, but their opposition succumbed to Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke's absolutism, which forced them out using police and syndicate gangs (Oguma 2009: 196; Kersten 2009: 232). Since the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held the majority of seats in the parliament, the legislation was passed in the middle of the night in the absence of the opposition parties. Students who had surrounded the Diet

with a view to thwarting the ratification of the treaty denounced the actions of the prime minister and the LDP as anti-political, contradicting the principle of democracy (Miyazaki 1990: 416). Statesmen attacked each other in the Diet, while protesters battled with riot police on the streets (Kersten 2009: 232). The battle was not over with the passing of the legislation however, as the Constitution held that diplomatic treaties approved by the House of Representatives were to be legitimated after 30 days, albeit automatically and without needing the approval of the Senate (Miyazaki 1990: 416). For the month following 19 May, many streets of Tokyo bustled with an increasing number of protesters, including members of the general public and students who had been indifferent to party politics and labour movements (Oguma 2009: 196). On 20 May, 300 students broke into the premier's residence, and six days later with anti-JCP students mustering 13,000 protestors, another demonstration followed (Oguma 2009: 197-198).

As the month turned into June, the mass movements against the treaty revision intensified their resistance. On 3 June, 6000 students pulled down the iron gate of the premier's residence, pushed over armoured police cars, and finally squeezed around 500 students into the building (Oguma 2009: 203). On the following day, an immense general strike of labour unions took place with approximately 5,600,000 participants, including 4000 student-members of the anti-JCP *Zengakuren* (Oguma 2009: 203). On 15 June, the Diet was besieged by around 100,000 citizens, labours and students. Although many protests unfolded peacefully under the instructions of the JCP and the JSP, for the anti-JCP radicals such peaceful action was not enough, and they broke into the Diet and clashed violently with riot police (Oguma 2009: 206). This clash left one student dead. Five days later, the divisions within Japan's public sphere over the US-Japan security treaty revision finally reached an end by virtue of the legislation of the *Anpo* treaty revision having been approved by default under the constitutional provision described above. However, this final battle – which ended with the government being forced to call off a planned visit of President Dwight Eisenhower to Tokyo and with the resignation of Prime Minister Kishi, as a result of a month-long student demonstration and pressure – left the essential question of how to secure Japan's public realm unresolved.

Why is it that the treaty revision generated such levels of social resistance? In order to begin an analysis of these events underlain by the polarised public – that is, an

analysis of the meaning and implications of these events concerning Japan's body politic and its sovereignty – it is important first to briefly summarise the major arguments of student-based mass movements, which can be divided into the following three strands. Firstly, *Article 9* (known as the pacifist clause or 'no-war clause') of Japan's postwar Constitution stipulates that Japan forever renounces war 'as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes', and it will never maintain 'land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential' (The Constitution of Japan Project 2004: 207). The postwar Constitution promulgated in 1946 promised both the sovereignty of the Japanese people and state pacifism. The left wing opposition manifesting in the student resistance to the revision of the US-Japan security treaty argued, accordingly, that the revision, which maintained the presence of American (hence foreign) military forces within the borders of Japan, was not only an unequal treaty because it retained Japan's subservient status under a continued US military presence, but also was unconstitutional because it breached the pacifist clause (Kishi 1983: 296; Miyazaki 1990: 419; Bey & Kataoka 1985: 15). Secondly, as in Jawaharlal Nehru's foreign policy, which was predicated on the non-alliance principle, the left resistance pressed the Japanese government to take a neutralist stance instead of coalition with the US (Nish 1960: 12). A friendly entente with America could lead to participation in the US's world military and nuclear strategies and, potentially, to Japan being involuntarily dragged into the Cold War which was escalating between the US and the Soviet Union. Thirdly, as seen in Prime Minister Kishi's forceful ratification of the *Anpo* treaty revision, the 1960 social movements stressed that the LDP and thus the government ignored a principle of democracy, that is, a thorough public debate on the matter of the revision (Miyazaki 1990: 417; Nish 1960: 14). An opinion poll taken on 25-26 May 1960 indicated that the public support for the Kishi Cabinet had declined to 12 percent, the lowest in the history of postwar Japan (Oguma 2009: 196). The citizens in 1960 critically voiced that democracy does not mean the tyranny of a majority sitting in parliament (Kersten 2009: 232; Miyazaki 1990: 418).

A state could not be supreme at home if it were not externally autonomous. For if it were dependent on an external superior power, whose decision-makers could dictate the foreign policy of the dependent state, there would be little to prevent them from dictating its internal policies and legal rules as well. (Arato & Cohen 2009: 309)

As epitomised in the above view by legal theorists, Carré de Malberg and Hans Kelsen (cited in Arato & Cohen 2009: 309), reclaiming the state's autonomy and sovereignty was an unavoidable and fundamental step and aim for conservative Japanese statesmen in the wake of Japan's defeat in the Second World War. Their struggles for this restoration, which continued until the *Anpo* treaty revision and, to a large extent, until the present day, continued to be unrecognised in the 1960 student, pacifist and democratic movements. From the beginning when Japan admitted its defeat in the war, the priority of statesmen laid in the Japanese question, that is, in determining the extent to which the emperor system – which had formed the body politic of the country – could survive in any form, while Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration meant its imperative to make a transition to a new polity.

Above all, the kernel which had configured the polity of Japan not merely during the time of war but since time immemorial had to be salvaged at any cost, for without it, that which had gathered the Japanese into a common, public space as well as separated them from one another – that which constituted, in a word, the binding thread of the public realm – the borders of Japan's public space would disappear. The competing interpretations of Japan's surrender at the end of the Second World War between Japan and the Allied powers are a case in point, speaking to the struggles of statesmen for this indispensable kernel and their pursuit of the Japanese question. Japan's surrender status is of important consideration, because there was a critical difference between Japanese interpretation of the conditions of its surrender and the Allied countries' interpretation. Although the Occupation of Japan was instigated by the Allied powers, which included Britain, the Soviet Union, Canada, Holland, Australia and China to name a few, the General Headquarters (GHQ) was predominantly administered by the military of the United States (Kita 2005: 133; see also Price 2001). Hence the reconstruction of postwar Japan was mostly steered by the Occupation policies of America. In exploring the records

of the American Occupation of Japan, Etō Jun finds in the September 1982 document of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (*Gaimushō*) an intriguing fact: there was a critical shift in the *legal* status of Japan's surrender after around June 1950 (Etō 1987: 105). According to him, until around the outbreak of the Korean War, *Gaimushō*, adopting the theory of Professor Taoka Ryōichi, a scholar of international law, maintained that Japan's surrender was *not* unconditional (Etō 1987: 105).<sup>99</sup>

The Japanese Foreign Ministry maintained throughout the occupation that its surrender was conditional. According to it, when the Potsdam Declaration – by itself a unilateral declaration of the four Allied powers – was incorporated into the instrument of surrender, it came to constitute a kind of contract binding on both parties. (Kataoka 1991: 21)

This *Gaimushō* view depended upon 'the double option nature' of the Potsdam Declaration (Kataoka 1991: 21). By 26 May 1943 in which the original draft of the Declaration was completed, the key officers in Washington in charge of the draft were convinced that Japan would not accept the terms of the Declaration unless the Allied powers allowed for the retention of constitutional monarchy.<sup>100</sup> Building on this original draft, the terms of the Declaration with which Japan complied in 1945 did not make 'the matter of the throne' clear (Kataoka 1991:16). In turn, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC) 150/4<sup>101</sup> did not use the words *unconditional surrender* to express the status of Japan's surrender under the Potsdam Declaration, keeping open a 'double option' with regard to the question of 'the monarchy' in the Declaration (Kataoka 1991: 24). However, the legal status of Japan's surrender espoused by the Japanese government came to be modified in the mid-1950s, when the prospect for the *San Francisco Peace Treaty* – the treaty between Japan and part of the Allied powers – became more concrete, preparing Japan for its signing (Etō 1987: 106). Since this period, the Japanese

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<sup>99</sup> This change is found in the *Gaimushō* documents which are released annually – the Principles for the Planned Peace Treaty (平和条約想定大綱).

<sup>100</sup> Eugene Dooman worked on the original draft of the Declaration under the supervision of Joseph C. Grew who was in agreement with the view of Henry Stimson that a *negotiated* end to the war had to be sought (Kataoka 1991: 15)

<sup>101</sup> After a series of revisions, the United States Initial Postsurrender Policy for Japan drafted by SWNCC was crystallized as SWNCC 150/4 (Kataoka 1991: 20).

government has officially articulated the legal position of its surrender as *unconditional*, paralleling the interpretation used by the Allied powers.

An act which could be called an *exchange of unexchangeables*, which some of early postwar Japanese politicians took in their actions in the years immediately following the end of hostilities, appears to have laid the foundation of a polarised public which lingers to date. In the hope of rescuing the key institution, the emperor system, which had underpinned the public space of prewar Japan, Prime Minister Shidehara Kijūrō (1945-1946), firstly, accepted the insertion of a no-war clause into the postwar Constitution in exchange for the release of the emperor from the peril of dethronement. The Japanese government's later change in the legal position of Japan's surrender harks back to Shidehara's exchange of unexchangeables. No sooner had the war ended than Prime Minister Suzuki Kantarō and foreign ministry officials began desperate negotiations with the Allied forces over the Japanese interpretation of the Declaration, given that the surrender could not result in the dethronement of the emperor, whatever it took for Japan. As seen in this process, the question of the status of Japan's surrender was left open to interpretation: the Japanese government espoused Professor Taoka's theory until 1950, in spite of the fact that the Allied powers interpreted Japan's surrender as unconditional throughout the postwar period (Kataoka 1991: 21).

While the war defeat meant the loss of self-determination for the vanquished, for Japan there was one thing that could by no means be conceded. While Japan's political leaders at the time were engaged with desperate attempts to ensure that the Declaration guaranteed the safety of the emperor, General Douglas MacArthur – in charge of the American Occupation in Japan – had to hasten the reconstruction of Japan – that is, the endowment of Japan with a new polity – in view of rising tensions with the Soviet Union.<sup>102</sup> On 3 Feb 1946, MacArthur called in the head of the Government Section, General Courtney Whitney and broached the subject of the US undertaking of constitution-making for postwar Japan (Kita 2005: 133). This order went behind the Constitutional Problems Investigation Committee which had been formally established

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<sup>102</sup> MacArthur needed to preempt the intervention of Washington and the other Allied powers into the reconstruction of Japan's polity where the issue of the emperor system would come central: The government of the US was divided over the resolution of Japan's emperor system at the time when they released the Potsdam Declaration (Kataoka 1992: 68).

by Prime Minister Shidehara on 25 October 1945 and was headed by Dr Matsumoto Jōji. The US draft of the Constitution, which was completed within a week, was handed over to the Japanese Constitution Committee on 13 February 1946, at which point they realised, to their astonishment, not only that their work had been in vain and that the Occupation authority had taken over the Japanese work of constitution-making, but also that the emperor's safety could not be guaranteed unless the war-renouncing clause, Article 9, was accepted (Kita 2005: 134).<sup>103</sup>

According to MacArthur's memoir, the no-war clause was proposed by Shidehara (Kita 2005: 134). Professor Takayanagi – chairman of the investigation committee on the process of constitution-making from 1957 to 1964 – likewise 'concluded that Article 9 had its origins in Tokyo, not in Washington' (Auer 1990: 173). However, Kataoka, in his meticulous study of the constitution-making process, *The Price of a Constitution* (1991), argues that the story that Shidehara proposed the no-war clause was 'a fiction' that had to be maintained 'in order to save the emperor and to keep the façade of democracy' (1991: 36). In any case, wherever the origin of the no-war clause, it is important that the question of the genesis of the pacifist Constitution be deliberated as part and parcel of inquiries regarding the ultimate law of a public space, namely, sovereignty, the condition of which is, in effect, circumscribed under the no-war clause in postwar Japan. In the first place, the clause was exchanged by Prime Minister Shidehara for the sake of the 'preservation of the emperor system' (Kataoka 1991: 36), the foundation to Japan's body politic, *kokutai* (see Chapter 3). At the same time, as argued by David Williams, Article 9 not only deprives Japan of the sovereign right to war but also raises the question of the

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<sup>103</sup> It is also important to note here that the formation of the constitution of any country by occupation forces breaches international law: Article 43 of the Hague Regulations – 'The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country' (Sassōli 2004: 2). It is however open to question as to whether Japan could resort to international law, as this could have invited the further intervention of the Soviet Union and, as a result, Japan could have followed the same path as Germany, whose postwar reconstruction was under the divided rule. With the Occupation composed of Allied powers, the role of Allies was to be consulted about the policies of the US through the Far Eastern Commission (FEC). The Soviet Union was not particularly happy with the US unilateralism on Occupation policies. On the matters of the Constitution, America was obliged to seek prior agreement and consultation with the FEC. In this regard, the US's undertaking to draft Japan's postwar Constitution – without going through prior agreement with the FEC – was a violation of the FEC agreement (Price 2001: 396; Kataoka 1991: 35). However, it should be stressed that there was no assured prospect for Japan of the Allied forces having a better understanding of the Japanese question and thus providing more favorable conditions for it than the US arrangement.

constitutionality of its possession of armed forces, which was to truncate and deny the sovereignty of Japan, since one of the fundamental attributes of nation states rests on ‘the authority to declare a “state of emergency”’ (2006: 52).

Japan’s postwar Constitution was predicated on three principles established by MacArthur: the emperor as a symbol of the nation; the renunciation of war; and the abrogation of feudalism. Given that the emperor was rescued from the danger of dethronement, in this view, the heart of *kokutai* or the Japanese question seems to have been redeemed. However, Shidehara’s exchange of the unexchangeable – the nation’s right to war (the state’s final arbiter) and the maintenance of a standing military force, for the security of the emperor – by way of constitutionally accepting Article 9 thereafter caused Japanese restlessness about its sovereignty and independence in general, and perplexity about the possibility and credibility of national self-defence in particular. For Kita Yasutoshi, one of the central factors in the Japanese handling of constitution-making being overridden by the GHQ was the unmitigated purge of January 1946, in which key incumbent cabinet ministers were expurgated as militarists (2005: 126). A vacuum of authority developed at the heart of the central government, allowing the Occupation’s control to increase.

No sooner had the US made Japan accept the American version of the postwar Constitution than MacArthur issued a censorship directive, prohibiting any information related to the US undertaking of constitution-making to be released for at least a year after promulgation (Price 2001: 402). Under the censorship of the US, however, it was not until the end of the Occupation in 1952 that freedom of speech was restored in Japan (Etō 1987: 110). Furthermore, while the head of the emperor was saved in the postwar Constitution as a symbol of the country, SWNCC 150/4 was to encourage the initiative of the Japanese themselves to overthrow feudal and authoritarian government – including regicide (Kataoka 1991: 20). The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) released the Japanese-communist prisoners incarcerated during the war (Kataoka 1991: 26-27), and the JSP was founded in 1945 ‘with the blessing of MacArthur, who hoped the



Socialists... would become the center and mainstay of Japan' (Kataoka & Myers 1989: 11).<sup>104</sup>

A key to the bewildering shift of the Japanese government in terms of the legal status of Japan's surrender was to be found in Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's (1946-1947, 1948-1954) concerns with the restoration of national independence and sovereignty. For Japan, the escalation of the Cold War over the Korean War suggested multiple opportunities to negotiate an end to the Occupation (Berger 1998: 38). Two weeks after the communist forces crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to invade South Korea, the United States swiftly moved to convert the defence framework of its protectorate, Japan, with MacArthur beginning to assert that he never intended that 'Japan be unable to defend itself from attack' (Auer 1990: 176). Hence a new ordeal arrived in Japan, with the need to gear towards rearmament, which firstly took the form of the National Police Reserve (NPR), then the National Safety Forces (NSF) in 1952, and finally, in 1954 the Self-Defence Force (SDF) (Auer 1990: 176-178). Even supposing there had been a unified voice both in the government as well as among the citizens to resist the US fiat for rearmament, it is open to question as to what extent the Japanese government at the time could, while remaining under the American Occupation, refuse their decrees. But Marxist partisans embarked on a series of strikes and protests against the government's move towards rearmament, and in 1952 the JSP asserted that the NSF was unconstitutional (Auer 1990: 177; Nish 1960: 9). The JCP and JSP intensified the voices of opposition from early 1950, particularly in response to trenchant criticisms from the Cominform, which accused the JCP leaders of not fighting enough against 'the true intention of American imperialism' (Kataoka 1991: 83). At this point the public space of Japan was characterised by a vehement collision of faiths, with some conservative politicians being concerned with the Japanese question and the sovereignty and independence of the state on the one hand, while many students and citizens were concerned with ensuring peace and democracy on the other. By the early 1960s, this conflict cemented the platform of postwar Japan's division in its public realm. And it is in this context that subsequent

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<sup>104</sup> For the Japanese communists, the Allied powers were a liberation army until the end of the 1940s. In 1988, Hayashi Kentarō writes, the JCP – in general – continued to boycott the annual inauguration day of the Diet on the basis of their rejection of the emperor. On the day of the Diet's inauguration, the emperor addresses a public speech. For the JCP, the people's respect for the emperor is not an authentic expression of national sentiment, but one structurally created by the ruling class (1995: 59).

actions on the part of the student social movements can be understood to have been contra-political, as shall be discussed below.

In the interim, there had been a gradual shift of voices among the key agents in the US away from a plan to prolong the Occupation for 25 years, and towards ‘early peace’ – a rhetoric encapsulating the strategy of key agents and department of the US to end the US occupation early but in such a way that Japan’s liberation established it in a position of ‘semineutralist dependency recuperating on the outer fringe of America’s backyard’ (Kataoka 1991: 78); in other words, a rhetoric against the continuation of occupation for the purpose of bringing an alliance of independent Japan with the US global military strategy (Kataoka 1991: 78-80). Although the US intention was shifting, the State and Defence departments of America were not yet in agreement in the early 1950s as to which option would most benefit the US.<sup>105</sup> In order for Prime Minister Yoshida to hasten the end of the Occupation, the contrivance which he came up with was to offer the US the lease of bases in Japan where their military could retain forces. But this option, correspondingly, meant the rise of a new problem for Japan, for the country – contained by the cage of pacifism – was to be locked into security-dependency on the US forces (Kataoka 1991: 83; Bey & Kataoka 1985: 15). In this view, opposition to Yoshida’s option was not limited to the left-wing parties, provoking indignation equally within the conservative party. For Kataoka, Yoshida’s trading established a compass for the direction of postwar Japan’s national security, the intractable and lackadaisical nature of which appears to be reflected in Yoshida’s response to John Foster Dulles: ‘Security for Japan is possible, and the United States can take care of it... Japan could have security through her own devices, by being democratic, demilitarized, and peace-loving and by relying upon the protection of world opinion’ (cited in Bey & Kataoka 1985: 13).<sup>106</sup> Such an approach to Japan’s national security, called the Yoshida doctrine, was

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<sup>105</sup> The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the Pentagon wanted the Occupation to continue while the State Department increasingly began to push for the independence of Japan (Kataoka 1991: 78).

<sup>106</sup> Prime Minister Yoshida’s policy of cooperating with the US involved considerable problems. Yoshida’s reluctance to move to full rearmament or full-fledged independence determined the fate of postwar Japan as a dependent nation or a partially independent nation; because John Foster Dulles had pushed Yoshida to rearm through the revision of Constitution, Japan had a chance to revise the pacifist Constitution and to move to full-fledged independence (Kataoka 1991: 84). In this respect, it was a decision made by the Japanese to remain dependent, which was firstly initiated by Yoshida and thereafter maintained by the members of the general public.

initially resisted but then gradually welcomed by the left-wing, eventually becoming a major part of their political bedrock. Pacifists in general stood opposed to a minority faction within the conservative party – renowned as constitutional revisionists – which endeavoured to break down the Yoshida doctrine. Yoshida and his faction<sup>107</sup> – albeit belonging to the conservative party – colluded with the socialists (Kataoka & Myers 1989: 18) in order to develop ‘the pacifist commercial democratic regime’ (Kataoka 1980: 7). In September 1951, Japan’s independence from the Occupation was finally and officially proclaimed at San Francisco in its signing of a peace treaty, followed by a security treaty in which an indefinite period of US military presence in Japan was permitted (Nish 1960: 8).

It is important to consider here the sudden change described above in the interpretation of *Gaimushō* regarding the surrender status of Japan at the end of WWII. According to Etō, although the details of changes in the stance of the Japanese government remain obscure, what occurred around the time of the government’s shift in 1950 was, precisely, the restoration of Japan’s independence at San Francisco (1987: 107). The exchange of unexchangeables seems to have been made again when Prime Minister Yoshida exchanged not only the US military’s use of bases in Japan for Japan’s restoration of national independence, but in addition, the government changed the official interpretation of the country’s surrender to the status of unconditional.

In this way, struggles on the part of some of Japan’s political leaders for the restoration of national independence and sovereignty took place behind the façade of student-driven demonstrations over the security agenda, which intensified across the period of the government’s move towards rearmament until the 1960 *Anpo* treaty revision. The perilous trials of conservative political leaders were represented by the exchange of unexchangeables: Shidehara’s exchange of the no-war clause for the survival of the emperor; and Yoshida’s exchange of Japan’s lease of its bases to the US military for the termination of the Occupation and the restoration of national independence. Against this political background developed the pacifist debate which became the primary impetus of postwar social movements in Japan in general, and of student opposition to the 1960

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<sup>107</sup> Mochizuki (1984: 158, italics added) writes that ‘the political realists are the inheritors of the Yoshida strategy and now form the *mainstream* of Japanese strategic thought’.

