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The Japanese University in a Changing Context: More Market or More Regulation?

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The Japanese University in a Changing Context: More Market or More Regulation?

Summary:

Higher education systems in nearly all highly industrialised countries are presently exposed to financial problems. Under the pressure of economical recession but also in accordance with currently dominant market ideology, governments adopt an explicit or implicit retrenchment policy towards the higher education sector. Institutions of higher learning are expected to open themselves (even more – or in some countries for the first time) to the market in order to improve the efficiency of the whole system and of the single institutions. According to their "market-position" the single schools can gain additional funding and thus improve their financial situation. In Japan where 75% of the higher education sector is private and market strategies always played a certain role, the new politics come under the label of "deregulation". This policy stands in the context of changed requirements on higher education and, in addition, a particular demographic situation.

**Die japanische Universität in einem veränderten Umfeld:
mehr Markt oder mehr staatliche Kontrolle**

Zusammenfassung:

Die Hochschulsysteme nahezu aller Industriestaaten sehen sich gegenwärtig besonderen finanziellen Problemen gegenüber. Angesichts wirtschaftlicher Rezession, aber auch in Übereinstimmung mit der gegenwärtig dominierenden Marktideologie sind die Regierungen zu expliziter oder impliziter Sparpolitik gegenüber dem Hochschulsektor übergegangen. Erwartet wird, daß die Hochschulen sich (noch mehr, bzw. in manchen Ländern: überhaupt) dem Marktgeschehen öffnen. Dies soll die Effizienz des gesamten Systems ebenso wie die der einzelnen Institutionen erhöhen und ihnen, abhängig von ihrer Qualität, zusätzliche, notwendige Mittel sichern. In Japan, wo, mit einem Anteil des privaten Hochschulsektors von insgesamt 76%, Marktstrategien schon immer eine Rolle gespielt haben, versteht sich diese Politik als "Dereglementierung". Sie steht im Zusammenhang gewandelter Forderungen an die Hochschulen und fällt zudem mit einer spezifischen demographischen Situation zusammen.

1. Preliminary remarks

The following paper is mainly based on a project which I conducted in Japan between September and November 1991 as a guest of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and of Takekazu Ehara at Kyoto University¹. During my stay in Japan I conducted intensive interviews at 15 universities and three research institutes, prepared a questionnaire, and sent it to 169 professors, assistant professors and lecturers at various universities. The basic design of the survey was determined by my interest in the attitudes of university teachers (professors, assistant professors, and lecturers) towards their material and non-material working conditions, and in their views on some acute problems and strategies in the face of present changes. Despite a high return rate of 64 per cent, the figure is, of course, too small to be a representative survey in a strict sense, and it was not designed to be. However, I included in my survey various departments ranging from literature to technology (but excluding medical schools) and higher education institutions of different types, metropolitan and local, private, national and other public ones, as well as colleges (*tanki daigaku*). A larger part of the questionnaires (28%) was distributed inside Kyoto University; so this type of a prestigious national university is somewhat overrepresented, on the other hand, it thus was possible to contrast this type with the higher education sector as a whole. The following paper is based both on the interviews and on the survey. The quoted views from university teachers are taken from my survey.

1 I take here the opportunity to thank especially Mr. Takekazu Ehara, because without his competence, understanding and help this project could never have been realised, but also all those who kindly devoted their time for my interviews and answering the questionnaire and, last but not least, Mr. Atsuo Fujimoto who translated my draft questionnaire into Japanese. As for the general preconditions of the questionnaire, I got some inspiration from a project which was initially undertaken by Manuel Crespo at Montreal university. He scrutinised the effects of austerity policy on Canada's universities in the early eighties and became interested in comparing this question in some more countries. He initiated a follow-up research in which a survey was undertaken in France and in Germany. For the German part my colleague from Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF), Manfred Weiß and I agreed on the part of adapting the questionnaire for Germany and co-ordinating the survey there. It should be mentioned that both my Japanese project and the Canadian-French-German project are not yet fully evaluated and respective papers are planned to be published later.