*Anpo* treaty revision in particular. Perhaps more significantly, what the Arendtian perspective adopted in this thesis would see as postwar Japanese society's failure to reevaluate the Japanese question can be seen to have arisen not merely from Occupation policies which intervened in the inviolable territory of a country's constitution-making, but also from the fact that the Japanese pacifists denied this inquiry into the political relevance and significance of the emperor system which had provided the borders of the public until Japan's defeat in the Second World War, which will be discussed below. Although social democratic movements – the rise of a public space or political life with the visibility of increased participation and contention – escalated over the event of the treaty revision, it is possible to suggest, as will be argued below, that the support for constitutional pacifism, as enshrined in Article 9, thereby ensured that the actions of such political movements would be *anti-political* in nature. Their support for the clause omitted any discussion of the problem of *constitutionalised* default sovereignty (or restricted sovereignty), as evidenced by the fact that the postwar Constitution was not made by the Japanese first and foremost, and that the no-war clause deprived – and continues to deprive – Japan of sovereignty, of the national will to protect its own public space, particularly in times of emergency.

#### True Peace? Pacifist Debates on Trial

According to Rikki Kersten, Japanese pacifism, enshrined in the linkage of peace and democracy, is a 'product of *indigenous* philosophy... with full consideration of the lessons of history' (1996: 181, italics added). The *Anpo* battle – widely participated in by the members of the left-wing political parties, the *Zengakuren* students, ordinary citizens, religious groups, labourers, mass media and trans-war intelligentsia (Nish 1960: 12) – reached its zenith on the basis of pacifist ideals and debates. But the so-called 'indigenous' conviction that formed the bedrock of left-wing movements can be seen, this chapter contends, to be devoid of a genuine concept and experience of *the public*. As a consequence, it may not have been inappropriate for many of the new social movements which began to prosper after the late 1960s to turn away from the orthodoxy of Marxism, having no way forward other than searching for new directions, values and ideals in a postwar society. In addition, the left-wing movements' circumscription of the meaning of the public or politics and the attribution of those terms to the traditional

notion of authority such as the state and the emperor system – as seen in the arguments of Maruyama Masao and Kuno Osamu below – introduced further insecurity into Japan's public space, keeping the country off-guard in the face of the growing number of dangers in the twenty-first century.

Beside his seminal writings, University of Tokyo Professor Maruyama Masao took part in political activism from the 1950s (Kersten 2009: 229). He led social movements in the belief that society – the locus and substance of the self – is to be set against the state (Kersten 2009: 229). For him, the realm of private or individual values had been subsumed by the realm of the public in Japan. Drawing on *shutaisei* (subjectivity) debates, the left-wing intellectuals argued that it was the autonomy of the self which could dismantle the overriding power of state over society (see Chapter 3). Kersten highlights that the subjectivity debates of postwar Japan were analogous to the idealist-materialist debates of 1890s Europe; in which the principle of autonomy was presumed to be the ethical independence of society from the state; and democratic society meant that 'the self was both fundamental to and privileged over any collective entity' (2009: 229). Traversing the bitter experience of the war, the Japanese pacifists espoused an unbreakable association of peace and democracy, on the premise that this association was transcendental and universal for humanity (Kersten 1996: 166, 168). The publications of Iwanami publishing house, which assembled the work of Maruyama and the other progressive intellectuals of the time, emphasised that, given their particular atomic experience and war responsibility, the Japanese were bound to make national commitments to pacifism.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the iron association of peace and democracy was a product of indigenous philosophy, as Kersten states.

Similarly, in *Shimin Shugi no Seiritsu* (the Establishment of the Principle of Civil Society)(1996), Kuno Osamu expounds on the universal philosophy and practice of democracy and civil society. In his explanation of the notion of civil society, Kersten's identification of Japan's pacifism as indigenous philosophy is evident: the principle of civil society rests on pacifism (Kuno 1996: 129). For Kuno, democracy means 'the

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<sup>108</sup> For scholars like Beer Lawrence who examined almost half a century of continuing Japanese pacifism at the end of the twentieth century, Japan's record in the area of defence-military, has been conspicuously peaceful, making a valuable contribution to the ideals of international law and the practice of constitutionalism in world civilisation (1998: 815).

modus operandi to resolve the issues of the public', and its 'major principle' is 'the division of the public and the private, and the defence of the latter' (1994: 36, mt). In contrast to the emperor-predicated polity – *kokutai* – in which the emperor sits at the top of the layers of ethnic egoism, family egoism, factional egoism and enterprise egoism, Kuno explains that democracy secures the realm of the private, where originality, innovation and spontaneity are cultivated (1996: 35, 138). In modern democracy, he maintains that the public is defined by the realm which is built by interests, fame and aspects of life that are common to each individual (1996: 36). The issues of the public are horizontal because the matters collectively in question influence the interests not only of a person but also of the many. For Kuno, politics instrumentalises political authority, which tries to hedge and rule our lives over-archingly (1996: 159). Citizens must stay always cautious about a mode of political authority which co-opts the realm of the private – including the realm of thought, and resist, when necessary, the leaning of political authority towards fundamentalism (1996: 160). Further, Kuno argues that culture can work as a catalyst to reinforce the control and agitation of political leaders, although its role is not restricted to that (1996: 181).

With regard to Japan's foreign policy, Japanese pacifists argue that Japan's position in the international sphere should be cemented on the principle of unarmed neutrality (Mochizuki 1984). Supporting disarmament and arms control, Mochizuki Mike explains that the unarmed neutralists 'adamantly oppose any revision of the postwar Constitution or a relaxation of the policy constraints on a defense buildup' (1984: 165). Hence Japan's resumption of rearmament beginning from the Korean War and the US's shift in its global military strategy, whereby the national independence of Japan rather than the prolongation of US Occupation was seen to benefit the US, were perceived by the unarmed neutralists as Japan's dangerous return to 'militarisation' (Mochizuki 1984: 165).

Given these major premises of pacifism in postwar Japan, the question arises as to whether loyalty to the pacifist Constitution actually achieves peace, especially in terms of the security of Japan's political public realm. According to David Williams, the pacifists' idealism constitutes 'unrealism about global politics and ... hyperrealism about the dark side of the Japanese national character' (2006: 55), in its denial of sovereignty and the

metaphysics of agency (2006: 43, 55). Highlighting the constitutional contrasts between postwar Japan and postwar Germany, Williams argues that although Germany was a vanquished country in WWII like Japan, Carl Schmitt's caveat – 'the sovereign is whoever decides what constitutes an exception' (cited in Williams 2006: 48) – was not obliterated in the German foundation of its Constitution after the war. Williams explains that Schmitt's caveat was not absent from the concerns of the framers of the Weimar Constitution who tried to 'legislate for a legal response to an emergency that could not, by definition, be anticipated with precision' (2006: 53). Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution states that 'If, in the German Reich, public security and order are considerably disturbed or endangered, the Reichpräsident may undertake necessary measures to restore public security and order, and if necessary may intervene with the aid of the armed forces' (cited in Williams 2006: 53). By contrast, in seeing the pacifist Constitution as a necessary check, effectively, on the rise of Japan's militarism, put differently, on the rise of threats from the domestic sphere, Japanese pacifists have marginalised from their discussions and considerations the question of potential 'exceptions' which could arise from the international sphere. For pacifists, therefore, any proposal and argument in support of constitutional revision could harbour only militaristic and anti-democratic intentions (Williams 2006: 51; Koizumi 1963: 105). But 'exceptions do occur', as Williams notes (2006: 53), and the forces bringing them about do not always come from within.<sup>109</sup>

For example, in August 1998, a Taepodong-I, intermediate-range ballistic missile, was launched by North Korea, which reached so far it traversed the territorial skies of the Japanese archipelago.<sup>110</sup> In September 2012 the Japanese government nationalised Senkaku islands, also claimed by China and Taiwan, on the grounds that the uninhabited

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<sup>109</sup> According to Richard Holbrooke, it may not be so long before Japan faces the day when American troops depart from Japan (1991: 50). Then the 'Japanese could no longer complain about American behavior or special privileges on the bases' (Holbrooke 1991: 50). Pacifists will then face the day in which they have to reassess whether the absence of military forces – that is, of a constitutionally legitimised military defence force – leaves Japan's public space safe from any external emergency.

<sup>110</sup> Prior to this missile crisis created by North Korea, there was a symbolic event in which Japan became aware of its presence in the international sphere – the first Gulf War. On 2 Aug 1990 when Gulf War I began, the premier's residence was empty with no staff on duty, despite the fact that a considerable proportion of Japan's oil comes from the Gulf region. This suggests the atrophy of statesmen's awareness and consciousness of the crises and dangers to their country. The Japanese government ended up paying a substantial share of the war cost, approaching US \$13 billion (Williams 2006: 44).

islands of Senkaku have historically belonged to Japan ('Japanese stage protest near China embassy over islands', 22 September 2012); after the government purchased the islands from private Japanese owners, the dispute between the claimants has escalated. Since then, Japan has faced continual threats to its territorial ocean and air spaces, from Chinese surveillance ships as well as their navy and air force ('*Chūgokugun no kantei 7seki, Okinawa, Miyakojimaoki wo tsūka. Bōeisho Happyo*', 4 October 2012; '*Chūgokugunki, aitsugi ryōkū sekkin. Kūji no keikokushageki kentō*', 9 January 2013). In November 2013, China unilaterally established the Air Defence Identification Zone, which included the disputed islands and waters of Senkaku, claiming that airlines which enter the Zone must inform China of their flight plans prior to flight ('Asian airlines to give flight plans to China after airspace zone created', 25 November 2013). China's expansion of its territory threatens not only the ownership of Senkaku islands but also the communication network of sea route which is a life line for the economic stability and national security of Japan. As Kataoka and Myers write, 'of the Asian and the Pacific countries, Japan benefits most from the uninterrupted flow of shipping from distant sources of supplies and markets' (1989: 93), particularly, concerning its import of much needed energy sources such as oil, coal and natural gas (Kataoka & Myers 1989: 97).

But such threats to the security of the public realm are increasingly not limited to border disputes and potential attacks on Japanese territory. One of the worst international hostage crises in recent decades unfolded at an Algerian gas plant in mid-January 2013. The four-day raid saw militants take hundreds of international workers captive, and of the hostages killed, ten were Japanese, more than the number of victims from any other nation ('Algerian hostage toll rises with reports of Japanese deaths', 21 January 2013). The Japanese Self-Defence Force (SDF) law prohibits the SDF from being mobilised to protect Japanese nationals abroad who seek to evacuate by air or sea ('Algeria siege fuels calls for greater SDF role in protecting Japanese overseas', 22 January 2013). Although its operation to help the repatriation of Japanese nationals from ports and airports is permitted, this is possible only if the government can confirm that, upon the investigation of the local situation, troops will not be drawn into conflicts. But in cases of emergency, it is more likely that there is little time for the government to carry out a full investigation of the local environment; and the place is less isolated from conflicts and dangers.



On 1 July 2014, the cabinet of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō approved Japan's exercise of its right to collective self-defence. This government's drastic policy shift was broadcasted as 'a major turning-point in postwar Japan's national security policy' (*'Teleasa "hōste" to TBS "NEWS 23" ha namachūkei, shushyō kanteimae demo, teleshōkyoku no toriagekatani sai'*, 2 July 2014), given that Japan can now dispatch its armed forces outside its territory in situations where Japan's close allies require its help ('Japan's cabinet approves changes to its pacifist constitution allowing for "collective self-defence"', 1 July 2014). However, critical ambiguity and intractability remain in the postwar Constitution of Japan, as this recent cabinet approval of Japan's exercise of the right to collective self-defence was based on the change in the government's interpretation of the Constitution, not on the amendment of Article 9 of the Constitution. The prohibition of military activity remains intact, and an exception clause remaining missing from the postwar Constitution. As Mochizuki writes, although the direct policy influence of pacifists is limited, the influence of their sentiments on the realm of public discussion has been considerable, constraining the security policy of the country (1984: 165). Constitutional amendments are possible with a two-thirds majority in both houses and a national referendum. Although the public poll in early May 2014 indicates that support for the revision is slightly higher than opposition, over a third of surveyed population expressed their inability to decide about the need for constitutional amendment (*'Seron chōsa kenpōkaisei hitsuyō, fuhitsuyō hobo onaji, 2 May [2014]'*, 3 May 2014), suggesting that the nation's will for constitutional revision in general continues to be amorphous.<sup>111</sup> In particular, with regard to agreement or disagreement over the constitutional revision of Article 9, 23 percent of the people in survey agree with the need for its amendment, as against 38 percent disagreement, alongside a further 32 percent undecided (*'Seron chōsa kenpōkaisei hitsuyō, fuhitsuyō hobo onaji, 2 May [2014]'*, 3 May 2014). This indicates that the constitutional amendment of the nation's postwar security platform which raises the question of the state's autonomy and

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<sup>111</sup>An NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) poll in early May 2014 indicates that 28 percent of the public in survey feels the need of constitutional amendment, in contrast to 26 percent disagreement. Also refer to the project of the *Sankei Shimbun* – an outline of a (new) "National Constitution of Japan" which consists of 117 Article ("Outline of a New "National Constitution of Japan"', 1 May 2014).

sovereignty is markedly difficult, proposing the low level of the nation's will for the recovery of its project of self-governance.

While Prime Minister Abe has not been able to push the debate regarding constitutional amendment since around July 2013 when the LDP and its junior coalition partner New Komeito declared a landslide victory in the upper house election, it remains to be seen how far Japanese constitutional debate could develop, concerning the fundamental issues of national sovereignty. These include: 1) acknowledging that the Constitution was not Japanese-made; 2) reviewing Article 9 which curtails national sovereignty – because of constraints on the nation's project of self-determination in terms of its own security – and which leaves Japan's public realm in a perilous position; and 3) reassessing, on the basis of the Japanese question, Article 1, which defines the position of the Japanese emperor in relation to the public space of Japan, that is, a symbol of the state; according to Hasegawa Michiko, Article 20 of the postwar Constitution, which bans the state's exercise of religious activities, 'makes Article 1 impossible' (2007: 63).<sup>112</sup>

Insofar as the sustainability of Japan's political public space continues, arguably, to be in question in the early twenty-first century, the division of the public realm sparked over the revision of the US-Japan security treaty in 1960 may not be a mere event of the bygone era on which the citizens occasionally look back. A few years after this event, Koizumi Shinzō revisited questions regarding the plausibility of pacifist opposition to Japan's incremental move towards rearmament, particularly after the Korean War. While the unarmed neutralists supported the option of a comprehensive treaty or a position of neutrality as being in accord with Japan's postwar principle of peace, Koizumi argues that opposition to neutrality does not automatically signify anti-peace and war-mongering. Suppose, he suggests, that in the Cold War environment Japan asserted neutrality: if either of the forces (of the United States or of the Soviet Union) landed in Japan, a neutral Japan must request the foreign military to leave its land within a certain time. If, however,

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<sup>112</sup> Article 20, paragraph 3, states that 'The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity' (cited in Hasegawa 2007: 63). Hasegawa explains that on the basis of this Article 'an imperial rite like the ... *Shihōhai*' – the ritual performance of the emperor that pays homage to the four directions of the cosmos and prays for averting natural disasters and for having abundant crops – 'cannot be treated as a public function'. She questions how the emperor can act 'as a symbol of the unity of the Japanese people without performing such rites as public functions' (2007: 63, italics added).

the foreign force denied this request, a force-less Japan would have no recourse but to ask the assistance of the opposing country to expel the occupying force, at which point Koizumi holds that Japan's neutrality would virtually end (1963: 106). In October 1957, the Soviet Union succeeded in launching the first artificial satellite, demonstrating their military superiority over that of the US (the Sputnik Crisis). According to Kishi Nobusuke, there was a further shift in the JSP's approach after this event. The JSP began to uphold the position of neutrality more strongly, urging Japan to immediately sign off the US-Japan security treaty, given its fear of Japan becoming a satellite country of the Soviet Union (Kishi 1983: 344-348).<sup>113</sup> For a position of neutrality to be taken by Japan, however, Koizumi argues that it needed a preceding condition in which Japan's security was ensured by *both* the US and the Soviet (1963: 106).

Thomas Berger's comparative study of national security in postwar Germany and postwar Japan supports Koizumi's contention. Berger explains that the public resistance to the move towards rearmament has been much larger and more intense in Japan than in Germany (1998: 34).<sup>114</sup> In the lead-up to the San Francisco treaty in 1951, fervent protests sprung up among the members of the left-wing parties, labourers, students and the intelligentsia in Japan, who advocated the principle of neutrality (or the option of a comprehensive treaty) and hence opposed a partial treaty with the non-communist block (consisting not only of the US but also the other 48 allied nations). Germany was much more vigilant about the threat of land invasion from the East, committing to develop a substantial military establishment, whereas in Japan the social movements of the time

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<sup>113</sup> It is important to note that at the time the Kishi Cabinet commenced in 1957, the JSP hardly supported the revoking of the US-Japan security treaty. The claims of the JSP were focused on the inequality of the treaty, pressuring the government to revise and reexamine the unequal clauses within the security treaty (Kishi 1983: 297). This suggests that the JSP was not equipped with answers as to how to defend Japan without resorting to the US military forces.

<sup>114</sup> Given the rise of militarism and fascism in Japan and Germany in the prewar period, an important postwar task for both countries was to develop a civilian control mechanism which monitored the armed forces (Berger 1998: 47, 50). Through this mechanism, the autonomy of the military is structurally precluded. Germany successfully created such a mechanism – *Innere Führung* (internal leadership or monitoring), which prevents the armed forces from becoming an instrument of authoritarianism (Berger 1998: 52) and enabled Adenauer-led postwar Germany at the same time to exercise a flexible approach to military, even leading to the introduction of conscription (Berger 1998: 54). By contrast, Berger argues, Japan's defence policy remained entangled in 'ad hoc legitimations' while its defence budget increased in keeping with the rise of its GNP. By the end of the 1980s, Japan's defence budget reached the third largest in the world (Berger 1998: 51; Auer 1990: 179). Notwithstanding the increase in budget, the constitutional ban prescribes, in the case of Japan, that the defence forces exist, but are not to be used in practice ('*Shūdanteki jieiken kōshi ha seisaku handande*', 21 Jan 2013).

‘appeared almost hopelessly naïve about the nature of the communist system and prone to accept Soviet propaganda at face value’ (Berger 1998: 37, 38).<sup>115</sup>

Koizumi argues that the second aspect in relation to the weakness of student pacifist contentions rests on their neglect of the potentialities that the Occupation could have prolonged. He contends that, if Prime Minister Yoshida had, in deference to the pacifist position, *not* signed the 1951 San Francisco peace and security treaties, it would have meant Japan’s acceptance of the prolongation of the US Occupation (1963: 108). Writing in the early 1960s, Koizumi describes that Japan’s sovereignty was still curtailed by the remaining Occupation policies. He argues that in the early 1950s, Japan was not yet in a political space in which the state could exercise freedom to choose either outright autonomy of the nation or partial independence, because the country was still subject to a condition in which the available choice was limited either to partial independence or to continuing subordination to post-Occupation policies (1963: 108). Despite the end of the Occupation in 1952, it should be noted that the Japanese government has not been fully liberated from remnants of the Occupation (a point which I return to below).

Lastly, Koizumi argues that when complete peace is presupposed for a country without armed forces, the question remains whether Japan would have a choice to seek help from any country other than the US. In the case of the Korean War, the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel was crossed at the expense of a considerable number of casualties in Korea due largely, Koizumi maintains, to Korea’s shortcomings in security preparations for such exceptional events (1963: 110-111). Koizumi argues that constitutional pacifism by no means guarantees peace, because Japan, for the sake of maintaining an *ideal* of peace, remains open to the *real* risk of invasion at any given moment, or to becoming the site of conflict between third parties (Koizumi 1963: 111).<sup>116</sup> Against the backdrop of the escalating

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<sup>115</sup> Koizumi echoes Berger, indicating that the Soviet Union declared war against Japan in 1945 although the former had signed the Japanese-Soviet Non-Aggression/Neutrality Pact in 1941 (1963: 107). Referring to his discussions with Japanese progressive intellectuals about this fact, Koizumi writes that the left-wing intellectuals tended to presume naïvely that ‘this time’ a treaty would work, despite the fact that the past case did not support this assumption.

<sup>116</sup> There have been marked legal cases which set precedents in relation to the difficulty and ineffectiveness of examining Japan’s constitutional pacifism within the domain of judiciary. The Sunakawa Case of 1959 – in which radicals, having destroyed properties used by the US forces in Japan, argued in their defence that the US-Japan treaty was unconstitutional – resulted in the confirmation by Japan’s Supreme Court of Japan’s right to self-defence. However, the Court could not determine the legality of the SDF (Auer 1990: 181). In 1976, although the Sapporo High Court overturned the decision of the Sapporo District Court,

Cold War, then, the Japanese pacifists could be seen as being unrealistic, if not contradictory, in their advocacy of unarmed neutrality (or a comprehensive treaty) and pacifism. With Japan's sovereignty curtailed by Occupation policies and by the postwar Constitution, the notion that Japan could stay at peace, in the absence of any alliance with the US, remains dubitable. Without full-fledged sovereignty, without its own legitimate defence forces, and without – most importantly – citizens who recognise that their freedom and lives rely upon their commitment to the public realm, the political public space can, arguably, never take a worldly form. Freedom is enjoyed, as Williams eloquently puts it, on borrowed time.<sup>117</sup>

#### No Japanese Question, Little Concern for Sovereignty

In the polemics of progressive intellectuals throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a claim routinely made was that Japan's particular atomic experience and war responsibility<sup>118</sup> demand that the nation's postwar politics should not deviate from a marriage of peace and democracy (Kersten 1996). Kuno celebrates Japan's defeat in the war, arguing that for the first time since the Meiji period, its loss brought to the country the fruit of officially recognising the realm of the private, such as occupation and employment, labour and work, and the household (1996: 212). This recognition contrasts, he stresses, with the pre-war period in which every occupation, place of work and household was considered to be an appendix to the public to support the grand project of the emperor (1996: 212). For Kuno, the pretence of citizenship in the pre-war era was fostered in daily life under the rubric of 滅私奉公 (*messhi hōkō*) – the renunciation of oneself for the sake of the public, given that the status of all the people was nothing other than that of the

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made three years earlier, that the SDF was unconstitutional, the High Court could not reach a conclusion on this matter, leaving it as a political question (the Naganuma Case) (Auer 1990: 182; Beer 1998: 821). As in the Naganuma Case, in the Hyakuri Base Case contested from the late 1970s to the 1980s, the Tokyo High Court could not draw a legal conclusion, classifying the question as to the constitutionality of the SDF in the domain of politics (Auer 1990: 183). It should be said that where Japanese constitutional pacifism is concerned, the judiciary branch stays at a distance, indicating its inadequacy to make a judgment on the legality of a self-defence force in light of Article 9 of the 1946 Constitution.