2. Factors and problems of change: demographics, money, prestige and competition

The context of higher education in Japan is undergoing some important changes. As a tendency the character of these changes — fluctuating figures of the respective population, retrenchment policies towards the university in a context of economic problems and the general problems of the mass university — is not confined to Japan but part of global trends. The specific structure and functions of the Japanese higher educational system certainly bring about a special blend of challenges and responses in this country. On the other hand, Japan's higher education always has had a very strong market character. Most of its quantitative expansion was achieved by private universities and, in total, compared with any other highly industrialised country a greater part of educational costs were paid by the students themselves: the share of student's fees as a proportion of the total expenditure in higher education comes up to 34 % as compared to 22% in the US. (JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, p. 70). Since new aspects add to this character of a highly "marketised" education system and since market philosophy nowadays achieves great triumph globally, Japan's higher education experiences could serve if not as a model, then as a case in point.

Japanese *educational policy* aims at some fundamental reforms in higher education in order to make it more flexible and adaptable in the face of new challenges on the one hand and to correct some major problems on the other hand. As for the new challenges, various global changes as well as changes inside Japanese society are usually quoted: the process of internationalisation, the aging of the population, the diversification of life styles, and the dissemination of information technology. As for the problems, the "examination hell", the concentration of educational facilities in the metropolitan areas, the low level of educational quality in parts of the system, the low level of specialisation due to a protracted period of initial two-year "general studies" in which, as the criticism goes, only the contents and methods of high-school studies are repeated, and lastly, the very small number of graduate students are reasons for concern. The variety of problems is great and so is the variety of motives and strategies for reform. Some, like "internationalisation", in terms of the rapidly growing number of foreign students in Japan, are consequences of a changed policy, some, however, like the "examination hell", are deeply rooted in a blend of traditional and modern structures of society. It is also said that the impulse for many aspects of reform had its origins in industry, which was and still is not content with the level of knowledge, flexibility and crea-

tivity needed in modern "post-industrial" society. I shall, however, refrain from trying to list all the individual problems (and the corresponding reform strategies) and rather turn attention only to some of them and to their relation with the "education market".

Table 1a: Numbers and proportions of undergraduate students in national, local (prefectural) and private universities

year	national univ.	local univ.	priv. univ.	total
1955	186.055 35,5%	24.936 4,8%	312.364 59,7%	523.355
1975	357.772 21,7%	50.880 2,9%	1.325.430 76,4%	1.734.082
1990	504.890 24,4%	61.264 2,9%	1.500.808 72,6%	2.133.362

Table 1b: Numbers and proportions of students in national, local (prefectural) and private junior colleges

year	national jun. college	local jun. college	private jun. college	total
1955	3.637 4,7%	11.080 14,2%	63.168 81,1%	77.885
1975	13.143 3,7%	17.973 5,1%	322.666 91,2%	353.782
1990	18.510 3,8%	22.647 4,7%	438.232 91,4%	479.389

Table 1c: Numbers and proportions of postgraduate students

year	national univers.	local univers.	private univ.	total	women
1955	5.022	409	4.743	10.174	593
	49,4%	4,0%	46,6%	100%	5,8%
1975	27.735	2.323	18.406	48.464	4.547
	57,2%	4,8%	38,0%	100%	9,4%
1990	54.425	3.640	27.198	85.263	13.076
	63,8%	4,3%	31,9%	100%	15,3%

Source: Monbu sokeiyoran, heisei, 3 nen, Tokyo, 1991, pp.76-77

The coming changes will be determined to a degree by the population factor: statistics show that from 1993 on the number of the 18 year olds in the population will decrease steadily and quite dramatically: from 2.050.000 in 1992 to 1.250.000 in 2007. True, there was already a temporary decrease in the population before: from a peak of 1966 with 2.495.000, a low of 1.540.000 was reached in 1976 (NIKKEI, p. 6-7). One difference now is that the peak as well as the trough are lower. The other difference is to be found in the fact, that the first decrease coincided with – and supported – the phase of the strongest expansion of the Japanese higher education system: during those years the rate of the corresponding age group advancing to higher education grew from 16% to 38% (OUTLINE 1989, p. 19).

Table 2: The 18-year-old population (in millions)

year	1966	1976	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007
pop.	2,49	1,54	2,05	1,86	1,72	1,61	1,51	1,48	1,39	1,30	1,25

Source: Nikkei Entertainment. 1990, 12.5. p. 7

From the faculty members I surveyed, only 6,6% believed that population decrease would not at all, 31% that it would rather not have an impact on their university. The majority of 60%, however, thought it would

have consequences.² Clearly, since the Japanese higher education system in some respects is very heterogeneous, the situation is not interpreted unanimously. On the other hand, as for some consequences, the questioned gave quite uniform answers: 94,3% (from those 59% strongly) believed that competition among students for admission, even now traditionally described as "examination hell", will be still keener – but also will be the competition among universities in order to attract students (as believe 90,5%). At the same time a majority (89,5%), expects massification of higher education to continue also in future. Why then, one might ask, concern about still more competition?