<sup>117</sup> 'Schmitt's notion of the exception encourages probing of the "unrealism" of Article 9. Exceptions do occur. Any constitutional order that assumes that such exceptions will never happen is living on borrowed time' (Williams 2006: 53).

<sup>118</sup> It is open to question as to whether or not these are, strictly, experiences of Japan alone. Although not identical to atomic warfare, the use of chemical agents (such as the defoliant Agent Orange in the Vietnam War) can also produce mass casualties. Similarly, debate about how the Second World War was different from the other previous wars in the international sphere, and about the difference of Japan's war responsibility from that of other wars should be revisited and unpacked.

emperor's subjects (1996: 212). Williams rebuffs this kind of criticism, contending that Japanese pacifists and the left-wing intelligentsia have aimed at 'the deconstruction of Japan' and 'its armour of traditional values' with a view to freeing the people who live in the Japanese archipelago from the need to be Japanese (2006: 56, 58).

In his 1980 publication, Shimizu Ikutarō writes that when we observe the 1948 public poll – the survey he considers to be the final general survey which asked the Japanese public the pros and cons of the emperor system – which revealed support for the system from more than 90 percent of the population (1980: 100), as well the trend in which many Japanese continue to support the emperor (1980: 132), it should be seen that the views of Japanese intellectuals are those of 'vocal minority', in contrast to those of the 'silent majority' of the ordinary people (1980: 102). Differing from the members of the general public, he argues that the Japanese intellectuals have had the advantage of being able to publish their opinions and of being frequently engaged in the public discussion of the emperor system after 1945 (1980: 102). To the silent majority of the Japanese public, the acceptance and support of the emperor system was a common ground, whereas to the vocal minority of many Japanese intellectuals, the denial and mockery of the emperor was a common ground (Shimizu 1980: 102). Given Shimizu's observation, a political public space over the *Anpo* event where students and pacifists echoed the writings and calls of Marxist intellectuals can be seen to have emerged *in denial* of the foundation of Japan's public. Put differently, in early postwar Japan, the kinds of political activities of speeches and actions that realise political life arose in *contradistinction* to the foundation and properties of the public, including the emperor system, state sovereignty and national security.

Where the attitude of Japanese Marxist intellectuals towards the emperor is concerned, Shimizu contends that the 1932 thesis of the Comintern (the Communist International) was decisive, as it fundamentally determined the approach of many Japanese intellectuals by setting up the primary aim of Japanese communists to be the overthrow of the emperor system (1980: 104). This thesis defined the emperor system as absolutism and ruled out any consideration of the Meiji Restoration as a bourgeoisie revolution. For Shimizu, the 1932 thesis continues to influence the thoughts of Japanese intellectuals to present, and it placed them into the pathological orbit of thought and a

sense of inferiority where they feel a sense of belonging to a country which lags behind advanced nations (1980: 105). These intellectuals worship Western civilisation. Shimizu argues that in Japan, a *base of social integration* which influences every aspect of public debate originates in the existence of the emperor (1980: 103). Nonetheless, progressive intellectuals have been able to address a line of thought and action which disregards this base, and thus their approach is, Shimizu maintains, destructive and radical (1980: 103). For him, the reasons that they can keep ignoring the issue of the base of social integration are, firstly, that freedom of speech is completely unconstrained in postwar Japan; secondly, that the social position and condition of the Japanese intellectuals allow them to be unconcerned with this question of social integration; and finally, that the influence of Marxism in Japan is incomparably stronger than those in other nations (1980: 103). He recounts that when demonstrations were taking place against the 1960 revision of the US-Japan security treaty, a communist intellectual asked him the question of whether he thought that Japan had finally come ‘closer to the time of the French Revolution’ (1980: 105). Shimizu points out that for many Japanese intellectuals Japan, in so far as the country retained the emperor, could not exit the stage of underdevelopment.

Seen from these viewpoints, the student movements of the public sphere were an emblematic event illustrating the extent to which the Japanese public denied and suspended postwar inquiry into the Japanese question. Put differently, Arendt’s premise of a political public realm did not, arguably, come to pass, because the hiatus of the public realm, made by the people who struggled to restore the independence and sovereignty of the state, and by the people who searched for postwar values and principles that would foster democratic power in the public sphere in the lead-up to and over the 1960 *Anpo* battle, severed the question of citizens’ freedom from concerns of the objects, institutions and measures which had endured in time. And as we shall see, the ramifications of this dissociation manifested in the public realm, most notably in the escalation of student violence in many universities of Japan, and in the student movement’s subsequent retreat from the politics of Marxism in the late 1960s.

Despite efforts on the part of some postwar conservatives to return to the Japanese question, it should be said that the exchange of unexchangeables made by Prime Ministers Shidehara and Yoshida during the 1940s and 1950s were not able to restore full

state sovereignty and postwar Japan's public space by the time Kishi Nobusuke assumed the seat of Prime Minister in 1957. While the 1951 San Francisco treaty had unshackled Japan from the plight of continued Occupation, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan – about which not only the members of the left-wing parties but also those of the government came to complain – signed immediately after the peace treaty did not end the Occupation as a legacy, but simply established the post-Occupation command anew. The extreme measures taken by Kishi in 1960 to pass legislation for the revision of the US-Japan security treaty can not be discussed without understanding the content of the security treaty signed by Yoshida. For Kataoka, this security treaty was a 'colonial treaty', 'avowedly provisional', and contained 'highly unusual features' (1991: 96-97). Although Yoshida's signing of the *Anpo* treaty to lease Japan's bases to the US military gave the treaty at least the appearance of a mutual or reciprocal treaty which protected both the security of Japan and that of the US, this treaty included neither a clause for 'prior consultation' when both countries face common dangers – 'an elementary feature of an alliance treaty' – nor a provision for consultation regarding US decisions to move its forces and nuclear arms (Kataoka 1991: 96). In recollection of the unequal treaties Japan was forced to sign across the Ansei period (see Chapter 3), the duration of the security treaty was posited as indefinite, and the US demanded extraterritorial rights 'to remove the trials of common crimes committed by its servicemen and their dependents from Japanese courts' (Kataoka 1991: 97).

In returning to power in order to lead the Cabinet in 1957,<sup>119</sup> Kishi resolutely committed to the restoration of sovereignty, announcing a 'new era' in his visit to Washington, D.C. where he met US President Eisenhower. Under this new rhetoric, Kishi attempted to redress Japan's status as only partially independent by revising the unequal security treaty, a status which Yoshida had been able to restore only amid the intensifying conflict between the US and the Soviets, when Japan remained bound by the possibility of prolonged occupation. For him, the revision of the US-Japan security treaty was an

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<sup>119</sup> Kishi's entry into the office of Prime Minister was a re-entry, since he had been a munitions minister in the Tojo Cabinet which started the Second World War. Kishi thus brought with him a dark shadow from the pre-war era, given that, following the end of the war, he was arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of being 'a Class A war criminal' (Kamiya 1972: 717; Berger 1998: 29).



essential step to reclaiming national sovereignty, with key demands being a change to the duration of US military presence in Japan from an indefinite period to a defined period; the creation of a consultation scheme for both countries when common danger is acknowledged; and the requirement for US consultation with Japan should the former seek to move its forces into or out of the territory of the latter (Auer 1990: 179; Oguma 2002: 502). In March 1960, the students of the Bund *Zengakuren* propounded that the Kishi Cabinet's act to revise the treaty arose from the rationale of Japanese monopoly-capitalism and from the intent of its imperialist expansion, and so the students had to block Kishi's move to reform the treaty at all costs (Oguma 2009: 186). Amid the vehement protests by labourers, students and intelligentsia against the treaty revision in 1960,<sup>120</sup> who described postwar Japanese society as taking the path to either democracy or authoritarianism, Kishi adamantly pursued 'a means to secure more independence and equality for Japan' (Kersten 2009: 231; see also Oguma 2009: 199; Oguma 2002: 502).<sup>121</sup>

In short, the trading of political leaders across the first two decades of Japan's postwar history could be seen as efforts not only to maintain and defend the heart of Japan's polity – the emperor – but also to restore national sovereignty, an essential condition of an autonomous public sphere. Against these restoration efforts the opposition movements escalated, and in these occasions of social resistance one can see the potential for a political public realm to have emerged – a contra-political phenomenon in Arendtian view, however. Although the 1960 *Anpo* protests did not, in a large part, confront the relevance of the Japanese question to postwar Japan's democracy, it could be seen that the political public sphere was made manifest insofar as the opposition movements, driven by the denial of the past, were, as Kersten puts it (2009: 228),

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<sup>120</sup> It should be noted that one of the strong fears of the public – from which civil disobedience spread beyond the opposition of left-wing parties – was the possibility that postwar Japan could be involuntarily dragged, by virtue of its alliance with the US, into a war that the country had nothing to do with (Nish 1960: 13). The Japanese concerns had been already roused before Kishi passed the revision bill in the Lower House on 19 May 1960. The citizens' unrest was sparked by the incident in which an American U2 plane was shot down in the airspace of the Soviet Union and by the fact that the latter was ready to make 'reprisals against any country from whose bases spying expeditions had been made' (Nish 1960: 13).

<sup>121</sup> Yet, after Kishi's attempt, an ambiguous and unequal aspect of the US-Japan security treaty remains: although the treaty was a contract, 'the only concrete contract in it had to do with the right of the United States to station her troops in Japan... There was no American guarantee, de jure, to defend Japan' (Kataoka 1980: 14).

characterised by ‘a fundamental reassessment of postwar values and ideals’, raising questions about the form of government in their normative actions.

Seen from this perspective, the Japanese question remains pending, arguably, rather than being totally abrogated, because democracy, as Hayashi Kentarō argues, is by no means a complete flight from the production and maintenance of the spiritual unity of citizens (1995: 65). The unity, he maintains, can only take hold in a shared culture and its continuity. Despite the disapproval of the past expressed by postwar social movements, it should be said that the Japanese question has not yet been extinguished from the minds of many postwar Japanese, given that such an extinction would suggest a need on the part of the Japanese to introduce a totally new authority – for example, natural law – and its associated institutions as a means of stabilising the public space; such an introduction, moreover, would require a whole other history in which this public realm could have been experienced, negotiated and validated by the people (see Chapter 2). In Japan, such history had been mediated and protected by the emperor institution. By consisting in the source of enduring measures of its culture, rituals and tradition, the emperor system had drawn the borders of Japan’s public space and endowed it with particularity. Without a search for the relevance of the Japanese question to democracy, Japanese citizens may eventually face a time in which they do not know how to stabilise and sustain the politics of a shared realm – the freedom of action and speech. Needless to say, if the public of the present does not carry forward the wisdom of the past, freedom is invariably destabilised with the birth of the new generations, to whom common sense and measures for living well with fellow citizens are unknown. The following, final section of this chapter explores the 1968-69 revolution, arguing that post-*Anpo* social movements suggest an outgrowth of the course in which the Japanese question was suspended in Japan’s public realm.

*The End of the Public Space? Student Dismay and Turn-Around in a Postindustrial Society*

According to Daniel Bell, many advanced industrial societies have undergone a type of social transition which may justify characterising them as postindustrial (1974).

Postindustrial society emerges in the critical shifts in the mode of economy of advanced

industrial societies, which include a focus on more rigid connections between science and technology and innovation, an emphasis on the centrality of knowledge and science, a disillusionment with ideology, and a dominance of the service sector. In the 1960s, these postindustrial characteristics emerged not only in many Western societies but also in Japan.

Coeval with the rise of postindustrial society in the advanced industrial societies were worldwide student uprisings: a series of collisions between students and university administration in Berkeley; student protests triggering the largest general strike in France (the May 1968 Crisis); a bloody clash between students and the Mexican government in the lead up to the 1968 Olympic Games; and the success of student opposition in forcing the resignation of the Menderes government in Turkey (Fuse 1969: 325). Japan's entry into postindustrial society and the signals associated with student unrest in the global sphere should not be disconnected from the account of *melées* in the 1960s public space in Japan, especially with regard to changes in the characteristics of student movements after the *Anpo* battle. Indeed, it was not unusual for young Japanese students at the time to engage in violent and radical action. Nor was it surprising that they began to turn away from the politics of Marxism which had been the cornerstone of social student movements in the early decades in the postwar period, since the public's neglect of the Japanese question and its relevance to its democracy, an attitude that had been largely popularised by the 1960 security affair, left little scope to raise awareness as to the borders of the public with which the new form of the government could be envisaged.

While the advent of the first anti-JCP group in 1958 – the Bund – foreshadowed the decline of Marxist-oriented movements, further fragmentation of *Zengakuren* student body and conflict between students following the 1960 revision of US-Japan security treaty may have signalled the possibility that post-*Anpo* Japan was hastening towards an irretrievable fall of the political public space. The disintegration of *Zengakuren* was followed by fragmentation after fragmentation. By the time of what could be marked as the final revolution of the postwar epoch, namely, the 1968-69 unrest, the *Zengakuren* had split into three major factions: the *Minsei* (the JCP group), the *Sampa Rengo* (the anti-JCP group) and the *Marugaku* (the anti-JCP) (Fuse 1969: 329). Represented by the *Sampa* radicals, students increasingly found effective political battle in escalating

violence, while their antagonisms congealed into factional rivalry (Fuse 1969: 329). Moreover, students started to shift their opposition from the question of government policies (especially foreign-defence policy) to the narratives of the old left, which were constructed by those of progressive intellectuals and the JCP (Kersten 2009: 234). The reversal in the ideological position of students even rebounded on University of Tokyo Professor Maruyama Masao, who came to be ‘verbally harangued, [and] even physically threatened’ by the radicals in 1969, despite Maruyama being a key instigator of public criticism of the policies of the Establishment (the government) and celebrator of the expansion of social movements as the growth and triumph of postwar democracy (Oguma 2009: 210).

Among the student uprisings of 1968-69, the *Tōdai Tōsō* (The University of Tokyo Struggle) stands out for its exemplification of a macro-political problem not just of Japan at the time but of postindustrial societies generally. According to Kersten, the 1968 upheavals, as a global movement, took root in the people’s profound sense of alienation, atomisation and disempowerment (2009: 235). In January 1968, a row started among the medical students of the University of Tokyo (Tōdai) over grievances about the unpaid internship system, introduced under the Occupation, which provided professors and hospitals connected with Tōdai with free labour from the medical students, postgraduate students and research assistants (Oguma 2009: 672-3). Although *Tōdai Tōsō* was a part of the 1968 global movements, it embraced something specific, unique and endemic to postwar Japan. Claiming supreme prestige among higher education institutions in Japan, Tōdai was designed to train the elite in government and industry (Sunada 1969: 469). For students who had worked so hard to win admission to the Tōdai on the basis of nationwide competition, entry to this University was meant to guarantee their future in an elite rank in society (Shimbori 1964: 231). The guarantee of future success gave students a sense of freedom in their young lives. In the case of Tōdai, this sense was greater than for other university students and was compounded by the liberal ambience of this university. In this environment, Tōdai produced many leaders of the

student movements, although the assurances of their future success tied the students to the paternalism of professors and their institutions (Shimbori 1964: 232, 235).<sup>122</sup>

Paternalism in the medical department of Tōdai fuelled the complaints of the students and researchers who continued to provide free labour, with the result that they pressed for the law to be revised. The introduction of a new program, the Clinical Training System based on the revised Medical Practitioner's Law, did not at all dispel the concerns of medical students however, since they saw the new system as 'a means for university hospitals to secure the services of young doctors at low salaries' (Fuse 1969: 331). Starting in the medical department, the issue expanded across the University, drawing the attention of other students who belonged to groups like *Minsei* and *Sampa*. A league was born out of cross-group collaboration, known as the *Zenkyōtō* (*Zengaku Kyōtō Kaigi*) (the Conference for the Struggle of Joint Schools).<sup>123</sup> At the same time, the Tōdai dispute was derided as a battle of the peerage, given that interns had access to casual jobs as medical students – known in Japan as *albeit* – which paid them a large salary, and guaranteed their future as elites (Oguma 2009: 680-681). Reflecting on critical reviews of the battle of medical students, Oguma writes that the discontent among the medical students stemmed, at bottom, not from the students' clear objective of resisting the imperialist reorganisation of medical department (e.g. the Clinical Training System), but from their humiliation regarding the orthodox and inhumane practice of the department – where, for example, professors of medical department in Tōdai took free student labour (in the form of unpaid internships) for granted, while increasing social transformations following the country's high economic growth began to pose questions about these orthodox practices (2009: 682). For Fukutake Tadashi, the discrepancy between the social transformations of a new age and the systems of the old underlay the *Tōdai Tōsō*: while these students represented a new generation in postwar Japan, receiving education in postwar democracy, the culture and system of the medical department remained as they used to be (Oguma 2009: 682). At any rate, the young protesters, mustering campus-wide student support, occupied the main administrative building of The University of

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<sup>122</sup> Under the paternalism of professors, the student disengagement from and neglect of academic activities was often overlooked and saved by professors until the point of their graduation (Shimbori 1964: 235).

<sup>123</sup> The *Zenkyōtō* refers to the federation of universities' groups, clubs and organisations, when it comes to Nihon University and University of Tokyo (Oguma 2009: 550)

Tokyo – the Yasuda Kōdō – and escalated their action to violence. Confrontation ‘peaked when 8,500 riot police were called on campus in January 1969’ (Kersten 2009: 235). Many university activities such as lectures, examinations and graduation ceremonies could not be resumed until the following year.

Kersten’s analysis of student radicalism recaps the 1968 Tōdai rampage. She argues that student radicals rebelled against the administrative complacency of universities while practising postwar values advocated by progressive intellectuals, such as *shutaisei* – the centre and agent of democracy who can act out through his or her self (2009: 236). In addition, many disobedient Tōdai students came to be sceptical of their privilege, wondering whether such privilege did not actually make them complicit with the project of capitalism in postwar Japanese society, where inequality and exploitation pervaded. Furthermore, Kersten points out that the Tōdai students placed side by side the university authorities and the conservative government as their opponents (Kersten 2009: 237).

It is possible to suggest that student radicalism escalated in the late 1960s owing to the citizens’ suspension of the Japanese question, a suspension which had crystallised by the early 1960s. After the *Anpo* battle, it is arguable that from student activists and the citizenry more generally, the standards of judgment and the categories of thought waned not only because of the rise of consumerism by this time (see Chapter 5), which increased political apathy and people’s indifference to common issues and concerns, but also because of the people’s disconnection from the Japanese question in which the source of common sense – ethics and norms – is enshrined. In Part I of this thesis, I argued that forms of permanence such as tradition connect ‘the thread of today’s activities with those of yesterday’ (Giddens 1995: 64), and pave the ground – the ground of common sense – which enables the ‘judicious exchange of opinion’ of the citizens who share a particular public realm (Arendt 1993: 223). That is, freedom – that is, the possibility of political action and speech to be recognised in their distinction and virtuosity and to inspire the public with their meaningfulness – is conditioned by the existence of a public space where forms of permanence provide a given people with the standards to tell what is *communicable*. As Arendt writes, every public space ‘has its own structure that changes over time and reveals itself... in a public context as laws, constitutions, statues, and the

like' (2005: 106), and those public codes are deliberated and decided by the citizens' judicious exchange of opinions which are mediated and informed by the measures that transcend the time. The failure of social movements to establish a new body politic over the question of national security in 1960 – in other words, a general consensus to walk away from the reassessment of the Japanese question – could be seen by the late 1960s to have led the student movements, to the extent that the targets of their opposition, whether the Japanese government, the university authorities or the left-wing intellectuals, no longer mattered for them. If the *Anpo* protests were a struggle over 'a fundamental reassessment of postwar values and ideals' (Kersten 2009: 228), the 1968-69 riots implied a consequence of this reassessment, with the failure of social, political movements to save either socialism or democracy from the reality where the identity of postwar Japan or the new polity increasingly slid into little more than the nation of *animal laborans*.

Indeed, disobedient students in the late 1960s were no longer fighting for a global revolution but beginning to doubt the integral structures, systems and institutions which imposed a certain way of living and of viewing the world. According to Nagasaki Hitoshi, who argues that historical examination of the 1968 revolution has been insufficient to date, students in the late 1960s raised a slogan of university dismantlement (*daigaku kaitai*) by criticising modern science and technology (2010: 145). When the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Director of Tokyo University Hospital were forced to resign, and many other university rectors and regulations changed in time (Fuse 1969: 332), the authority of modern science – the *raison d'être* upon which higher education institutions were built – was identified by students as a pivotal problem which they had to address. Students argued that Japanese Marxism shared the spirit of modern rationalism and was inadequate for overcoming Stalin's industrial theory (Nagasaki 2010: 145). Marxism was coupled with modernism and science.