First of all, the higher education system is *highly competitive* in general. The outcome of competition is a pyramid-like system with some excellent institutions on the top and a broad bottom filled with institutions of low standard and reputation, some of them "universities" only by name. In between one could discriminate upper and lower levels of more or less reputed institutions. The respective place in this ranking³ goes back to various factors, like: a strong tradition of vertical structuring in Japanese society in general, different genesis and academic traditions, the selectivity of entrance examinations, the employment chances for the graduates, the fact, that only 54% of all universities have graduate schools and thus offer an academic training leading to master and/or doctor degrees, and others.

In my survey, I asked for a self-evaluation of the own institution in respect to research and teaching based on the personal judgement. 36,2% assessed their own institution as being "superior" respectively 24,8% "above average" in research (29,5 % and 24,8% in teaching), 19% see an average position (22,8% in teaching). For 8,6% their own institution is "below average" in research (11,4% in teaching) and for 2,8% it is "inferior" (3,6% respectively). As a tendency, the position in research is ranked higher than that in teaching. This is especially evident in the case of prestigious Kyoto University which 84% hold to be "superior" in research (12% above average), but only 68% "superior" in education (and 8% each say it is "above average", respectively "below average" and one

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- 2 The percentages given always refer to the number of all returned questionnaires. If the percentage in a given question is lower than 100 % then the difference is due to those who did not answer this particular question; they are interpreted as "undecided/no answer".
 - 3 W. Flüchter in his study on higher education under regional aspects gives a tentative list of criteria and groupings (FLÜCHTER, Tab. 16)

person even says it is "inferior"). As for their working conditions, only 3,8% felt that the inferior position in the ranking had a very negative influence, still 16% felt some rather negative influence.

Table 3: Survey: How do professors evaluate their own institution (% of questioned)

a) Quality of research:

type of university	superior	above average	average	below average	inferior
public	43,1	16,2	4,8	0,9	—
private	1,9	8,6	15,2	8,6	2,9
Kyoto*	84	12	—	—	—
total	41,7	25,2	20,4	9,7	2,9

b) Quality of teaching

type of university	superior	above average	average	below average	inferior
public	31,4	18,1	7,7	2,9	0,9
private	1,9	8,6	15,2	8,6	2,9
Kyoto*	68,0	1,9	1,9	1,9	0,9
total	35,0	26,7	22,9	11,4	3,8

*All Kyoto professors = 100%

During the last decade a quite interesting shift in the hierarchy of universities has taken place. Traditionally, at the top of the pyramid the top national and some private universities can be found. This stratum remained more or less unchanged and is not expected to change much in the near future. On the next level, the rest of the upper quarter of the pyramid, the other national and public universities held a dominant position. The next quarter is still good average or better. Not many changes are to be expected in the lower half and especially not at the bottom of the system. It is the second and the third stratum which moved: as a tendency, the public universities from the second stratum are on their way down to the third one and the private institutions from the third level are gaining

ground and gradually moving to the second one. This is due both to changes in the examination system, and also to the fact that the costs for studies, in former times definitely cheaper in public universities, came closer to those in private ones. Last but not least, the priorities and the life style of youth has changed over the years and students are not longer willing to accept the often poor buildings and equipment conditions of many national universities. The actual place in the ranking depends on a combination of several factors, the most sensitive, at least in a short-time perspective, are the "deviation factor" (hensachi) a complicated computing of entrance exam results in relation to a mean value and secondly the "competing ranking" (kyosoritsu), the relationship between the numbers of students taking part in the examination and those who passed them. This ranking, however, is not official and the modes of assessment are less unified than in the (very roughly) comparable American Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Nevertheless, corresponding lists of ranking, not only of universities but of all respective departments and courses of study are published each year in an uncountable number of handbooks and other publications. Generally the most important and most used are released by big prep-school companies.