Outside the universities, mass media began to spotlight the disasters of Japan's Four Big Pollution Diseases (Itai-itai disease: cadmium poisoning; Minamata disease: methylmercury; Niigata Minamata disease: methylmercury; Yokkaichi asthma: surfur

dioxide)<sup>124</sup> as well as the trend of people being increasingly attracted to a self-sufficient life-style and to communities which could integrate such a life-style (Nagasaki 2010: 146). Nagasaki comments that the new social movements which emerged by the 1980s – including the movements of local citizens, anti-discrimination, woman’s rights and the environment – were unlocked by the late 1960s. The dissolution of the Bund immediately after the 1960 *Anpo* battle – a dissolution which marked the beginning of student questioning of Marxist politics – foreshadowed the new social movements while developing from Marx’s teaching (Nagasaki 2010: 163). For Nagasaki, the *Anpo* battle was a watershed or a ceremony for the nation in getting through the malaise of poverty and the revulsion of the war memories which had smoldered for decades after the war defeat. As the people got through these memories and hardships, their passage at each phase was reflected in the actions of students deviating from the old morals, norms and values, which took a nihilistic form (2010: 166). Nihilism, which was mirrored in the student activism, pursuit of pleasure, irresponsible political objective of their movements and their poor organisational management, was more evident in the 1968-69 movements than in the *Anpo* battle (2010: 166).

According to Fuse’s account of student radicalism in 1968-69, the student uprisings of the 1960s demonstrated a crisis of authority, with radicals rejecting ‘both the symbol and agent of legitimation as “phony”’ (Fuse 1969: 334). While Fuse’s empirical data highlights a sizable portion of Japanese students either denying or ignoring the emperor as the symbol of legitimation (Fuse 1969: 335), Nagasaki’s analysis four decades later appears to be far more instructive, identifying in the 1960s movements a fall of Japan’s politics into nihilism, which in turn heralded the decline of a common public realm. As seen earlier in Shimizu’s observation of the Japanese Marxist intellectuals in particular, and of Japan’s political public realm more generally, the political space in postwar Japan tended to form in opposition to the foundation of norms and values that had underlain Japan’s public space, abandoning the reassessment of the emperor system’s relevance to the democracy of postwar Japan (other than its role as the symbol of the state). In this neglect, the reassessment of the system’s relation to the

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<sup>124</sup> Nagasaki (2010: 146) discusses ‘Japan’s Three Big Pollution Diseases’. As these diseases are known as Four Big Pollution Diseases today, I refer to them as such in the main text.



enduring measures such as tradition, mores and rituals was also jettisoned. It was in such an evasion of the Japanese question that the standards of judgment with which students and citizens might tell what was needed for their common public space – in the present and the future – were lost.

Hence the 1968-69 revolution suggests why Japan's political public sphere continues to be intangible, invisible and impenetrable. Without engaging in an authentic examination of the relevance of Japan's historical public space to postwar democracy, without critically exploring the meaning of the origin of the postwar Constitution in the context of Japan's historical public realm and without allowing a space for alternative debates on political life other than Marxist narratives, the public space of postwar Japan was predictably reduced to the ideals of *animal laborans* and *homo faber* (see Chapters 2 and 5). For the former, leisure, abundance and good life are the goal of their life. For the latter, since a world is a place of creation and fabrication, it can be constructed and reconstructed through violence; moreover, for the latter, because the world is only instrumental, human affairs can be understood through appeal to the principle of causation, and the methods of behavioral and positivist science more generally. Such epistemology is not of the political public sphere, given that citizens are a mode of political being that can arrest meanings out of the contingent and irreversible nature of human action and speech. In Arendtian terms, the most important implication of the 1968-69 revolution in Japan was the emergence of many splinter-groups which moved away from the politics of Marxism, suggesting the advent of a new age in which the postwar alternative of Marxism was insufficient to realise the political life of a community.

Student radicalism spread in many universities in Japan: the campuses of the University of Tokyo as well as of other universities such as Chuō University, Nihon University and elsewhere. The protests were directed at university plans to increase tuition and misappropriation of funds; and they sought to highlight the need to democratise university administrations, and to demand increased student participation in university management (Fuse 1969: 330-332). The young agents of democracy boycotted classes, barricaded buildings and prevented examinations from taking place. The power of students spilling out of universities combusted in Haneda (Oct-Nov 1967) and Sasebo

(Feb 1968), objecting to Japan's support of the US's Vietnam War (Sunada 1969: 466). Student violence was legitimised under the rubric of *jitsuryoku shoshi* (confrontation tactics) in which helmets, staves and rocks were used to collide with the riot police and to escalate bloody street battles (Sunada 1969: 467). As distinct from many other cases of airport resistances where forms of action were peaceful (such as petitions, marches and litigation), the anti-airport protests at Narita (from 1965 to 1989) took a 'long', 'extreme' and 'aberrant' form (Aldrich 2008: 71, 75). According to Daniel Aldrich, Narita's 'horrific battles', which left ten dead and thousands more injured, were owed particularly to *timing* in which the Ministry of Transport's airport decision was made at the height of the Vietnam War, alongside the other interrelated factors, including the government's failure to appreciate the area's history, inadequate planning and hasty maneuvering – the Narita conflict was seen 'as an *extension* of the [Vietnam] war' (Bowen, cited in Aldrich 2008: 75). Yet, what may fall short in his empirical analysis of the Narita's exception to the cases of airport resistances, which were mostly bloodless, is an account of collective action in the post-*Anpo* and post-Marxist epoch, where the agents of the political were no longer confined to 'large numbers of socially activated left-wing students', who were joined by 'conservative right-wing farmers' (Aldrich 2008: 75). Arguably, postwar Japan's affluent public realm which continues to be intangible and impenetrable keeps itself susceptible to the rise of political public realm, whose manifestation is a form of *reaction* to this first condition.

On the other side, the avant-garde of new social movements such as the *Beheiren* (an abbreviation of *Vietnam ni Heiwawo! Shimin Rengō*) (Citizens' Association for the Peace of Vietnam) set forth a new model and ideal of democratic organisation by advocating opposition to war and to the security treaty, as well as supporting the battle for Okinawa (Oda 1969: 7). Oda Makoto applauded the ascendancy of the *Beheiren* as the development of democracy because of its organisational structure which amassed people without prescribing membership, principles and a membership fee (1969: 17). He praised the fact that the *Beheiren*, similar to the *Tōdai Zenkyōtō*, could now increase its branches to almost 200 nationwide in spite of the fact that it did not have directives, orders and leaders, and that it assured the diversity and independence of social movements that were composed of people from various social backgrounds (1969: 18,

20). Increasingly, the mode of social movements was being transformed from orthodox top-down organisational structures which were inherent in the JCP groups. But the missing piece in the social democratic movements of postwar Japan was, from the viewpoint of Arendt's conception of the public sphere, critical inquiry into the pacifist Constitution, the legal matrix which continues to define and shape the postwar polity of Japan to date – despite the fact that the *Japanese consensus* was omitted from the process of constitution-making at the outset; that the postwar Constitution shrouds the link between the symbol of the emperor and the measures of endurance which may secure the space of human freedom; and that the postwar democratic Constitution does not guarantee either the peace or sovereignty of the country, given the key clause of Article 9 continuing to constrain the Japanese project of self-determination and self-government.

### *Conclusion*

Through an exploration of student movements in the 1960s, this chapter has shed light on the irresolvable contradictions in postwar Japan's public sphere, which made manifest in the form of collided powers generating around the struggles of some conservative statesmen to reclaim national independence, and around the searches of young students and citizens for postwar values and ideals. The *decline* of Japan's political public space, which we have been exploring in this thesis, is evidenced, firstly, by the student opposition to the revision of the US-Japan security treaty (the *Anpo* treaty) which served as an attempt to restore the sovereignty of the country. The student radicalism and social struggles which followed in the late-1960s continued to be propelled by an *anti-political* impetus – despite many left-wing intellectuals regarding the time as a watershed at which democracy began to take root in (postwar) Japan – insofar as these political movements evaded the Japanese question, which might be an answer to the question as to how to protect freedom, in other words, democracy. As a result of this evasion, many of the new social movements that have developed since the late 1960s, began to search for alternative values that can guide the common public realm in a post-industrial society, without resorting to Marxist narratives. Whether Japan in the new century has reached a point where Japanese citizens may start to examine the Japanese question without relying on Marxist historiography remains to be seen. In any case, both the *Anpo* battle and the

1968-69 movements painted a picture of a turbulent political public realm in postwar Japan.

## CHAPTER 7

### *A Sustainable Public Sphere? Politicising Civil Society and the Market in the Age of Neoliberalism*

Neoliberal globalization must aim to depoliticize the public realm in order to emancipate not human beings but the metahistorical ‘laws’ of free market capitalism, from the hindrance of diverse and potentially oppositional political opinions and action.  
(Arendt cited in Weinert 2009: 7)

The chimera of Pax Nipponica and Japan as Number 1 cultivated overseas during the booming days of the 1980s has given way to a more dismissive and denigrating tone in the 1990s.  
(Kingston 2004: 70)

Japan, too, has an increasing number of ‘ordinary people who decide to take matters into their own hands and organize to improve their conditions or seek basic rights’.  
(Yoshida 1999: 42, citing Lester Salamon, 1994: 112)

Globalization is essentially ‘action at distance’... not in the sedimentation of time, but because of the restructuring of space.... Unlike other forms of cultural or military conquest, disembedding via abstract systems is intrinsically decentred, since it cuts through the organic connection with place upon which tradition depended.  
(Giddens 1995: 96)

#### *Introduction*

Two decades ago, Lester Salamon (1994) announced that public spaces around the globe were bustling with a mass of voluntary organisations producing vivid political life outside the parliamentary apparatus. Coeval with the increasingly conspicuous activities of voluntary groups pursuing public objectives was the growing influence and dominance of a market guided by the dictates of neoliberalism. Why is it that we are witnessing today the appearance of the public sphere on the one hand and, as Harvey (2005) writes, the hegemony of neoliberalism, described as a new ‘logic of capital’ that entails ‘creative destruction’, on the other (cited in Clarke, Newman and et.al. 2007: 15)? Or is it really the case that the political public realm is manifesting under the gaze of ‘associational revolution’ (Salamon 1994) at a time when neoliberal globalisation is presumed to be accelerating as a force ‘usurped by powerfully organized private interests’ (Patrick Hayden, cited in Weinert 2009: 7)? Although the volume of writing on the rise of civil society, or the ‘third sector’, in Japan is similarly celebratory with regard to this sector’s

political potential, can we presume that the sector's rise is contributing to the development of democracy, to the advent of a new public?

This final chapter of the thesis explores the phenomenon of associational revolution currently thriving in Japan and uses Arendt's work on the public space to account for the seemingly public appearance of civil society activities. This chapter argues that much of the discourse on contemporary Japan's civil society has failed to attend to the ways in which the market has been organised throughout the postwar period, particularly in regard to the preventive mechanism against the market's expansion. Owing partly to such oversights, voluntary organisations in Japan have had a very limited political role and have remained inchoate in their outlook. The objectives of this chapter are to investigate the mushrooming third sector in Japan and to unpack the current dialogue on this phenomenon; from this critical analysis, dialectical viewpoints that may compensate for the blind spots of existing studies will be put forward. This chapter stresses that existing critiques of the depoliticising role of neoliberalism are inadequate for understanding the crisis of the public realm in postwar Japan. Debates about those movements, within other countries, that have adopted the neoliberal model of the market must be situated within the critique of a prior development, namely, the growth of a lavish welfare-state which had already brought down the boundary of the public, prior to the ascent of neoliberal programmes.

In order for my study to demonstrate a critical link between the course of the postwar market and the conspicuous rise of the third sector since the 1980s, the first section explores Karl Polanyi's account, in *The Great Transformation* (1944), of the *original* model of the market and the course of its transformation (along with the society in which it was embedded) across the nineteenth century. It highlights the way that exchange activities were governed by 'limiting functions' (or what I call 'the umpire mechanism'), which Polanyi saw as a feature of the original market, and which I argue can be understood as having prevented a collapse of the borders between the public and the private realms. This examination is followed by the unfolding of Wendy Brown's study of the neoliberal model of the market which has produced far-reaching political, public consequences. This chapter observes in Brown's analysis a result of the market transformation which Polanyi problematises.

The second section investigates the phenomenon of civil society movements in Japan which have grown since the 1980s (chiefly, since the passage of the Special Nonprofit Organisation Law in 1998 [the NPO Law]) and contemporary discussions of the movements. This chapter debates the inchoate phases of their political life. Lastly, this chapter focuses on the decline of the political public sphere as evidenced by the severe depopulation of rural regions of Japan. The inappropriate solutions worked out by the Japanese government as well as by the third sector organisations suggest that a political public space has not yet been realised in postwar Japan. I turn to the case of the *Mittelstand* model of the market in contemporary Germany, which underlies a successful regional economy today, reviewing its sector and management method as exemplary of an alternative model in which the market both coexists with and safeguards the political public realm. This is followed by the exploration of the Sado island's regional response to the challenge of rural depopulation. I argue that power, heightened by the rise of a civil society, should be directed to the transformation of the market in Japan. Only by re-introducing the market's umpire role, as exemplified by the *Mittelstand* sector in Germany, may the ontology of the Japanese consumer-citizens developed in the postwar period be awoken to its fundamental political agency.

*The Umpire Mechanism of the Market: an Essential Border between the Public and the Private Realms*

In the mid 1990s, Lester Salamon (1994: 109) pronounced that 'we are in the midst of a global "associational revolution"' with 'a massive array of self-governing private organizations... pursuing public purposes outside the formal apparatus of the state'. In around the same time, there has been an explosion in Japan of new writings about and interest in the entities and issues of civil society: non-profit and non-government organisations (Tsujioka & Pekkanen 2007: 419; Furukawa 2003; Iokibe 1999; Inoguchi 2002). Although many of these civil society studies call for further changes, particularly at the institutional level, the field of study commonly celebrates the rise of the sector as the development of democracy and the emergence of a new public. The aim of this chapter is not to disavow this emergence. Nor does it dismiss the capacity of the civil society sector to reproduce political life. Rather, the primary aim of this chapter is to

explore and contest the blind spots of these multiplying studies of civil society in contemporary Japan. Insofar as a study of civil society in Japan not only attempts to explore the new structures and phenomena of ‘associational revolution’ (Salamon 1994),<sup>125</sup> but also aims at the activation and institutionalisation of political life, these oversights should be diagnosed, without which the sustainability of a common public realm may be impinged.

Before unravelling the current state of civil society in Japan, this section scrutinises one of the key blind spots in Japan’s civil society study which I argue influences much of the current effort to reconstruct the public space. A failure to review a macro-picture of the market development through which we may reconfirm the boundaries of the public sphere frustrates the sector’s project of establishing its realm. It should be said that this blind spot is not exclusive to the socio-political discourses of contemporary Japan but is common to those of other advanced industrial countries. What is missing from these studies of civil society is a reflection on the nature, form and function of a market that does not violate the autonomy, particularity and demarcation of both the public and the private realms. To address this gap I turn to the arguments put forward by Karl Polanyi and by Wendy Brown, which in their different ways highlight or call for a space of exchange that may enable a version of the political public realm, as Arendt conceives it, to operate. My argument based on the study of their work is that the current neoliberal model of the market is neither an organic outgrowth of market development nor an inevitable and totalising economic order. It remains possible for leading economies to explore and institute alternatives both to the neoliberal market model and to the expansive Keynesian market from which neoliberalism developed.

Although Hannah Arendt considers economic activity to be a private affair, she does not appropriate the market to the private realm, proposing that it is a space of activity in which the public is found. In the ancient Athenian polity, the market was seen as a realm of the public, since the producer – *homo faber* – required the market in order to display his products or artefacts to the multitude, trying to arouse respect and

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<sup>125</sup> In ‘The Rise of the Nonprofit Sector’, Lester Salamon writes (1994: 109) that ‘a striking upsurge is under way around the globe in organized voluntary activity and the creation of private, nonprofit or non-governmental organizations... people are forming associations, foundations and similar institutions... [to] pursue a thousand other objectives formally unattended or left to the state’.



admiration for their special qualities (Arendt 1958: 160). It was the pride of *homo faber* to fabricate objects which demonstrate refined instrumentality, or to produce artwork which bears the outlook of transcendent beauty. Until the rise of commercial society and with it the manufacturing class, the market, Arendt argues (1958: 160-163), was thus enlivened by conspicuous production by the society of producers. Importantly, the market was seen as the domain of the public, because its space was occupied by artisans' production which endures in time, not by labourers' production which creates consumer goods. Because the ancient hierarchy of the *vita activa* or the fundamental human activities was derived from their cosmological consideration of human life where humans were defined by their mortal existence, the ancients in the Athenian polis sought a way for citizens to attain potential immortality by finding the bridge in cultural objects. Monuments, stories and architecture were some of the media in which *homo faber* inscribed legendary actions, speeches, figures and periods – lest their distinctions and yardsticks 'be obliterated by time' – so that the coming generations could discover these meanings and learn the standards which sustained their public sphere (Arendt 1958b: 570).

In *The Great Transformation* (1944), Karl Polanyi propounds a model of the market in its original form, which complements Arendt's premise of the enabling market, one that can add durability and relative permanence to the public space without having private economic concerns overflow into public-political activity. The crucial aspect of Polanyi's study of the market is his denunciation of orthodox economic theories which presuppose the transformation of isolated markets into a market economy – from regulated markets into a self-regulating market – as a *natural* sequel of the market's development (1944: 57). In their glorification of the market, orthodox theories tend to conclude that the individual's propensity to barter, which progressively creates local markets and division of labour, develops ultimately and *inevitably* into trade and foreign trade (1944: 58). Polanyi refutes this orthodox proposition, contending that the market – an institution where people meet each other for the sake of bartering and exchanging – is not naturally competitive or expansive to territorial trade. Because a particular territorial space, shared by a community of people, was circumscribed not just by their economic behaviour but also by certain cultural practices, the configuration of market institutions

was constrained by local cultural phenomena such as custom, law, religion and magic (Polanyi 1944: 61). It was these limitations underlying the markets that served as something like an umpire mechanism, restricting ‘acts of exchange in respect to persons and objects, time and occasion’ (Polanyi 1944: 61). Polanyi explains that the rise of towns was accordingly not the outcome of market expansion, but signalled the advent of mechanisms to protect the stability of the prevailing economic practices of different societies from interfering with each other. In other words, measures of endurance such as tradition, customs and culture could still abide in the public realm, because the original form of the market not only facilitated but also circumscribed basic activities like bartering such that endemic traditions were not jeopardised by human economic activities. This was the *discipline* of the market. Remaining ‘almost unchanged right up to the middle of the eighteenth century’, Polanyi writes, diverse local markets existed with ‘an amazing indifference to time and place’; towns played a double role of absorbing the activity of trade and of functioning as containment, a shield devised primarily to safeguard the enduring measures of public spaces in the countryside (1944: 62-63).

In *The Burden of Our Time* (1951), Arendt elaborates on Polanyi’s argument concerning the transformation of this original market into a national economy, which Polanyi contends arose from state intervention, not from the natural evolution of the market. For Arendt, the accumulation of ‘superfluous’ domestic wealth – based on capitalist production and exploitation – began to seek an exit, ‘an escape’ through which the bourgeoisie could flee from the consequences of maldistribution, compensate for increasing investments and their losses and, notably, fly from the ‘menacing prospect’ that they would become permanent parasites on the nation (Arendt 1951: 150). The discovery of diamond fields and large gold mines in South Africa and the subsequent flood of emigration from industrially developed countries in the late nineteenth century effaced the new agenda of growing divisions between the bourgeoisie and the labouring class. Arendt writes that ‘expansion’ thus became a life-saver for the nation as a whole (1951: 152).<sup>126</sup> Since foreign adventures, she contends, cloaked the problem of growing internal class divisions, when the owners of superfluous wealth came to demand

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<sup>126</sup> She writes (1951: 152) that ‘class struggle was so universal a characteristic of modern political life, that the every cohesion of the nation was jeopardized’.

protection and regulation from governments, state authorities found little reason not to support the project of expansion – imperialism, which became an instrument of national politics (1951: 149, 154). Zealous interests of high society and, eventually, of the populace more generally in the ‘Dark Continents’ impelled ‘continuous step-by-step retreat on all questions of morality’ (Arendt 1951: 156). Arendt’s analysis of the problem of growing class divisions here supports Polanyi’s argument that the cause of market expansion was state intervention.

In contradistinction to the medieval solution to the threat of mobile capital through the segregation of local trade from export trade, that is, by way of the policy of exclusion and protection, the nineteenth-century solution, according to Polanyi, was ‘the nationalization of the market’ into which local markets and local trade were amalgamated indiscriminately (1944: 65). It was from this point, crucially, that the augmentation of state and its administration, and its intervention into the market through regulation escalated, essentially transforming the original nature and model of the market (Polanyi 1944: 66). Polanyi explains that

With every step that the state took to rid the market of particularist restrictions, of tolls and prohibitions, it imperiled the organized system of production and distribution which was now threatened by unregulated competition and the intrusion of the interloper who ‘scooped’ the market but offered no guarantee of permanency. (1944: 66)

The hiatus that emerged in the wake of this radical transformation may be a plank that our current prospect to restore the public realm should not overlook. What is suggested here is that the incipient political capacity of contemporary Japan’s civil society, discussed in the following section, might better progress if its discourse turns attention to the bygone event of ‘the Great Transformation’.

Wendy Brown’s article ‘American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism and De-Democratization’ (2006), which investigates the subsequent development of this transformation since the late twentieth-century, helps further understanding of how the fall of the original model of the market has impacted on the political life of our age. Brown argues that neoliberalism is a ‘market political-rationality’ which devastates the

public realm by influencing political agency and producing ‘the citizen on the model of entrepreneur and consumer’ (2006: 691, 705). Indeed, the effect of the new arrangement of the market seems to be, as Brown argues, more than laissez-faire economics, as neoliberalism tactically mobilises law and policy to support the market and to shape social goals (2006: 700). Its fundamentalism modifies the former umpire mechanism of the market by which, as Polanyi held, the individual’s act of bartering did not disturb the areas beyond the borders of a public realm which were incarnated by a specific local culture and customs. The neoliberal fundamentalism mutates the umpire mechanism into a command which regulates the citizen’s economic activity through the principle of utilitarianism.<sup>127</sup> Under these conditions, as Brown explains, ‘more than simply facilitating the economy, the state itself must construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life’ (2006: 694). Moreover, since the political agent is perceived in neoliberal policies as an individual entrepreneur and consumer, the citizens’ capacity for self-care or self-responsibility signals to the neoliberal state the citizens’ moral autonomy, and thus such capacity becomes the criterion of the public policies; and, in this development, citizens’ orientation to the public space and their concern for the common good begin to dissipate accordingly (Brown 2006: 694-695). As Brown contends, neoliberalism thus brings about its ‘de-democratizing effects’, thwarting political life under the dictates of superfluous capital (2006: 705).

Brown’s interpretation of the neoliberal market highlights a consequence of the transformation of the original market, explained by Polanyi. But while Brown pointedly identifies the conterminous rise of neoliberalism with neoconservatism, her argument is flawed to the extent that it does not adequately articulate the grounds for her criticism of the neoliberal market model. For her, the essential modern democratic values are equality, universality, political autonomy, liberty, the rule of law and a free press (2006: 696). She is also concerned with the economic welfare of the working and middle classes (2006: 702). But while she correctly argues that neoconservatism, the spouse of neoliberalism,

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<sup>127</sup> As Brown writes, it is ‘the neoliberal rationality of strict means-ends calculations and need satisfaction’ (2006: 699).

unilaterally confers upon the state the authority to prescribe moral conduct – on the basis of *truths* established by way of authoritative declaration rather than public discussion and argumentation – she is not clear as to how to critically address the problem of these ethical principles in the secular public realm in which deference for tradition and authority has waned (Brown 2006: 707).<sup>128</sup> For Polanyi, the original model of the market which had prevented the public space of the region and the tradition and customs of that locality from collapsing has been already radically transformed.

The neoliberal offshoot of the transformed original market is described in Foucault's model of the art of government which began to emerge in the eighteenth century; the chief rationale of this model was enshrined in mercantilism (Foucault 1991: 97-98). For Foucault, the mercantilist desire for the might of the sovereign was pursued through the laws, decrees and regulations of sovereign instruments (1991: 98). The same holds true for Brown's critical observation of the culmination of neoliberalism at the turn of the century in which law is 'tacticalized', 'instrumentalized' and 'desacralized' (Brown 2006: 695). Through the art or techniques of government, neoliberalism converts every political or social problem into individual problems with market solutions (2006: 704).<sup>129</sup> Because 'neoliberal political rationality devolves both political problems and solutions from public to private', Brown argues, the state's 'project of navigating the social becomes entirely one of discerning, affording, and procuring a personal solution to every socially produced problem' (2006: 704). In the neoliberal demarcation of a public space, citizens are, accordingly, co-opted into 'a province of choice and need-satisfaction that they mistake for freedom' (Brown 2006: 705). The 'privatised public' – that is, the aggregate of consumers whose interests and goals do not go beyond the sustenance of bodily life – answers questions which need to be answered, rather, by citizens and through the non-privatised public's activity of collective deliberations and discussions.

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<sup>128</sup> See Brown (2006: 708): Situating herself in the standpoint of the left, Brown dismisses the condition that 'the pastoral model becomes the political model'. To be sure, the governance of the public realm though the measure of authority – the pastoral model – alone diminishes the principle of contention and deliberation. However, Arendt's narrative of public space does not, importantly, suggest that authority should be banished from the public realm. It should be said that the left's challenge today is not merely with the structural law of capital which has given birth to neoliberalism but also with the question of how to resolve the contradictions of secularisation underlying modern democracy.

<sup>129</sup> See the examples in her article: in the case of the US, bottled water as a response to contamination of the water table, private schools as a response to the collapse of quality public education, private security guards as a response to intensifying economic inequality, etc. (Brown 2006: 704).

Brown's critique of neoliberalism showcases a result of the transformation of Polanyi's original market model. Yet, the new left's critique of neoliberalism as that which is aligned with neoconservatism misses an articulation of both the great transformation of the original model of the market and the problem of the secular public sphere in the advanced industrial societies in the modern age. Prior to the proposal of a solution to a course of market evolution over the past few centuries, the next section examines a case of a public realm in the neoliberal age, the case of contemporary Japan.

*Japan's Civil Society Movement since the 1980s and its Political Viability*

Following the late-1980s, and more noticeably since 1998, a large number of socio-political texts have been published regarding the growing movement of nonprofit and nongovernment organisations.<sup>130</sup> These organisations are known collectively as the third sector or civil society, and the literature commonly celebrates the phenomenon of the third sector in the belief that 'in both consciousness and reality, the public realm is growing' (Yoshida 1999: 43). Kawato and Pekkanen agree with Yoshida, expressing that the movement 'will continue to be a significant part of the further development of the Japanese democracy and civil society' (2008: 207). While acknowledging the rise of this new social movement, this section argues that the discourse on Japan's civil society is hindered by blind spots, largely owing to the lack of scholarly attention to the critical relation between the market models which postwar Japan has adopted and the key barriers to the growth of the third sector. To authentically examine the political public space in postwar Japan, studies of civil society need to emancipate themselves from Marxist-influenced postwar historiography, and especially from the premise that the state and civil society are bound by an inimical relationship. As far as its entity presupposes political agency in itself, the study of the third sector in Japan also needs to attend to the extent to which the state reserves resilience to the project of neoliberalism, a powerful *de-politicising* force of globalisation, so that civil society and the state are united to sustain

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<sup>130</sup> Nonprofit organisations (NPOs) are defined as a collective body of autonomous private organisations which advocate policies and take collective self-help actions for the promotion of public good, and hence, their primary concern is presumed neither to achieve private gains and to advance private interests, nor to interfere formally in a government's decision-making process (Takao 2001: 292). In Japan, nongovernment organisations (NGOs) are often referred to as a collective body which is associated with global issues such as development concerns, human rights, gender, environment and peace. For this reason, international (more than domestic) organisations in Japan are largely designated as NGOs (Takao 2001: 296).

an autonomous public sphere. In reflection of Arendt's work on the political public space, this study holds that contemporary Japan's civil society embodies a weaker political agency than was the case for student social movements during the period of the *Anpo* battle.

Two key aspects of current studies of civil society in Japan need deconstructing from the viewpoint of Arendt's work on the public realm. Firstly, while many studies about Japan's third sector acknowledge that its emergence is related to neoliberal globalisation, their analyses often fail to demonstrate in what way the sector contributes to political life in their opposition to neoliberal governance, as distinct from being, simply, a byproduct of that form of governance. Secondly, much of the civil society discourse tends to develop into functionalism, frequently drawing the standards of identifying and demonstrating the ideal form of the polity in which government and civil society interact merely from procedures and methodologies which they consider to be universal. A fall into functionalism arguably leaves the debates isolated from the Japanese question, as that question has been elaborated in this thesis, because the third sector's superfluous focus on questions of methodology, procedure and organisational mode assesses these questions in relation to an 'ideal' (hence 'universal') model without having scope to situate their importance within the particularity of Japan's body politic, or the borders of this public space. Such a focus thus neglects the questions of what unites, sustains and stabilises the realm of reinvigorated, more diversified and authentic communication. This point shall be returned and expanded below.

To reiterate the argument of the previous chapter, the sovereignty of postwar Japan remains truncated because the country's defence policy has been locked in the Yoshida doctrine.<sup>131</sup> Japan's stunted sovereignty has reduced the political immunity of the state against international pressure, including the expansion of superfluous national capital to the global market. The studies of the third sector in Japan draw little attention to this country's vulnerability, partly because the debates of many leading activists and scholars in the civil society movement originate from a pacifist foundation. The

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<sup>131</sup> The doctrine was created by Yoshida Shigeru who centred Japan's defence policy around the country's reliance on its security alliance with the US and their military: Japan does not support its full rearmament, the point where the self defence force (SDF) is recognised as a military and becomes equipped with the military capacity to protect the country on its own (Mochizuki 1983: 153).

ambiguity of Japan's self-defence capacity created by the no-war Constitution has been reinforced by both pacifists and the partisans of the Yoshida doctrine, and this ground has allowed a greater space for external superior power to exploit the common welfare of the Japanese. What may need to be stressed is that because the overriding voices of the international sphere have taken the forms of pressure and strategy rather than force or war, the mounting social and political problems caused by deferring to foreign pressures are the responsibility of Japanese citizens themselves, for the country always had a recourse to alternative options through diplomacy, negotiation and disagreement, including constitutional amendments. Importantly, the fact that the pacifist Constitution has not been revised up to the present day is not caused by pressure from the US.

Perhaps, the most influential case for Japan tasting the bitterness of its truncated sovereignty since the 1960 security upheaval was a 'free rider' allegation which emerged after Japan's economic growth began to threaten the US economy, as Kataoka Tetsuya explains in his *The Truth about the Japanese 'Threat'* (1995). The decade between 1980 and 1991 was a period in which Japan's trade surplus over the United States stood out. The US, particularly, the so-called 'revisionists', launched a vehement trade dispute with Japan after the fall of the Berlin Wall, asserting that the 'U.S.-Japan relations work to the unilateral advantage of Japan' (Kataoka 1995: 1-2). Samuel Huntington's article published in 1993 was, Kataoka argues, a conceptual turning-point for revisionists in the US to see an effective link between trade and geopolitics while their discussions had been limited to trade issues till then (1995: 1). Constructing the discourse of a military 'free ride', Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder contended that despite the fact that the Japanese economy had already become highly competitive in the world, the US kept spending its dollars on the defence of Japan (Holbrooke 1991: 49). The Japanese government responded to the US's tactical discourse linking defence and trade with the option of 'a condominium in which the United States would contribute military power and Japan would contribute economic power', a response which suggested that Japan was still not willing to abandon the Yoshida doctrine (Kataoka 1995: 3). In fact, the allegation that the US-Japan relation worked to the advantage of Japan was, Kataoka argues, based on 'incomplete information' (1995: 2). He contends that Japan's trade surplus against the US shot up because Japan recycled its trade earnings by buying the treasury bonds of the



US when the latter were struggling with a fiscal and trade deficit (1995: 2). Donald Regan, Treasury secretary of the Reagan administration, cursorily wondered ‘why Japan could not recycle its huge trade earnings to cover the federal deficit, which was after all incurred partly to protect Japan from the Soviet threat’ (Kataoka 1995: 7-8)! Indeed, the act of Japanese recycling – what Kataoka calls the 1980s ‘Japanese Marshall Plan’ – was taken to such an extent, he estimated at the time, that it ‘may well exceed [the original] Marshall Plan after adjusting for inflation’ (1995: 2). Given this example, perhaps Japanese reactionary politics could graduate from a mode of relationship with the US that is built around ‘dependency and growing ill will and deep mistrust’, only if Japanese citizens recover their responsibility for protecting their own public sphere and thus start to debate the problem of Article 9, which blurs the extent of the nation’s self-defence capacity and credibility (Kataoka & Myers 1989: 7). Then, as Kataoka and Myers argue, the US-Japan alliance could be reconstructed upon ‘greater equivalence and mutual responsibility’ (1989: 7). The allegation of a military free ride and the Japanese government’s compliance with the US interests exhibit the fact that Japan’s defence dependency weakens the state’s resilience to foreign pressures. These pressures include the US-UK initiative to shift the global economy from the Keynesian model to neoliberalism, or from Fordism to post-Fordism, promoting a globally flexible model of production and consumption (Shibata 2008: 98).

Shibata Kuniko’s study (2008) of neoliberalism’s impact on the planning policy of the Japanese government showcases the critical point at which neoliberalism arguably infiltrated the state. In terms of Japan’s large trade surplus during the 1980s, the US attributed the problem of trade imbalance between the two nations to Japan’s trade protectionism and low domestic demand, and in concert with other leading economies demanded that Japan proceed with market liberalisation and deregulation. The 1986 Maekawa Report – the Japanese government’s formalised, nationalised version of foreign pressures, so to speak – prescribed structural changes, proposing ‘deregulation measures and incentives to developers in order to *boost domestic demand*’ (Shibata 2008: 99-100, italics added). In response to pressure not only from the US but also from Japan’s big industrial sector which had lost investment opportunities in the domestic market by the late 1970s, the Construction Ministry of Japan was loaded with neoliberal reform,

‘heavily focusing on spatial development’ plans (Shibata 2008: 101). Japanese neoliberal planning policies included selling public land for urban regeneration and building ‘quality’ (luxury) high-rise housing as part of an urban renaissance; extending urban renaissance to smaller cities and towns; and promoting leisure industries in rural areas by developing entertainment facilities like ski resorts, extravagant hotels and theme parks (Shibata 2008: 99, 101, 106). By 1990, as a result of ‘effective land-use’ policies which replaced the outmoded design or structure of buildings with the new outfits, ‘land prices were 3.3 times higher than those in 1985’ (Shibata 2008: 101). By the early 2000s, however, land value crashed to a third of its 1990 peaks. At this time, the abundant cheap loans, subsidies and incentives facilitated by the welfare state engulfed industrial states worldwide into debt crises, and the policies of the Japanese government, from the period of the welfare state to the neoliberal state, equally swallowed the whole nation into the ensuing debt crunch.<sup>132</sup>

The political capacity of Japan’s third sector thus suffers a critical blind spot, for not being able to address the elemental issue of sovereignty, that is, the state’s capacity to be independent and secure its public realm. The rising political agents have failed to discuss the state’s vulnerability to foreign pressures, which impinges upon the common welfare of the Japanese. Secondly, the political role of Japan’s third sector is inchoate, because a large segment of that sector is, in fact, an ersatz political agency, acting out at

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<sup>132</sup> Japan’s adoption of a Keynesian economy was realised in the form of the developmental state. Chalmers Johnson summarises its model in his book *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* as composed of ‘1) an elite bureaucracy; 2) a political system in which the bureaucracy rules and the legislative branch is restricted in power; 3) the perfection of market-confirming methods of state intervention in the economy; 4) a pilot organization like MITI’ (Pekkanen 2004: 364). Shibata Kuniko (2008: 94) describes the character of Japanese government since the late 1980s as a neoliberalised developmental state, one which has not wiped out the features of the developmental state; the remnant developmental state is accompanied by the new constructs such as an increase in economic and environmental risks and the deterioration of safety standards. She illustrates that developments in law and regulation in the modern West – particularly after the Great Depression – were attempts to control risks in the market economy, including tort law. But on the other hand, the developmental states in Asia in general and in Japan in particular have been, Shibata argues, slow in terms of awareness of market risks and the movement to deploy legislations to such risks (2008: 96). This slow response comes from the fact that the developmental states tend to perceive economic security at the national level, continuing to rely on non-statutory power to solve (individual) risks, disputes and conflicts (2008: 96). While Shibata’s contention is debatable, my work argues that both Keynesian and neoliberal economies have deprived the public realm of much public legitimacy throughout the world. Critically, these models of economy were initiated in the West. Although the appropriation of the developmental states has been something unique to Asian countries, it does not follow that increasing risks which come from postwar economy are attributable to the model of the developmental states.

the structural behest of neoliberalism.<sup>133</sup> In this regard, the stratum of action is mobilised from the top down, rather than from the bottom up. Robert Pekkanen, a leading political scientist in the study of Japan's civil society, contends that 'a dual structure' characterises the sector, with a plethora of small, local groups and a paucity of large, advocacy-oriented, professionalised groups (2004: 366). After the passage of the Special Nonprofit Organisation Law in March 1998 (the NPO Law), which was intended to 'promote the development of independent NPOs by liberalizing conditions under which groups could form and operate' (Kawato and Pekkanen 2008: 193), there has been a steady increase in the number of NPOs and NGOs (NPOs with legal status having increased from 1,176 in 1999 to 31,581 in 2007); a broadening of channels of communication between the third sector and state officials; and a strengthening of the legitimacy of the sector in terms of legal status (2008: 193-198). Kawato and Pekkanen hold, however, that the impact of the Special Nonprofit Organisation (NPO) Law 'on the quality of Japanese democracy has not been as dramatic as many proponents hoped' (2008: 195). In line with many other nations transitioning from Keynesian to neoliberal policies (see Salamon 1994), a crisis of development and the consequent move to retrenched, small government have propelled the Japanese government to carry out administrative, structural reform in which the third sector is posited as complementary to the state provision of social services, offering a

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<sup>133</sup> While Japan's third sector has expanded, partly, in response to the social problems aggravated by the neoliberal governance, the study of civil society in Japan will be misguided if its critique of neoliberalism calls for a return to the welfare state. Sufficient cause for caution in this regard is presented by Lester Salamon and his discussion of the rise and popularity of the third sector across the globe over the past few decades (1994). Salamon argues that 'for much of the past 50 years, politicians on both the political right and left have tended to downplay these institutions. The left has done so to justify the expansion of the welfare state; the right to justify attacks on the state as the destroyer of private "mediating institutions". The rise of the welfare state thus crowded out the nonprofit sector from both public discussion and scholarly inquiry even as this sector continued to grow' (1994: 110). Salamon identifies three key factors that has underpinned the transition from Keynesian to neoliberal policies that drive the growth of civil society in advanced economies, including, as this chapter suggests, Japan's civil society sector. He argues, firstly, that the crisis of the welfare state, reflected in the oil shock in the 1970s and the recession in the early 1980s, was seen as a crisis of development and growth (1994: 116). Second, in an apparent confirmation of Arendt's argument, in *The Burden of Our Time*, that the authority of modern nation-states depends on the civil servants and their administration (1951: 154), Salamon notes that the crisis of the welfare state was recognised when governments came to be seen as over-bureaucratized and overloaded, particularly with policies that generate excessive social welfare spending and impose higher taxes on people (Salamon 1994: 115). Lastly, the miraculous global economic growth of the 1960s and 1970s represented the bourgeois revolution, promoting goals and values which are beyond the stakes of people's material improvement (Salamon 1994: 118). With the impasse of the welfare state, and its resultant transfiguration into the neoliberal state, the study of Japan's civil society is therefore misguided if it presupposes that a return to the welfare state is a path to restoring the political public realm.

more efficient and cheaper means of service delivery compared to what could be delivered by public officials and businesses (Kawato & Pekkanen 2008: 197, 200). Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the number of NPOs working in the field of social services ‘is the largest of all NPO fields’ in contrast to those in the fields of political advocacy associated with such issues as the environment, gender and human rights (Kawato & Pekkanen 2008: 200-201).<sup>134</sup>

In the context of a study of postwar Japan’s public realm, it would be tempting to see the recent rise of third sector activity as indicative of spontaneous political action on the part of Japanese citizens. Thus the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is frequently regarded as a pivotal initial event which provoked a sense of common interest or public good in the nation (as seen in the involvement of over a million volunteers in relief efforts) (Kawato & Pekkanen 2008: 196; Pekkanen 2004: 372; Yamamoto 1999: 98). However, such a view overlooks the structural connection between the rise of the sector and the advent of the new neoliberal market hegemony. Neoliberalism’s structural behest came, moreover, not merely via the state but also via the industrial sector. The role of Japan’s Keidanren-led industrial sector (日本経済団体連合会) (Japan Business Federation) in the lead-up to the passage of the NPO Law thus speaks to the inchoate political capacity of Japan’s third sector. Earlier than the state, a cluster of Japanese private business communities reacted to a signal of superfluous capital, urging the Japanese government to implement structural reforms, part of which appeared as the Ad-hoc Commission on Administrative Reform in the 1980s (Yoshida 1999: 38). The private sector articulated its disquiet about the threat of fiscal bankruptcy following ‘the advent of the low-growth period and the rapidly aging population’ (Yoshida 1999: 38). Accordingly, the Keidanren joined the nonprofit Coalition for Legislation to Support Citizens’ Organizations (Cs) – a leading civil society organisation at the time – in urging the government to introduce the 1998 NPO Law (Kingston 2004: 74). Leading newspapers of the time, especially the financial papers and including the Nikkei and the

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<sup>134</sup>Pekkanen writes that in comparison to these civil groups in the US, Japan’s civil society organisations are less conspicuous in leading public or policy debates on moral issues such as gender, environment and human rights (2004: 371). Pekkanen’s comparison, however, must be evaluated critically because moral issues which he proposes here (i.e. in the US) may not be articulated as such in Japan, not because these problems do not exist in Japan but because they have been approached differently in the realm of culture or tradition. If a different approach is taken, then resolution could be differently achieved, including the absence of advocacies for these issues through the organisational mode of NPOs/NGOs.

Wall Street Journal, supported the move, stressing that the legislation would help administrative reforms and streamline the oversized government (Kingston 2004: 74). The 1999 proposal submitted by the Economic Strategy Council – an advisory body to the prime minister – regarded the sector as ‘partners in private finance initiative’ (Ogawa 2005: 33).

Japan’s ‘associational revolution’ might thus be seen to have been ushered in by the structural force of neoliberalism, rather than as having emerged as spontaneous and autonomous, citizen-driven political action.<sup>135</sup> This is all the more obvious when we compare this movement with the social movements of the *Anpo* battle and with the *bakumatsu* movements of the pre-modern epoch. For Ogawa Akihiro, the movements of the 1960s were more dynamic and egalitarian than those of the third sector today, which he argues is coupled with the expansion of neoliberalism (Ogawa 2005: 11, 30). Ogawa’s study of Japan’s civil society in the neoliberal age observes a ‘volunteer subjectivity’ in the spirit of contemporary political agency, one that is ‘intentionally produced and reproduced by the state’ (2005: 4).