The placement in *hierarchy* has not only to do with "prestige" as such, but is part of the struggle for position and survival in the educational market system. It has also to do more or less directly with the finances and other formal and informal support the respective university can count on. Although officially the principles of *financing* are uniform for the sector of national universities, an actual preference for the former "imperial" universities, with Tokyo and Kyoto universities at the top, can be observed traditionally: an analysis from 1975 showed that both institutions together had 8,6% of the ("national") students enrolled but received 14,9% of the total expenditure, all 7 former "imperial" universities with a share of 24% of the students received 35,7% of the expenditure. A second group of 11 older (and thus quite prestigious) national colleges and universities with 20,9% of the students still received 23,7% of the expenditure. The "bottom" of 64 new institutions with 55,5% of the students held a 40,6% share on the expenditure (ICHIKAWA, p. 44).

The *private sector* however — it comprises 73% of all universities and 83% of all junior colleges — is much more differentiated than the public one, both in terms of prestige and of financial situation. Since private institutions are only to a minor part supported by the state, they heavily depend on student fees in 1988 which came up to 50% of the total income of private universities (56% in the case of the colleges). Next important

were miscellaneous charges: 29,5% (for instance for the use of school equipment). Income from the use of properties contributed with 5,1% and donations with 3,5%. The government subsidies came up to 11,3%. They are divided into regular and "special subsidies". The latter are used to stimulate certain educational policy priorities, be it in respect to special research or such issues like "decentralisation", which means to transfer campuses into the province, accepting foreign students, special programs for returnees to Japan, etc. The proportion of "special subsidies" to total subsidies grew from 10% in 1982 to 26,2% in 1990. Apart from the mentioned sources, private institutions can (or often have to) take government loans and some universities are confronted with the problem of an accumulated deficit: in 1988 the sum of all long term loans was more than double that of the current state subsidies at the same year (JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, p. 112-114).

Quite an important part of the income through fees is not only through the regular student fees but also the fees for participating in the entrance examination. New enrolment is limited by a number provisionally fixed each year by the ministry (*tei-in*). In the case of public universities it must not be transgressed at all, in the case of private institutions the actual intake should not exceed the fixed number by more than 20%, but up to 50% were tolerated by the Monbusho (The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) in the past decades with strong 18 years old cohorts pressing to enter higher education.

Despite this quantitative limitation of actual enrolment, normally all universities can, especially in times of quantitative growth, count on a good additional income through the large number of participants in the entrance examination. Prestigious institutions might have as much as ten times more examinees than they actually will enrol. For instance, prestigious Waseda University, one of the biggest institutions in the country, had a fixed *tei-in* of 7.440 new enrolments in 1990, however, 146.375 competed for admission and participated in the entrance examination and only 15.639 of them passed the exams. Since the fee for sitting the exams is mostly between 25.000 and 30.000 Yen (about US \$200 – 250), universities and colleges depend among others heavily on a sufficient pool of potential examinees. Clearly, there is reason for concern from the side of many universities in face of a decreasing population of 18-year olds.

Still, if other sources stagnate or even decrease, the regular student fees can be lifted. However, there is a limitation in the social structure itself since only a limited number of parents can afford to pay the high and fast

growing fees of some universities. For instance, in some private medical schools the regular student fees rose to as much as 3.500.000 Yen (28.000 US Dollars) In addition, a fee for the use of equipment must be paid (usually another 12.000 Dollars) and, as in all other universities, an entrance fee (about 10.000 Dollars) has to be paid, in some cases additional donations are expected. True, the examples of medicine and dentistry are extreme, but the average stands presently at about 8.000 Dollars in the "cheap" humanities and at about 10.000 Dollars in sciences. (all figures from KEISET-SU 1991, p.755-769).

In the beginning I quoted the concern that although further massification of higher education is expected, competition both among students and institutions might increase in the future. Seen in the light of factors I mentioned here, it might be clear that the problem will not only be the declining figure of the 18-year olds, as such, because universities could still have a much larger intake than they actually have. But there is already – and will be – a fierce fight for the "good students". Good students in this context means certainly bright, gifted and diligent students, but also, equally important, with enough money to pay for the ever rising costs of education.