The arguably underdeveloped political capacity of Japan’s civil society movements to form a public realm is traceable to the tendency in their discursive foundations to see the state as a major cause, reducing the barriers to their action and

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<sup>135</sup>The empirical case study presented by Ogawa Akihiro (2005) is valuable for understanding the extent to which a fictitious public sphere, composed of citizens who are organised by a structural and disciplinary technique, can emerge. But his civil society discourse is flawed by universalism and pluralism because his critique of contemporary civil society or volunteers – as one coopted into the neoliberal governance – is not explicit in terms of his (alternative) ideal or vision of civil society, except by briefly celebrating the citizen-subjectivity demonstrated in the 1960 *Anpo* battle. In affirming the 1960 citizen-subjectivity, he merely states that ‘they networked horizontally and freely manifested a wide range of lifestyles’ (2005: 12). He denounces that public-volunteer participation in a community-oriented education project which he demonstrates was initiated, funded, and coordinated by the government (2005: 4). While the state has proliferated in its policies and use of watchwords like *atarashii kōkyō* (the new public) and *kyōdō* (collaboration) between the government and the third sector, the local government which he examines emphasised cooperation, which he argues demanded the implied cooperation of volunteers to follow the rules of the organisation without registering complaints (Ogawa 2005: 13). His article concludes, then, that Japan’s NPOs are instrumentalised by the neoliberal state under the rhetoric of civil society, but his work falls short of explaining why the state is neoliberalised today, resulting in the production and disciplinarianisation of the third sector. The flaw of his argument is that his valorisation of citizen-subjectivity in 1960 must be unpacked further, where he needs to explain in what way horizontally networked citizens during this Keynesian period contributed to the manifestation of a public space. Having said that, Ogawa’s observation of stronger citizen-subjectivity in 1960 is confirmed here not because the 1960 movement evinced a more genuine grass-root politics that had not been coopted by the neoliberal state, as Ogawa argues, but rather because that movement did not separate its action from the question of norms, ideologies and values – even though they were Marxist – in search of a better polity and the form of government. The problem discussed in this footnote also underlies the analysis of Majima Masahide (2004: 163).

emancipation to the traditionally identified authoritarian governance of the state: its decision-making processes, policies and regulations.<sup>136</sup> However, Japan's authoritarianism appears to be not so fixed as the Japanese public has voiced, given that the latter has been able to suspend state policies, if they are highly unpopular among the citizens, and to demand the creation of new policies. For example, Yoshida's article lists the cases of effective local voices which have challenged government decisions and policies, including the nuclear power plant protest in Niigata; the coalition protest between the local government of Okinawa and its residents against the central government over the issue of the US base; and the nuclear waste protest in Aomori (1999: 33-35).<sup>137</sup> Broadbent's work on Oita citizens' movement in the 1970s and 1980s also illustrates a credible social, public movement which froze a number of government policies which had not been concordant with local public interests (1988). Furthermore, there has been a ripple of institutional reforms undertaken since the 1990s, corresponding with the fall of the welfare state; recent legislations such as electoral reform, the information-disclosure law, and judicial reform, are reflective of public voices (Kingston 2004; Pekkanen & Krauss 2005; Asia Program Special Report 2004). Given the fact that the state is not impenetrable for the public, it is crucial for the civil society movement to start identifying other barriers – not only the state barrier – to its success in contemporary Japan.

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<sup>136</sup> As Pekkanen reports (2004: 369-370), in the postwar period, the Japanese government has neglected its efforts to nurture a public space where truth is uttered and communicated. This is reflected in the aspects that the state has 'significant monitoring powers and sanctioning powers'; NPOs which have gained legal status are bound by tight reporting duties (onerous accounting and finance reporting), and are subject to continuing administrative guidance; and the state agency/ministry has more power and authority as it can cancel the licence of NPOs to operate if they have engaged 'in activities outside the purposes defined in the articles of association' (Civil Code Article 71). Pekkanen's examination of civil society movement in contemporary Japan illustrates the state's exercise of its power to curtail and reduce civil society activities.

<sup>137</sup> It is important to add that, in the case of Okinawa, although there have been public outcries and protests challenging government decisions, the US base remains in the region. What is politically implied here is the question of whether the Japanese are prepared to debate the forthcoming possibility that 'there may be no American troops in Japan,...', as Holbrooke suggests (1991: 50). The Okinawa problem will not be resolved unless the Japanese public begins to discuss the agenda of national security as their important security question (i.e. not just criticising this agenda negatively as the revival of militarism and war), and the option of independent rearmament. Only through these discussions, may the long-standing woe of the Okinawa people over the stationing of foreign troops in their land be eliminated. In the case of Aomori, although its residents demonstrated against the nuclear waste issue, the Japanese government has nevertheless reserved a dump site (disposal factory) in the region (a village called *Rokkasho Mura*) since the early 1990s. As this Aomori example suggests, the issue of the state overriding the voices of its citizens continues to warrant debate. The Japanese government must be accountable for further transparency and information disclosure, explaining why these decisions have been made in the name of the public good.

Arguably, it may be that the political weakness of Japan's civil society derives not so much from the authoritarian tradition of the Japanese government – as many would assume – as from the prolonged uncertainty, anxiety and prejudice of postwar citizenry towards the re-valorisation of a time and space in the past, where the measures of durability and endurance had sustained the public realm. It may not be so persuasive any more to argue, as Yoshida does, that, since the term *kō* (公) (the public) was historically attributed to the government and its officials in relation to *shi* (私) (the person/private) (see Chapter 4), Japan's third sector could find its emancipation only if the 'public-equals-official' mentality were to break down. For Yoshida, that is, owing to *kō-shi*'s vertical ruler-subject relationship (1999: 24-26), a belief permeates among Japanese citizens and state officials that the processes, methods and objectives for defining public interests are to rest on the central government bureaucracy (1999: 13). As Arendt has shown (1951: 154), however, civil servants and their neutrality have been the source of authority and legitimacy of modern nation-states more or less since their emergence, and so a highly regimented bureaucratism and top-down formation of power are hardly peculiar to Japan or to the East.

In highlighting the underdeveloped political capacity of Japan's civil society, and in critically exploring the key barriers to the success of Japan's third sector movement as a political agency, the point is by no means to denounce or shun those voices that have been raised against the state. The concern, rather, is with the extent to which the severe decline of political life in advanced industrial societies – including Japan – today stems from postwar models and management of the market. These models no longer have the umpire mechanism which characterised the pre-nineteenth century markets, and which prevented the overflow of private activities into the public realm. Kitagawa Chieko, for instance, questions: 'if [a] deeply-rooted civil society is the foundation for democracy, then, why [is] the United States ... now facing a democratic deficit?' (2000: 27). 'The degradation of supposedly-established democracies among the western industrialized countries', she contends, is closely interwoven with consumerism and individualism, paralysing citizens' respect and responsibility towards their political communities (Kitagawa 2000: 23, 27).

If, as Kawato and Pekkanen argue (2008), the analysis of Japan's civil society interprets the recent third sector movement as an evolution of democracy, Kitagawa's questions of where the boundary of civil society is and what role civil society is expected to take seem to be crucial (2000). Jürgen Habermas positions the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) as part of civil society. For him, the modern public sphere occupied by civil society is one that has no clear-cut distinction between the public and the private identities of citizens (1989: 2). For Arendt, equally, the public space has been vulgarised into the realm of the social in the modern age, which is a new sphere that 'has opened up between the familiar spaces of the private and the public' (2007: 184). It is in this location of civil society that neoliberalism radically makes inroads. As Clarke, Newman et.al. put it, in the social realm intervened by neoliberalism:

- Everyday life is increasingly subjugated to the logics and processes of capitalism
- Social formations are dominated by the economy and politics
- More and more spaces and relationships are subjected to the logic of the market; it is a process of extended commodification or re-commodification. (2007: 16)

To the extent that neoliberalism is an aggressive ideology and rationality whose organisation of the market has promoted the means-ends principle of market fundamentalism in the realm of a concourse between the public and the private, it is imperative not to treat civil society merely as the realm of the social which passively receives such overriding logics of social formation. Civil society can enhance its political edge by helping revive Polanyi's original market, given, especially, its entity having its residence in the realm between the public and the private. For Japan's civil society to take a *political* role, it needs to be conscious of the Japanese question, and the measures of endurance which the original body politic enacted. Harking back to the *bakumatsu* period, for example, Japan operated with a workable self-sufficient economy, which the third sector must investigate further, if that sector is to be more than an outsourced provider of services intended either to prop up the project of neoliberal state or to compensate for the collapse of the welfare state. With the growth of the postwar Japanese economy counting, to a significant extent, on its export activity, a broader discussion from both the government and civil society is needed as to the regulation of the speed and the extent to which the country's international trade and the project to reconstruct more self-sufficient



economy are adjusted. The grand task of the twenty-first century Japanese citizens is perhaps no less than the restoration of the political public realm whose decline has escalated since the Meiji period, with the rise of a consumer society and the shift of popular faith from ancient authority to the authority of modern science. Such a restoration can arguably be achieved by seeking a viable form of a legitimate market which plays an umpire role that protects freedom through the preservation of enduring measures. In its current guise, civil society in Japan accordingly remains embryonic, given its failure to advocate for a transformation of the market, in spite of the fact that it is well situated to tackle the postwar rift created by the Keynesian economy and neoliberalism.

Finally, in addition to the third sector's neglect of the issue of Japanese sovereignty, its complicity with neoliberal objectives, and its identification of the presumed authoritarianism of the state as the primary obstacle to democracy, the underdeveloped political role of Japan's third sector today stems, partly, from its functionalist appeal. As Kitagawa holds, it is true that the utility of the third sector has been valued largely by the government on the basis of its 'programmatic efficiency' (2000: 26) and its cost efficiency. Moreover, studies of NPOs and NGOs in Japan tend to explain their public quality and utility on the basis of their functional efficiency. For example, Jinno Naohiko defines the third sector as a social system rather than economic or political system, highlighting its nature as a 'functional' organisation that has a reciprocal function in which social constituents offer mutual support, and a collaborative function in which constituents engage in shared activities in order to solve common issues (2004: 8). Promoting the concept of social governance, Jinno stresses the indispensable role of the sector as a replacement for the function of social unification which has been hitherto handled by the political system (2004: 9).

The political problem of the functionalist approach is, firstly, the excessive weight given to putatively universalisable and standardisable procedure rather than the norms or the foundation of norms which construct a particular body politic. Arendt's critique of the tendency of social science to ignore the sources that make a historical public space specific in favour of a concern with their putative 'functions' (1993: 102, italics added) can help elaborate this point. In critiquing this functionalist mindset that reduces cultural or political phenomena to their functions, Arendt wryly observes, 'it is as though I had

the right to call the heel of my shoe a hammer because, I like most women, use it to drive nails into the wall' (Arendt 1993: 102). Against this mindset, then, an Arendtian study of Japan's political public space stresses the importance of civil society study to explore the political relevance of formulaic truths inherited *by a given people* across time, since the reciprocal function, for instance, cannot be simply *instituted* on account merely of the democratic relevance of its functionality. Rather, reciprocity (for example) has functional significance by virtue of the survival of the standards of judgment – norms – through which the people may be able to tell what is good and bad, or what is appropriate or inappropriate for Japan's public space, and on the basis of which people actively affirm (or question) the significance of a function like reciprocity in a given context. Without recognition and reassessment of the political relevance of the organic matrix entrenched in the Japanese question, formulaic truths endemic to each locality will be at risk of disappearing in the attempts of civil society to resuscitate the public space. Worse still, the functionalist approach presupposes procedural validity as an inviolable tenet of political legitimacy. Enduring measures which assist politics – action and speech – are thereby likely to be marginalised, inasmuch as the presumed universality of a procedure or the standardised method takes precedence over the integration of local tradition and norms into decision making processes.

To recap, 'a citizen is by definition a citizen among citizens of a country among countries' (Arendt 1995: 81). The civil society of a country is an entity of the public sphere. It is the people – who share a particular territorial space of the public – that enact something common through the citizens' 'judicious exchange of opinion' (Arendt 1993: 223). It is a community's discussion of and deliberation over what is appropriate and what should become permanent for the realm that determines the particularity of its space. As Kitagawa states, therefore, the civil society sector is 'often defined with a normative overshadow' (2000: 27). Japan's civil society study which interprets the political substances of reciprocity, communication and participation as systemic functions can disengage its analysis of political life and its development from the history underlying a public realm. Sharing this blind spot, Kitagawa – despite her critical articulation above – accedes to the functionalist approach, when she denounces a 'recent political development in Japan, [as] represented by the legal designation of national flag and

national anthem' (2000: 33). She argues that the evolution of civil society should not be guided by the state, which encourages uniform patriotism in the nation, but by the pluralist principles upon which the essential value of civil society rests. Kitagawa's view appears to be loyal to the principle of political public realm. Yet, if cultural symbols like the national flag and the anthem, which speak to the history of a public space – in other words, a thread of the history which carries forward the memory and wisdom of the past – are altogether perceived as the 'hidden intent' of the state by pluralists (Kitagawa 2000: 33), the question remains as to what other cultural phenomena could be tasked with enabling the unification and continuity of the Japanese public realm. For the symbols or the products of a public, such as the flag and the anthem, are phenomena which represent a shared sphere and which refuse tomorrow's disappearance and discontinuity. A pluralist approach which is otherwise universalistic, and hence ignores the aspect of freedom that is secured by enduring measures, may invite a situation in which Japan is deprived of any common or shared history and continuity.

*Towards the Resuscitation of an Extinguished Public Space, "Kaso" Regions: Challenging the Consequences of Postwar Japanese Economy*

The onset of the neoliberal age has coincided with a monumental growth both in the number of social problems and in their intensity. This final section dissects one of the major social problems of contemporary Japan – *kaso* (過疎): depopulated regions in rural Japan. The speed of depopulating areas has accelerated throughout the Japanese archipelago since the 1950s, evidencing not merely the actual decline of the public space in postwar Japan but also, importantly, the limited political capacity of Japan's third sector today. Through an examination of the *kaso* problem, this last section proposes a project to resuscitate a public realm. It should be emphasised that the withering of Japan's public space as evidenced in the socio-political problem of the *kaso* regions is interrelated with the course of postwar Japan's modernisation, which has focused on industrialisation, urbanisation and centralisation.

Kingston's summaries (2004; 2011) of a tumultuous social sphere in post-bubble Japan warrant attention for their illustration of the social consequences of the postwar adoption of market models, first Keynesian and then neoliberal. Since the about face of

the late 1940s, when the US Occupation re-defined the direction of postwar Japan's politics (see Chapter 5), the Japanese reconstruction of the public sphere has been absorbed into national efforts to boost the economy. Following the catastrophic fall of the nation's economy in the early 1990s, disciplined Japanese commitments to this end have begun to confront scathing realities both in the public and the private spheres. Kingston reports that unstoppable demographic change in Japan – which is not unconnected to the transformation of the market models – indicates significant consequences for the future of the nation that is composed of a large proportion of elderly citizens and a small proportion of youth. Japan is predicted to become the world's oldest population by 2025, with nearly one-third of the population aged 65 or over (Kingston 2004: 291). The issue of 'the graying of the nation' is aggravated by mounting, serious problems among youth: a sharp drop in the fertility rate; a substantial rise in the divorce rate; a rise in domestic and child abuse; a proliferation of crime and delinquency; and a high suicide rate, especially among elderly people (Kingston 2011: 67-82; 2004: 258-291). These ills are exacerbated by a malignant growth of poverty and the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots (Jinno 2007).

While social democrats like Kingston find solutions in policy reforms such as new legislation to protect women, spending to alleviate poverty, and pension reform, it is worth recalling that these problems are closely intertwined with the specific way in which the market has been organised. Legislative reforms to help alleviate such social problems seem to result in *ad hoc* solutions, inasmuch as the current formation of the market remains untouched. In this regard, Jinno Naohiko is right to suggest that a shift to a new industrial structure is urgent (2007: 32). But what sort of new industrial structure or market model could counter these social problems which have grown massively, due to the industrialisation, urbanisation and centralisation of postwar Japan? Put differently, how could we re-draw the demarcation between the public and the private realms through the reconstruction of the market's umpire mechanism, so that the essential place and memory of inter-subjective communication is revived and protected until the era of future generations? Although issues such as decentralisation, civil society and self-responsibility are part of the constructive strategy of neoliberalism for its further capital accumulation,

it should be said that these neoliberal agendas could simultaneously trigger opportunities for new debates to re-examine, re-imagine and resuscitate a political public realm.

According to the recent study of Matanle and Rausch, while population shrinkage and rural depopulation have been dramatic phenomena of postwar Japan, the gravity of this problem has ‘failed to gain the attention it deserves’ (2011: 18). The 2000 Special Law Promoting Independence in Depopulated Areas (過疎地域自立促進特別措置: *kasochiiki jiritsu sokushin tokubetsu sochi*) defines *kasochi* as ‘depopulated rural areas that have experienced a significant population loss, whereby the area has experienced declines in its vitality and is at a lower level in terms of production functioning and infrastructures related to daily living, compared to other areas’ (Metanle & Rausch 2011: 25). Among the *kasochi*, the number of *genkai shūraku* (限界集落) – the worst affected *kasochi* communities – amounts to 7,878 (as of 2011) of which 423 communities are predicted to perish within 10 years (2011: 26).<sup>138</sup> It is evident that the critical intersection between the continuous concentration of industrial activities in the metropolitan regions and the marked decline in the fertility rate subjects rural communities to the threat of dying-out.

The work of Doo-Chul and Hye-Jin (2009) on Kawane village (located in Hiroshima Prefecture) portrays an optimistic picture of a revitalisation project led by civil society in *kasochi* communities. Their study explores the actions of the Kawane Promoting Association, which began in 1972 following a severe flood in the remote community of Kawane; this is a successful case of revived local governance and of a revitalised self-help community. In a village composed of only 19 hamlets, the Association was successful in its initiative to develop a network of cooperation, particularly, by resuscitating regional, cultural and traditional events and festivals; eventually all households in the village became members of the organisation by the 1980s (Doo-Chul & Hye-Jin 2009: 81). Since the 1980s, the group has faced population-shrinkage and the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of an aging population. Along with local government, the Association has taken on local governance by extending its work from

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<sup>138</sup> The term *Genkai Shūraku* – hamlets/villages at the threshold – was coined by rural sociologist Ohno Akira (Metanle & Rausch 2011: 25). *Genkai Shūraku* suggests ‘a village where more than 50 per cent of its residents are older than 65 and the population is decreasing so rapidly that maintaining the village becomes challenging’ (Klien 2010: 529).

providing social services (such as regular care and lunch services to elderly people) to negotiating between households and local government (for example, the request of the local government to use farmers' land for a public purpose), and acting as proxy for private properties (such as surrogate for the use of arable lands abandoned by retired farmers) (Doo-Chul & Hye-Jin 2009: 82-83).

The irreplaceable role of a civil society group such as the Kawane Promoting Association is indisputable in Kawane village. However, Doo-Chul and Hye-Jin's methodology for analysing the role of the third sector and the democratic scale of its activity constrains the political prospects of the sector to the role of cleaning up the wreckage of continuous industrial activity concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka. Put differently, their method of analysis prevents reflection on how the Association might play a political role, in the form of contributing to the reconstruction of the public space. Accordingly, their study effectively confines the potential political contribution of the group to the task of playing handmaiden to neoliberal industrialism; that is, to being a convenient entity to which essential public services that were formerly seen as a province of the state can be outsourced as a cheap means to supplement the dismantled welfare state.

Further, it is important to attend to the facts that 'before 1953, Kawane village was a municipality with its own village office with financial autonomy'; and that after the 1980s, cultural-traditional activities and festivals could no longer be held at the village due to the severe decline in their population (Doo-Chul & Hye-Jin 2009: 79, 81). Doo-Chul and Hye-Jin demonstrate that, before the onset of depopulation and before the rural communities lost their capacity for self-organisation – a capacity which was replaced by the subsidies provided by the central government (2009: 78) – this community had possessed autonomy and a vibrant, reciprocal help network. Such facts provide a basis for seeing, against celebrations of the political value of Japan's civil society organisations, a *decline* in the health of the public sphere in industrialised Japan. Today, while the structural force of neoliberalism encourages municipalities to merge across the country in order to have them reduce administrative costs, local people are required to pay higher

costs to access public services.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, the disappearance of cultural activities due to the dispersal of residents suggests not merely a decline in the public realm, but something that approximates its extinction. Accordingly, only when the study of civil society in Japan can critically consider a market model that respects the border between the public and the private spaces may the third sector movement have sufficient theoretical guidance for political agency, playing a role in reconstructing the public space.

The market models promoted by Keynesians and neoliberals alike are antagonistic to the idea and practice of permanence and durability. Arguably, turning to the German business management method and sector known as the *Mittelstand* offers a realistic alternative to the market models constructed by Keynesians and neoliberals. The *Mittelstand* is a business model and market apparatus consisting of small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which operates to date in many regions of Germany, most notably, in the state of Bavaria. The sector has been commended for its remarkable strength and for its contribution to Germany's economic prosperity today (Berghoff 2006). Indeed, in spite of the fact that over the past decade multiple members of the European Union have, one after another, succumbed to the torment of debt crisis (particularly Greece, Italy and Spain), the German state of Bavaria, as reported by the ABC program *Foreign Correspondent* ('A Bavarian fairy tale', broadcast 14 February 2012), has seen a boom in its business sector, on the back of a rise in exports and an unemployment rate sitting at a 20-year-low, making it the most wealthy state in Germany today.

According to the *Foreign Correspondent* report, Bavaria's SMEs neither invest large quantities of money in finance nor concern themselves with financial instruments which go beyond the financial network of the region, in contrast to the popular practices of large corporations. Moreover, the family-owned businesses of the *Mittelstand* do not privilege CEOs with extraordinary salaries, nor antagonise unions and seek to boost quarterly shareholder returns. Although the emergence of the EU and the innovation of

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<sup>139</sup> Doo-Chul and Hye-Jin also mention that the aggrandised local municipalities after the merger are encumbered with increased responsibilities for a larger number of residents, with a lower available budget (2009: 78). This chapter recalls my argument that neoliberal governance has been in place as a consequence and ramification of the Keynesian economy. Put simply, the extravagant welfare state did not create a polity in which the public realm was possible, eventuating in the production of the neoliberal market which more aggressively violates the public realm.

the Euro currency propounded the efficiency and profitability of the common market in its foundation of a unified, supra-national market, the Bavarian interviewees in the Mittelstand comments that ‘everybody was offered loans... and at the end everybody is in debt now’, and even the good times of the postwar period ‘were built on the sands of debt’ (‘A Bavarian fairy tale’, 14 February 2012). The *Foreign Correspondent* reporter explains that the Mittelstand model of the market differs from the mainstream economy underpinned by neoliberalism, which shuffles real money around through collateralised debt obligations or structured asset-backed security trenches, and spends billions of dollars on financial actions that are too colossal and complex to keep up.

An examination of the Mittelstand market model suggests that this form of market may re-enact the resilience of Polanyi’s original market model, insofar as it has forestalled the overflow of the private or market fundamentalism into the public realm, as has occurred elsewhere since the great transformation. The model may restore the umpire function of the market that provides a foundation for the public, political sphere. Critically investigating the hitherto under-researched and neglected sector of the Mittelstand, Berghoff calls for another great transformation of the market, from the one dominated by large corporations to the one composed of SMEs (2006: 263). Berghoff considers that the Mittelstand, grounded in philosophy, norms and principles rather than value-free utilitarian practice, is a distinctive feature and pillar of the German economy, a social apparatus with which most workers wish to identify themselves. Berghoff illustrates five pivotal characteristics of the Mittelstand (2006: 272-275): ongoing family-owned, multi-generational business; focused, long-term business strategies which stick to core competencies and cultivate specific capabilities; emotional attachment of both owners and workers to their firms, viewing their work as integral to personal self-fulfillment; paternal culture and informality composed of mutual trust and loyalty rather than of union-protected labour rights; and independence based on the measure of self-supporting finance and the attitude of self sufficiency.



In contrast to the market after the great transformation, which confronted the rise of division of labour and class conflict, the classic, pre-WWI Mittelstand model<sup>140</sup> had a unique characteristic described as a ‘Unified Stand’ that was devoid of sectional divide. The Mittelstand was collectively composed, that is, of various workers like artisans, peasants, retailers, shopkeepers and publicans, cutting ‘across the lines of class conflict and the struggle between town and country’ (Blackbourn 1977: 412). The activities of the market were synthetically orchestrated by planning and execution, mental and physical labour, as well as including every business apparatus. In order to implement the holistically constituted Mittelstand market, contemporary Germany has reinforced the role of key institutions such as local, communal and regional banks (Berghoff 2006: 268).<sup>141</sup> Bavarians, for instance, borrowed money mainly to buy materials and to retain a budget for the production of quality objects in a time when Thatcherite deregulation encouraged acquisitive banks to offer easy loans (‘A Bavarian fairy tale’, 14 February 2012), while the Mittelstand enterprises did not let the bankers ‘interfere with strategic issues, such as major investments’ (Berghoff 2006: 275).

It is the commitment to and functionalisation of traditionalism and localism that animate the Mittelstand’s potential for the restoration and re-politicisation of the public realm. Germany was once made up of independent kingdoms and principalities, and each region competed to differentiate itself from the others by specialising in its own products and making them stand out in their own way (‘A Bavarian fairy tale’, 14 February 2012). The family-based Mittelstand enterprises are governed by a twofold tradition: the particular methodologies and principles which the family inherits in its private realm, namely, those that are handed over to successors of the business; and the tradition of a region and a community that influences the Mittelstand business and with which the Mittelstand model coexists. By virtue of their regionalism and localism, the products of the Mittelstand such as beer, leather shorts and leather shoes find a niche even in the

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<sup>140</sup> The new Mittelstand model was one that had to be reconstructed in order for the sector to adjust to the needs of the changing times: the new model was mostly characterised by a modern outlook, organisation and management. See Blackbourn (1977) and Berghoff (2006).

<sup>141</sup> Berghoff (2006: 287) notes that, although the Basel II Accord was agreed on a more restrictive lending policy, as the Mittelstand has historically won ‘considerable political backing’, it has pressured the German government to relax the regulations after the Accord. Not only credit cooperatives but also national, state-owned institutions like Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (the German Development Bank) are ‘fully committed to providing loans to SMEs’.

world market today, under the name, not simply of the particular family/business, but also of the region ('A Bavarian fairy tale', 14 February 2012). The Mittelstand's localism has been underpinned by the decentralised industrial order of Germany. Furthermore, the Mittelstand model of the market is focused on the production of high-quality objects – the end products of *homo faber* – by collaborating with the *Meister* (master craftsman) training institutions; this scheme keeps competition low, prices up and thereby reduces the default rate of craft businesses (Berghoff 2006: 274).

In this view, the Mittelstand market model in Germany proposes a sensible potential for the restoration of a political public realm – something along the lines of Polanyi's original market, which was equipped with an umpire mechanism against the collapse of the public and private borders. The Mittelstand's participation in economic activities is less likely to endanger the public realm, because of the sector's commitment to the production of objects that are fabricated by the hands of *homo faber*, whose standard is durability. As Arendt argues, if we are to appreciate the reality of the mortal existence of human beings, then our mortal existence, our ontology, may only find stability, assurance and home in a world that is constituted of the opposite – that is, endurance and permanence. In addition, the Mittelstand model of the market contributes to the public space, because their businesses take root in a decentralised industrial order in which the prosperity of SMEs are interdependent with small and regional communities. Furthermore, this market prototype transfers profits less to the markets outside the region (capital-flight) and appropriates them less to speculative activities and the stock market. This traditional model disciplines profits and safeguards regional cultures.

Lastly, the Mittelstand model is less likely than the neoliberal model particularly, and the Keynesian model to a lesser extent, to generate class antagonism, for its practice is based on the cooperation and loyalty of workers, not of class hierarchy. It is true that the Mittelstand sector of the German economy underwent severe crises both in the first half of the twentieth century and after the 1970s when a technological revolution radically transformed the production process,<sup>142</sup> but it is crucial to acknowledge the survival of this apparatus today (despite its stiff-necked traditionalism), and especially to

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<sup>142</sup> See both the articles of Berghoff (2006) and Blackburn (1977). Note that these crises have also been inseparable from the development of superfluous capital.

credit Bavaria's success in this new century, at a time when many parts of Europe are drowning in debt crisis. Under the *Mittelstand* model of the market, the production process is structured less by division of labour than by specialisation of work. Indeed, the case of Bavaria and the *Mittelstand* business model demonstrates that, against the formidable forces and defects of neoliberalism, namely, of superfluous capital, the *Mittelstand* model of the market exemplifies a legitimate and viable market which respects the border of the public realm. To that extent, the *Mittelstand* model potentially provides the conditions for the emergence of a political public space understood in Arendt's terms, a space that rapidly declined in the wake of the great transformation of the nineteenth century.

Matanle and Rausch's study of Japan's shrinking regions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one that substantiates the considerable relevance of such a market solution – a shift to an alternative (sustainable) model – to the revitalisation of the public space, over the focus on reform policies which are, often, makeshift. Regarding the issue of *kasō*, both local and national governments have sought to reverse the trend of depopulation, for example, through immigration policy and the mechanism of providing incentives for adults to have more children (Metanle & Rausch 2011: 271).<sup>143</sup> But strategies to raise the fertility rate have been frustrated by social insecurities caused by a rise in unemployment, especially among young people; a proliferation of temporary jobs; and an increase in poverty (Jinno 2007: 33; Metanle & Rausch 2011: 29). Moreover, attempts to solve severe depopulation in rural areas through immigration policy have been hampered by such realities as the high concentration of foreign workers in the metropolitan regions; many illegal practices among Japanese companies, including insufficient legal protection of foreign workers; and complications in relation to welcoming foreign brides in the households of rural regions (Metanle & Rausch 2011: 273-295). Since many young Japanese women have moved out of rural communities, and farmers inherit the agricultural lands of their families, many of the latter have little choice but to resort to importing brides from other countries, who face manifold difficulties and inequalities of culture, language, gender and urban/rural difference (Metanle & Rausch 2011: 292). If the policies of the Japanese

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<sup>143</sup> Indeed 'cash benefits as tools of public policy' (Jinno 2007: 33) have been the dominant methods used by either the DPJ or the LDP to meet the challenge of worsening social problems.

government are, in the long run, to rectify the decline of Japan's public sphere in the postwar period, the depopulation problem must be made a political priority, as an attempt to solve this problem may raise most effectively the need to restructure the mode of the economy, a need which goes beyond the government's immigration policy and incentive provisions that provide *ad hoc* solutions. Restructuring the mode of the nation's economy would entail, above all, the government's support for the growth of local economy – by facilitating banks to make more credits and loans available to SMEs of the regions – and encouragement of industries now concentrated in the metropolitan regions to relocate their branches to the rural areas – in such a way that this relocation do not destroy the fabric of local economies – so that young generations could move out of the cities with more opportunities for employment. Symbolised by the original model of the market examined by Polanyi, restoring the umpire mechanism of the market would be the key to re-enacting the border between the public and the private realms and thereby to reactivating cultural and traditional practices that might provide (old and new) people in a public space with a means of reconnecting.

Meanwhile, the recent example of the Sado island, one of the severely depopulated regions, illustrates the viability and relevance of Bavaria's Mittelstand model in Japan. Metanle and Rausch's interviews of Sado residents illustrate a pivotal change in outlook as having driven change in current Sado: the reorientation of residents' values from a growth-first-perspective to a vision of re-establishing stability in the island's economy and society by creating a comfortable and attractive place to live (2011: 296). As the processes of globalisation have intensified, the problems affecting the Sado economy have been exacerbated, given that many young generations migrate to the metropolis in search of stable incomes and better working conditions, and that the new businesses aggressively enter the region not only by transferring store and corporate managers from the headquarters, who have no interest in reviving the rural regions to which they are sent, but also by forcing out local markets and employments through the introduction of big-franchise supermarkets and aggressive competition (2011: 299). Despite the unrelenting economic hardships of the island, the Sado citizens have taken a constructive approach to cooperating with the public and the private sectors; a successful example of this is the attempt to develop a local sake-brewing industry.

By earmarking the distinctions and specialties of the region and the industry, for instance, developing value-added activities, highlighting the special geography of the island, and resuscitating the declining sake business in Japan, a local sake-brewer in Sado has found a niche in the world market for its distinguished products and anticipates an increase in local employment in its business, believing that its initiative contributes to the sustainability of society, culture and the environment in the island (Metanle and Rausch 2011: 304-305).<sup>144</sup> Another of Sado's resuscitation projects, the opening of a post-secondary education institution, has been gradually gaining currency, with young students living closer to the island beginning to enrol in the institution, and with the college now teaching skills and knowledge *specific* to the island's culture and society (2011: 303).<sup>145</sup> In this regard, the revival of a political public sphere is possible in Sado island by virtue of the creation of a sustainable market, a potential increase in employment, the sustenance and handing down of region-specific skills and knowledge which can attract the younger generations back to the island, and the repopulation of a space that is threatened with the prospect of depopulation. Moreover, as is the case for Sado residents, the change in rural citizens' perspective towards the creation of a comfortable community to live in – rather than the pursuit of a growth-first community – could pave the way for the return of young people who may have been dissuaded from establishing a family in the capital regions on account of their busy, alienated and regimented everyday life. Social problems such as the decline of the fertility rate and the disproportionately aged society may not be so insurmountable as some people may believe, if the project of decentralisation can be accompanied by the act of restoring the original model of the market proposed by Polanyi, with its umpire mechanism to regulate the overflow of activities from the public and the private spaces. As Bavaria's example suggests, it is important that community and national banks move to assist these resuscitation programs in the *kasō* areas and rural regions as part of the nation's decentralisation project.

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<sup>144</sup> Sado's sake is sold in a Japanese restaurant in New York, and the product is becoming popular because of its difference (Metanle and Rausch 2011: 305).

<sup>145</sup> For example, craft work is indigenous to Sado, and hence teaching skills peculiar to the island's crafts leads to the preservation of indigenous knowledge and tradition.

In June 2014, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō unveiled Japan's revitalisation strategy, an 'ambitious package' ('Abe unveils Japan's new growth strategy', 24 June 2014) which includes an objective to stem the accelerating rural depopulation. This new plan appears to show disquiet and haste of the Japanese government over the growing chaos both in the public and the private spaces of Japan, introducing measures which will counter the problem of regional depopulation, such as institutional and policy reforms to accept more foreign human resource, enhancement of child care services and measures against overwork (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2014). These reforms are a part of strategy to tackle the serious problems of contemporary Japan: an aging population and a declining fertility rate, which prepare the ground for *kasō*. The regional revitalisation strategy is a main part of the Abe cabinet's radical reforms: for example, radical development of agriculture, promotion of regional specialities by SMEs and development of strategic industries, to name a few (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2014). In tandem with the regional initiative in the recovery of the public space, as seen in the case of the Sado island, the prospect of success in the Japanese government's initiatives in revitalising Japan's public space remains to be seen in the days to come. A recent study provided by Susanne Klien of Hokkaido University proposes that regional 'revitalisation is only sustainable if incentives are created for residents to establish local autonomy' (2010: 513). Yet, exemplified by the government's revitalisation project of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial, which began in 2000 in the mountainous region of Niigata prefecture, with the aim of responding to the challenge of 'the demographic decline and general economic stagnation of rural regions in Japan', Klien's ethnographic investigation of the Triennial illustrates that the degree of success of the government's initiatives in regional revitalisation is still largely uncertain (2010: 516, 530). Many of the implemented Triennial projects – albeit not all – failed to draw the sustained cooperation of regional residents, to create a passage for functioning regional economy and to foster the locals' motives for exploring and deliberating ways to enhance their villages' future on their own (2010: 525, 528-530). In addition to such observations, critics maintain concern over the government's credibility to 'implement all the steps in the strategy', because 'Japan often falls short of following through with its lofty goals' ('Abe unveils Japan's new growth strategy', 24 June 2014).

Following the example of Bavaria's Mittelstand business model, Sado's project to resuscitate its community in the face of regional depopulation demonstrates a vision and path to revive the public sphere in postwar Japan, one built on an alternative model of the market to that offered by Keynesianism and neoliberalism. Solutions to the problem of depopulated rural regions by way of provisional legislation, regulation and *ad hoc* policies appear to be ineffective in the long run, unless they are combined with a shift to a new industrial structure, which can only be driven by cooperation between the government and Japanese citizens. Although the civil society sector's capacity to take a political role is widely assumed in Japan, the movement, which has escalated since the 1980s, could remain a by-product of neoliberal globalisation unless the study of the third sector begins to re-valorise the key components of political public space; these are not only human plurality, but also time-transcending measures such as culture, customs and tradition. Combined by the desirability of the Japanese public to reassess Japan's postwar Constitution and to move to the amendments of Article 1 and 9 (see Chapter 6), re-enacting the umpire mechanism of the market – a market solution – could, arguably, save 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan from suffering a further decline in the vitality of its public sphere or, indeed, the potential extinction of this realm and its history.

### *Conclusion*

The contemporary celebrations of Japan's civil society movement remain blind to the extent to which the issues of the autonomy and security of the state have been neglected and undermined since the Second World War, owing in part, as seen in Chapter 6, to the considerable influence of Marxism or neo-Marxism on Japan's political public space. The third sector has a tendency, in general, to presume that any potential constraint on their action and emancipatory aim is owed to the latent authoritarianism of the state, the presumption of which obstructs them from recognising the problem of the vulnerability of Japan's state sovereignty to foreign pressures and demands. With the state having less resilience against foreign pressures, including the structural force of capital, the political potential of these agencies is undermined by the force of neoliberalism which reduces civil society organisations to agencies compensating for the axing of social services that

had once been provided under the welfare state. Furthermore, by giving undue focus on the importance of procedures and methodologies with a view to institutionalising the culture of civil society, Japan's third sector remains blind to the essential political relevance of the Japanese question, which is to work to stabilise and sustain the political public sphere. In contrast to the contra-political consequences of neoliberalism at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Polanyi's depiction of the original model of the market before the eighteenth century illustrates the market's role as gatekeeper between the public and the private realms, preventing the overflow of each activity into the other. Being similarly situated between the public and private spaces, Japan's third sector can invigorate the public space only if it pays attention to strategies and processes for restoring the original function of the market. If the third sector is not to remain a by-product of the neoliberal market or of the Keynesian economy, it needs to develop a political role by eliminating the blind spots in its understanding of the relation between the market models which postwar Japan has adopted and the key barriers to the growth of the third sector. The implication of the discussion in the previous chapters, moreover, is that one means by which such blind spots may be reduced is a positive re-evaluation of a certain historical period of its own country, in which freedom and endurance coexisted.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis presumes that Hannah Arendt's examination of political life in the Occidental history and her analysis of the fall of the public realm in the modern West can be applied to contexts beyond that territory and history. The study investigates Arendt's conception of political public space in highly industrialised postwar Japanese society, and finds a decline of Japan's public realm that runs parallel to the West. The thesis proposes that Arendt's political thought and the standards of politics that she derives from the experience of an original political community, the ancient city-state polis in Athens, offers criteria for restoring Japan's public space. Postwar Japan stands out among other nations as a distinctive historical period and an idiosyncratic geographical space in which the project of modernisation has been embraced as imperative, while memory of the nation's past has been disowned to a considerable extent. Primarily, the rise and dominance of Marxist and neo-Marxist intelligentsia and their (mainstream) historiography have contributed to the decline of public space in postwar Japan, although, paradoxically, political life has been enlivened mostly under their initiatives. As Arendt suggests, if political life or the public realm is a space in which freedom needs support of enduring measures such as culture, tradition and authority, postwar Japan's pacifist faith in the linkage of peace and democracy, which denies the concerns of these enduring measures, ultimately deprives the citizens of their freedom – understood in Arendt's terms as the revelation of human plurality through action and speech (see Chapter 1), rather than freedom to choose and consume according to one's desires – and thus of an essential space of inter-subjective communication, paving a road to self-destruction and self-defeat. From the project of the new identity-building in postwar Japan, the reconstruction of the emperor system – which is a historical thread of Japan's political public realm – has been marginalised, with a political public sphere having come to manifest under Marxist-led social movements. Put differently, the political forms of human action and speech were kindled over Marxist discourses, having risen to the surface of the public by discarding an inquiry into the democratic relevance of the Japanese question. The fact that the emperor system, which had mediated the interaction of the Japanese political community with enduring measures which appear in the forms of religion, tradition and ethics, has been displaced from political life of Japan for more

than half a century, is a disjuncture which threatens the survival of the present and future of Japan's public space. It remains to be seen whether law alone can safeguard the freedom of the public sphere. In the absence of an agency or medium to bequeath to the coming generations the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the past, freedom of postwar Japan's public space is to retract correspondingly. Given that the realm of public debate in postwar Japan has been highly influenced by liberalism and Marxism of modern political philosophy, Arendt's political thought which identifies the political crisis of the modern age may offer postwar Japan a passage out of the exigency which it faces, particularly when we find her emphasis on the relevance of human artifacts and measures that transcend the time to the public sphere.

The main research question of this study derives from Arendt's proposition that the political public space has declined in the modern age. Building on this broad inquiry into the decline of political life proposed by Arendt, the preceding chapters have explored the questions of whether political life declined equally in Japan; of whether it was incapacitated in Japan before and without modernising the structures and institutions of its polity; and of the way in which the public space of postwar Japan has been socialised or privatised. The focal argument of this thesis is that the public space of post-1945 Japan has experienced a catastrophic decline due, above all, to the public opposition to revisiting, reassessing and revalorising its past, including the form of government and of the polity which traditionally constructed the borders of Japan's public. This thesis regards the questions related to these borders, which are today more or less obsolete, as *the Japanese question*. The discussion's methodological focus on phenomena ordinarily taken as indicative of a healthy public realm – namely, social and political movements – suggests that authentic politics – which is to say, that which is maintained by a fair balance between freedom and the interaction of people with historical threads – can manifest only on the basis of collective action *that is guided by the question of how the public borders of a country are proposed, negotiated and enacted*. This is because, as Arendt argues, freedom – human plurality – alone cannot sustain the public space, given that its appearance, reflected in the collective activity of participation, deliberation, discussion and judgment, is contingent, transient and ever-changing, which falls short of

a capacity to stabilise and maintains the public space where the new generation continuously comes to join, without knowing how to protect their freedom.

Part I of this thesis outlined Hannah Arendt's philosophy of political public space, the uniqueness of whose theory lies in its calibration of the standards of politics against those set by the original political community of ancient Athens (see Chapter 1). Political life or the public realm can be seen to be realisable on this basis only as long as freedom is supplemented by the enduring belief, attitude and work of that community: its traditions, its forms of authority and its culture. The modern experiment of secularisation thus appears problematic not for its democratic promise to prevent the violation of the rights and faiths of others, but for the way that the specific forms of political modernisation pursued in many modern states depend upon and exacerbate a separation of the present from the past. Culture and tradition can be understood to inform people of the wisdom and standards of the past, formed by the long historical process of the judicial exchange of the opinions of a community, and without these standards modern citizens risk losing the guideposts that protect the space of freedom. The decline of the political public realm, then, starts when these enduring measures begin to withdraw from the public space, a phenomenon which can be symbolised by some contemporary scientists' difficulty and confusion as to the disciplinary boundaries of politics, culture and society, or exemplified by the ambiguity which a branch of cultural study has when examining the issue of consumption and contending how it becomes the problem of politics (see Chapter 2). In the modern age, the *vita activa* hierarchy, which was constructed in ancient Athens in the order of man of action (deed and word), *homo faber* (work and production) and the *animal laborans* (labour and consumption), has been reversed with the elevation of the latter two human activities. As a result, the interdependent relationship between politics and culture has been destroyed. Culture is today severely privatised and socialised, which is often overlooked in studies that seek to overhaul the space of the public. In view of the recession of enduring measures in the modern age, the notion of the Japanese question serves as a means for examining Japan's political public space, bringing Arendt's political thought to a valorisation of enduring measures of a specific territorial space. In doing so, it introduces an alternative approach into the mainstream of socio-political science where Marxism and liberalism, largely guided by an Archimedean

epistemology, dominate. The Archimedean epistemology is peculiar to the modern age, particularly, for transforming the notion of time into one that is developmental and teleological, and for changing the methodology of science into one in which the realm of political life – the space of spontaneity, unpredictability and contingency – is explained by utilitarian thought or the narrative of causation, generalisation, statistics and patterns (see Chapter 1).

Part II of this thesis explored the foundation to Japan's body politic – the *sui generis* of the polity – in which the borders of its public realm are drawn. The *bakumatsu* movement shortly before the 1868 Meiji Restoration (see Chapter 3) is a symbolic moment in Japan's history, in that the collective action of the time formed a political public space in the way in which it asked and fought for the foundation of the public borders of Japan, the emperor. An analysis of public responses to the political crises at the time demonstrates that this search sprung from the people's concern with the Japanese question, namely, with the foundation to Japan's *kokutai*, or a body politic, which, in the case of Japan, was derived from a history of practice in which the interrelation of the person of emperor with the phenomena of rituals, culture and customs knitted together the political community. The *bakumatsu* period was thus characterised by the collective concerns over the Japanese question which impelled the manifestation of a political public space. While the Japanese question concerns the foundation of the polity and the borders of Japan's public, its practices and experiences can be seen in places such as *yoriai* (as seen in Miyamoto Tsuneichi's anthropological observation of Japanese communities), samurai ethics, and the particular way in which the emperor traditionally governed the country and its public realm (see Chapter 4).

Part III of this thesis examined the prominent socio-political movements of Japan in the postwar period. As Chapter 5 illustrates, the critical aspect of labour movements – the vanguard of social movements in postwar Japan – was a developing direction of political activism after the end of the Second World War, where there was a manifestation of a political sphere, but only in the way in which such action departed from the Japanese question. Despite labour movements' marriage to the ethos of democracy, or democratisation, the movements were ambiguous about the meanings and concepts of these terms, eventually submerging their political agency into the private

realm. Labour movements eventually colluded with capitalism or liberalism, as seen in the rise of the second union which presented more powerful and cooperative force with the employer than the original union, and in the case of far left-wing union of Sōhyō which had initially opposed the Productivity Centre's programs but ultimately took part in the programs of this liberal organisation. That is, labour movements' departure from the Japanese question abandoned their search for the standards and categories of the public, which prevented them from pursuing the question of what authentic politics might mean, beyond understanding it as a struggle to raise living standards. Forgotten in this process was the question of how the polity and the people can be united over their concerns of the public good. The denial of the thread which links the past to the present was further reinforced by Japanese citizens in the *Anpo* battle in 1960 (see Chapter 6). Although the 1960 event of the US-Japan security treaty revision was a historical turning-point in postwar Japan at which the important public conditions and properties of sovereignty, independence and security were reviewed with a view to further restoration, the social student movement of the time actualised a political public realm in the way in which they resisted this restoration. Manifesting a public realm nonetheless, the political agents' denial of the Japanese question by 1960 resulted in the rise of new social movements at the end of the 1960s, which often took a form of nihilism and radicalism.

In postwar Japan, the political public realm – namely, the space of action and speech – has been formed primarily under the leadership of Marxist or neo-Marxist agents and hence has refused an inquiry into the democratic relevance of the Japanese question, represented by the 1960 event of the *Anpo* battle. However, this pacifist political space only prolongs the vulnerability of Japan's external sovereignty, leaving its polity at the mercy of foreign threats, demands and pressures. At the end of the twentieth century, Japan was attacked over its defence policy by the US, who had made, on the basis of a mutual agreement, its security commitment to Japan in exchange for Japan's lease of its bases to the US military. Given this agreement, the charge of a military 'free-ride' made by some US officials against Japan was inappropriate, but Japan obliged the US in any case, by implementing a large scale Japanese 'Marshall Plan', in which Japan recycled its export surplus to buy American bonds. Possessing such a defunct sovereignty, Japan cannot sufficiently protect itself, weakening its resilience against the powerful

force of global capital (see Chapter 7). Although there has been a development of diverse self-help or voluntary organisations represented by NPOs and NGOs since the 1980s in Japan, a development which might be taken as a sign of the health of contemporary Japan's political public realm, these civil society entities can be seen to remain inchoate, given that their rise is driven largely by the structural force of neoliberalism. The Japanese third sector remains blind to the significance of Japan's defunct sovereignty, a condition which also exacerbates a range of social problems, such as rural depopulation and the dissolution of family. Given that the Japanese project of self-determination and self-governance is still fragile, it remains vulnerable to the superior power of the US and the latter's interventions into the matters of domestic politics, including that nation's economic policy. The new movements remain thus far indifferent to the political significance of the Japanese question. The decline of authentic politics or genuine political public space in postwar Japan – a loss owing to the specific history charted across the course of this thesis – has led to the rise of many social problems, which are owed partly to society's loss of tradition, including the struggle of depopulated regions over the restoration of self-management ability, represented by such communities' loss of self-help knowledge and skills. Consequently, it is perhaps only through a deliberate effort on the part of Japanese citizens to revisit their nation's past, through impartial eyes, in order to seek the help of the past and take counsel from its wisdom, that those citizens may begin to reconstruct the present and the future of Japan's essential public realm.

From this Arendtian examination of Japan's political public space since the end of the Tokugawa period and particularly after the end of the Second World War can be drawn a series of points that may contribute to the development and restoration of the public realm of 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan. First and foremost, the Japanese public must expand debate over the amendment of Japan's postwar Constitution to focus on the question of what sort of constitution can not simply protect but also *enable* freedom concerning the future of Japan's public realm, rather than solely on the fear that constitutional amendment threatens Japan's peace and democracy. Particularly important clauses in terms of constitutional revision are Article 1 (Nakanishi & Fukuda 2005: 107) and Article 9, the clauses that articulate and define an entity and policy which this thesis has shed light on. Article 1 defines and explains the status and role of Japan's emperor relative to

Japan's public space. The reassessment of Article 1 is crucial, because it points to the foundation to a body politic, without which Japan's public realm is devoid of guiding principles for many other socio-public agendas: not only national security but also social-welfare and human development. The weak relevance of the emperor to Japan's public space today not merely causes the problem of disunity within the nation but also keeps its space susceptible to and reactionary towards external critiques, pressures and demands. For Ohara Yasuo, when the foundation of the Constitution, which records traditions and announces the forms of a body politic, is debated, it is significant for the Japanese to attend to the question of what sort of state-church relationship is suitable to their own polity (1989: 120).

Today, the continuity of economic growth, which has been accompanied by many undesirable by-products, including environmental degradation, that cross the borders of sovereign state, is in doubt. In such a context, it may be plausible for 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan to pose questions as to the course of postwar democracy, which has thus far focused on economic development, neglecting concerns over the sustainable development of the country. As some constitutional revisionists suggest, in this regard it is advisable for Japan to shift the status of the emperor from a symbol of the state to the head of the state (Kataoka 2006: 118, 208), a position which may strengthen the relevance of ethics to the public space. In so doing, the country – where the influence of religion has been scattered and meager in its public realm in the postwar period – may be able to restore the principles of action for its public, including the virtues and teachings of thrift, moderation and respect – which will, indirectly, contribute to the protection of environment, as well as being able to explore alternative forms of market, as seen in the policy of seclusion during the epoch of Tokugawa *bakufu*.

Concerning Japan's pacifist public realm, it is important to stress that constitutional amendments to Article 1 and Article 9 would by no means lead the country inevitably into authoritarianism, totalitarianism and warmongering, which would itself constitute a threat to the freedom and security of the public. If we are to draw upon historical precedents, the Meiji Constitution and the constitutional monarchy of the Meiji polity were predicated upon the emperor's charter oath, which promoted 公論 (*kōron*) – wider public participation and discussion of an issue, prior to its legitimation at the

government level. Any constitutional change towards re-establishing constitutional monarchy by defining anew the status of emperor as the head of the state (rather than the mere symbol of the state) could and should at the same time premise Japan's sovereignty on the unity of the head and the citizens.<sup>146</sup> Japan's restoration of a political public realm would be a restoration of faith in the foundation of a body politic that is underpinned by mutual trust between the governing authority and the citizens.

Although the Abe administration was resolved on Japan's exercise of its right to collective self-defence in July 2014, this resolution was made on the basis, critically, of a change in the government's interpretation of Article 9. Given the fact that Japan's defence policy remains to be bound to the no-war clause which forbids Japan's maintenance and use of an armed force, the country cannot part company from the Yoshida doctrine in which the national security of Japan is dependent upon the US armed forces. As Carré de Malberg's and Hans Kelsen's views suggest, if a state were dependent on an external superior power, the latter could dictate the foreign policy, internal policy and legal rules of the dependent state (Arato & Cohen 2009: 309). In order to restore the power of self-determination and self-government, amendment of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution seems imperative. To this end, it is at the same time significant for the Japanese government to include measures that prevent military forces from taking control without the approval of the citizens. Postwar Germany has successfully internalised a civilian-control mechanism (*Innere Führung*) within its military force (Berger 1998: 52). In the absence of any revision of the pacifist clause, the contradictions inherent in Japan's defence policy will remain. Such contradictions conspicuously appeared, for example, at the event of the first Gulf War, where Japan became the target of bitter international criticism for not being able to send its combatants to the battlefield and was accused of its 'checkbook diplomacy' (Eto 1991: 64). For all other nations, a confirmation of citizens' responsibility for self defence is ordinarily recognised as distinct from the ideological extremes of militarism and nationalism, and is seen as integral to the very idea of national sovereignty. Were Japan to succeed in revising the imposed constitution and in reclaiming the right to possess its own military, reflecting the

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<sup>146</sup> Refer, for example, to the Belgium Constitution: it defines the monarch as the head of the state while at the same time the Constitution upholds the sovereignty of the Belgium people (Sakurai 2006: 84).



citizens' will to defend its own public sphere during moments of crisis, Japanese society could say farewell to the qualifier *postwar* and simply call itself Japan.

The citizens' welfare cannot be assured, as this thesis has argued, unless those citizens become responsible for the security of their own public realm and realise the importance of the state independence and sovereignty, which are Japan's only means to reduce dependency on other countries and engage with the project of self-determination. The challenges to the welfare of Japanese citizens extend far beyond the threat of military dictatorship. Indeed, the increasingly unpredictable scale and frequency of environmental disasters – an undesirable by-product of the modern age – has made earthquake-prone Japan very vulnerable to unpredictable shocks. As Arendt eloquently describes, man has acquired a 'new ability to handle nature from a point in the universe outside the earth' – that is, the Archimedean point where highly developed science and technology authorise man's violation of nature; yet the earth is the home of mortal man who is by nature terrestrial (1993: 279). Today, the crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant continues to leak radioactive water into the ocean, and radioactivity hot-spot continues to scatter throughout Japan. Contamination of subsistence foods (such as fish, rice and vegetables) and inter-generational health consequences threaten the public and the private spaces of the country simultaneously. While the Abe government hastens to resume operation of the nuclear power reactors, the safety of its energy program can never be absolutely guaranteed, particularly, in an age in which the scale of environmental disasters is unforeseeable.

Japan's energy agenda should not, however, be an issue which the Japanese government has to confront alone. Japan's energy policy should not be discussed only at the level of scientists and government officials, but be built on wider public discussion of relevant issues, including the question of how to create the nation's energy policy based on renewable energy sources so that the country can move to a nuclear power phase-out. Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster, Germany and Switzerland opted for a nuclear power phase-out, and the same path could be and should be taken by Japan. For such a path to be publicly acceptable in Japan today, however, a fundamental shift in the normative ground that influences public policies would be required: a shift from the rationale of cost efficiency and profit gain, and from the values and priorities of

mainstream modern science, to forms of ethics and virtue that are concerned with the sustainability of the public space and of the polity for centuries to come. To this end, the Japanese public, particularly the anti-nuclear movement, might attend to the positive implications and the public significance of a recovery of the emperor system; for the healthy return of tradition, with reinvigorated interaction between the emperor system and the public space, may help unite citizens who would be attuned not only to their rights but also to their responsibility to protect their public space. The return of tradition may thus reveal to contemporary political movements the potential link between an end to nuclear power use and the virtue of a military force as a means for citizens to take responsibility for their security – the anticipation of which can replace the Japanese government’s anguish over reserving the capacity to produce atomic weapons, a capacity which some scientists have pointed out as the cause of the government’s maintenance of nuclear power use (see Introduction). Furthermore, a move to renewable energy sources would also have the virtue of reducing its reliance on the conventional energy sources, most of which come via the sea, lowering security concerns over the sea route communication system.

By contrast, lacking an institution that can inform the public space of the teachings of authority, religion or tradition, the nation’s energy policy continues to be formed under the instrumental epistemology of *homo faber* or the interests of the *animal laborans*. Indeed, without the restoration of the relevance of the emperor system to Japan’s public sphere, it is possible, given the continued predominance of the concerns and goals of the *animal laborans*, for the initially anti-nuclear agents to be co-opted into the liberal narrative that contrives the necessity of nuclear industry to resuscitate the struggling national economy: In this regard it is worth noting that, on 7 November 2014, the resumption of the idling Sendai nuclear plant of Kyushu Electric Power Co was approved by regional authorities in Japan; reportedly, ‘38 of the 47 members of Kogoshima’s prefectural assembly backed the restart’ (‘Japan’s Sendai nuclear plant wins regional vote to restart’, 7 November 2014). Moreover, if the next environmental disaster hits Japan’s reactivated nuclear plants, its impact and consequences, following on from the Fukushima aftermath, will be of far greater concern than the costs associated with Japan’s import of energy resources from abroad, which are currently skyrocketing.

As Kataoka and Myers pointedly write, ‘Japan’s domestic institutions have been altered and adapted to the nation’s external conditions with the support or acquiescence of the Japanese themselves’ since the start of the Occupation (1989: 9). As shown in Chapter 7, Japan’s domestic politics and its public space have been inordinately sensitive to and reactive to the international criticism. Since the end of the twentieth century, Japan has been flooded with criticism from the international community in general and from China and South Korea in particular, who have indicted anew Japan’s responsibility for its conduct in World War II and demanded apology and compensation for the many victims of the war (McCormack 2000: 103). In international forums such as the United Nations and the US Justice Department in the 1990s, incidents such as the Nanking massacre and comfort women received international condemnation as crimes against humanity. In addition, visits by public officials to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours the people who fought in the war, have been criticised and politicised since the visit of Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro. In recent decades these international critiques have escalated, though most of these issues were not raised at the time of Tokyo War Crimes Trial and in the early postwar period. Further to these, Japan’s regional neighbours have begun not only to monitor and criticise but also to instruct (if not intervene) in the ways in which history is taught in Japan. In response to the increasing international critiques of Japan’s history, some Japanese academics have objected, presenting data which differs from that held by indicters, and arguing that the concept of war that underpins those critiques, and which has been promoted since the Second World War, is biased (McCormack 2000; see also Berger 1993). According to Kataoka, this bias originates in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s reformulation of war concept:

Roosevelt, who shaped the outcome of the [Second World] war, took as his point of departure Woodrow Wilson’s failure to make a lasting peace out of World War I and its settlement... [Roosevelt] was determined to avoid Wilson’s mistakes... Roosevelt’s solution was to use the idea of unconditional surrender, which he enunciated in Casablanca in 1942, to turn World War II into an even more intense moral crusade than the first. He viewed the war as a punishment against crimes (Kataoka 1991: 13)

Seen from the viewpoint of Thucydidean impartiality and objectivity, in which the debate of a history is proceeded on the basis of multiple perspectives (Arendt 1958b: 579), the idea of war ought not be limited to Roosevelt's concept of war. Nor should the data presented by some Japanese scholars to contest international critiques be dismissed out of hand from the process of international counsel.<sup>147</sup> Regarding war in general, there are questions that remain to be answered. If it is possible for us to impose moral judgments on the initiators or the vanquished of war, does it not suggest that international critics should subject *every* country which once initiated war (and colonisation), or has been defeated in war, to the counsel and verdict of the international body? What are the moral criteria that indict the war responsibility of Japan while absolving or pardoning the war responsibility of the other states, for example, those which initiated the Vietnam war? To make matters more complicated, have not the nature and concept of war changed radically over the past few decades – that is, more radically than in Roosevelt's redefinition? Importantly, these questions are not synonymous with support or affirmation of war or colonisation. Nor do these questions imply that the meaning of war needs no examination.

As far as Japan's public realm is concerned, the important issue of today seems to concern the trend of Japan's regional neighbours using the issues of history as a tool of power politics or a bargaining card of diplomacy, rather than as a means of developing an international consensus on what is a just notion of war; for instance, China's territorial expansion in the region is concomitant with its escalating accusations against Japan's conduct in the Second World War. While Prime Minister Abe ended 2013 by visiting the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, in the same year he also avowed to move to the revision of the postwar Constitution; both his visit to the Shrine and the move to amendments have been labeled as nationalism ('Risky nationalism in Japan', 26 December 2013). These critical pictures appear to suggest that every sovereign action of Japan with regard to collective political issues imply nationalism or militarism, whereas constitutional

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<sup>147</sup> See, for example, to the work of Handō Kazutoshi, Fujiwara Masahiko and et al, 'Chichi ga Ko ni Oshieru Shōwashi: Ano Sensō 36 no Naze?' (The History of Shōwa [period] which Father tells His Son: 36 Quizes about That War)(2009), which shows facts, realities and perspectives that have been little accounted in mainstream debates and historiography to date, by compiling the views and arguments of the scholars representing Japan. The stories focus on a wide range of events, including the Manchurian Incident and the Tokyo Trials.

amendments are, for instance, a general part and process of democratic deliberations and decisions in the political culture of Western countries. For Kevin Doak of the Georgetown University, Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine is fundamentally a domestic affair and hence the criticisms of Japan's regional countries are an inappropriate intervention into it (“*Chinreisha hōmon: Heiwa nozomu ishimeihaku*”: *Bei Georgetown University*, Kevin Doak *kyōju ni kiku*, 28 December 2013).

The US is an irreplaceable ally of postwar Japan. While the liberal newspaper *The New York Times* criticised both Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine and his move to constitutional amendment ('Risky nationalism in Japan', 26 December 2013), it should not be forgotten that there were times when the US strongly urged Japan to re-arm, when the former needed the military support of the latter over the events like the Korean War and the first Gulf War, which no less required constitutional revisions. Importantly, the producer of Japan's postwar Constitution, America, admitted as early as 1955 upon Vice-President Richard Nixon's visit to Tokyo that 'the MacArthur constitution was a "mistake"' (Kataoka & Myers 1989: 15). Constitutional amendment of the pacifist clause is desirable and critical, concerning not only the security but also autonomy of Japan's public realm. For Kataoka and Myers, it is, however, crucial for Japan to maintain a close alliance with the US and to rebuild it on the basis of 'greater equivalence and mutual responsibility' by departing from a type of relationship that was built around 'dependency and growing ill will and deep mistrust' (1989: 7).

Turning attention back to the domestic public realm of Japan, Kataoka believes that it is difficult to rule out the possibility of Japan collapsing in the face of a threat, owing to the pervasive pacifist sentiment in postwar Japanese society (1980: 1). Unless Japan possesses sufficient self-defence credibility, without which the project of self-determination is always at the mercy of the voices and decisions of external superior power upon which its security depends, social problems such as rural depopulation are only to deepen further, because the other realms of domestic politics such as economy become even vulnerable to the demands and pressures of the country which provides tutelage over the security of the dependent state. Owing to its lack of self-defence capacity, Japan has lost resilience to the dictates of global capital (hence the US's ability to push Japan to deregulate markets and to restrain exports voluntarily in the 1980s), and

this drawback remains an expedient terrain for other countries to exploit. To repeat, rampant social problems which Japan has experienced since the final quarter of the twentieth century – those which pacifists often blame the state for – are tied, to a considerable degree, to the defence platform of postwar Japan, which equates to the absence of state sovereignty and independence.

Without the presence of citizens – political agents – who are prepared to assume responsibility for their world, not merely a nation's public space but also its history could vanish together. Japan, in the early twenty-first century, already stands at this threshold. Arendt (1958) points out the inevitable fact of human mortality and therefore the indispensability of a public space in human life. The enduring representations of Japan's body politic – its culture, traditions, and authority; that which had been fostered by and developed around the emperor system – are neither mere antiquated human constructions, nor the pillars of chauvinistic nationalism or militarism. If human life is that which is finite, it is open to question as to whether it is sensible for us to continue to privatise the public space where the main agent is the *animal laborans* whose concern rests merely on the maintenance of its biological life and hence on the repetition of consumption activities; or to occupy the space of freedom with the epistemology of *homo faber* to whom the meaningfulness of every action is nothing but means-to-an-ends. What is suggested here is that modern science may need to introduce alternative approaches and methodologies into the mainstream approach applied to the examination of the realm of human affairs.

In order for us to discern the different characteristics of what appears in the world, the place where citizens come to meet and exchange views requires both freedom as well as enduring measures through which their standards of judgment and category of thought are fostered. In Japan, virtues and ethics that are reserved in human memory and that construct the category of thought – which processes the meaningfulness of action and speech – had developed from the history of the emperor system. Like Christianity that is undercurrent of the Western civilisation, and Islam that is undercurrent of the civilisation of the Middle East, Japan's emperor system constructs its body politic as a civilisation (Nakanishi 2005: 15-17). However, with the decline of this institution and its relevance to the everyday life of the citizens in the postwar period, it can be seen that the Japanese

project of modernisation has lacked a compass, particularly, for creating an authentic and sustainable political community. In the long run, for Japanese citizens to restore a sense of home and assurance in the space of communication, a 'post-bubble' recovery of the national economy and the improvement of social care system will not be enough. Citizens in the modern age, a unique time in which the space of interaction and interdependence between meaningful communication and the guideposts that safeguard such freedom is being eroded, shall need negotiation and consultation with the authorities of the past for the survival and development of their public sphere. For human beings are mortal, and their plurality, revealed in ever-moving opinions, can remain on this earth only if there are time-transcending artifacts and measures which bequeath to the next generations the trace, legend and wisdom of what citizens had collectively considered as meaningful.

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