In my survey only 3 persons believed definitely *that retrenchment* policy was not a problem for their university (from those 2 from privileged Kyoto University), 8 persons believed it was rather not, but the rest, 84,7% – and among those also the majority from the privileged universities and colleges – saw it as a problem. All things considered, 74% believed that the financial situation of their university was worse than 10 years ago and nearly all of them believe that this is the result of retrenchment policy. This corresponds strongly with the development of actual financing during the last years, although retrenchment is felt differently if it comes to the level of the single persons or departments: in 31,4% of the cases the respondents even claimed that the material conditions of the workplace had improved somewhat (very much 5%), 25,7% felt no change and 31% saw them deteriorated and ascribed this to retrenchment measures against their departments. This seems to have influenced less the quantity, somewhat more the quality of teaching (52,9% respectively 61,8% saw this influence), but above all the amount and quality of research: 94,1% and 82,4% saw this influence). A majority of 54% had received in the last academic year some additional research money from outside their university, most of it came from public sources, but only in 30% of the cases it came up to more than 50% of their regular research funds.

Table 4: Survey: received external research money, by position and type of institution

funding source/ conditions	professors	assistant profs.	lecturers	members of public univ.	members of private univ.
a) received funds, % of total sample	30,5	23,8	5,7	44,8	16,2
% of a) private sources	12,5	0	0	6,4	5,9
% of a) public sources	50,0	72	83,3	61,7	64,8
% of a) comb. private/public sources	37,5	28	16,7	31,9	29,4
% of a) individually	28,1	12	0	21,3	11,8
% of a) in team	43,7	60	50	48,9	58,8
% of a) comb. indiv./team	28,1	28	50	29,8	29,4

As far as the overall figures for the private sector are concerned, there the share of government subsidies as a percentage of the total income of the institutions declined steadily during the past years: between 1984 and 1988 from 13,4% to 11,3% (JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, p.112). Even public universities are not without severe financial problems. Expenditure on public higher education in 1986 and as a percentage of National Income amounted to 0,7% (an additional 0,1% was for subsidies into private institutions) thus being somewhat lower than in France (0,9%), and remarkably lower than in other countries (Table 5):

Table 5: Sources of higher education expenditures (percentage)

sources	Japan	U.S.	U.K.	France	West Germany
student fees	34	22	—	—	—
national	41	—	43	90	—
federal	—	13	—	—	10
state/land	—	30	—	—	90
local	6	3	57	2	—
others	6	32	—	8	—
public exp.as % of national income	0,8	1,5	1,6	0,9	1,8

Source: JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, pp. 69-70

True, the total amount of subsidies for national universities grew at a rate of somewhat over 30% between 1980 and 1988 — but so did the numbers of students (plus 24%) and inflation. Besides, in 1988, for the first time, the total amount of expenditure for national universities was lower than in the year before (STATISTICAL ABSTRACT, 1990, p. 136-137). Thus, in reality the situation might be properly described as stagnation — a best. The breakdown of the total sum shows that in many respects the situation worsened (building expenditures for example decreased for a lack of money during the seventies in national universities) and an Education Ministry's report comes to the conclusion that "the level of the provision of research facilities and equipment is very often inferior to that for research institutes in the private sector" (JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, p. 134).

3. Reforms: "Deregulation", improved quality, and a new structure of higher education

The essence of the present reform initiative, launched by the ministry respectively an advisory council, is to give the universities considerably more freedom. Until now existed detailed prescriptions on all possible aspects of academic life: not only on how many credits at which time and with how many students per class had to be taken, but even the time of day when classes should be held; in addition there were detailed regula-

tions concerning the space of buildings and campuses and so on. Now the decisions on the organisation of curricula and academic life as a whole will be much more left to the universities themselves. This could mean a great change especially for the two-year "general studies" which comprise 36 credits (nearly one third of the regular four year study course in most subjects) and so far are compulsory for all students. They include humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, languages, and sports. Under the new regulations universities will be free to decide if they want to organise general studies at all, what to include and how to organise the studies.

True, the shift in favour of deregulation in a country often criticised for its bureaucratic and centralised administration and decision making sounds good. Interestingly enough, the first reactions of most universities were not too enthusiastic. One reason among others – and perhaps the main one – might be that there is something like a "mutual suspicion" between government and academic institutions (NANA MIZUSHIMA-REGUR, p. 31). In fact, in 1991 started a phase of intensive, sometimes hectic consultations in most institutions, what might be the expectations of the ministry, if deregulation meant really more freedom or another, more sophisticated modus of control, and what would be the appropriate way to cope with the situation. True, there is more freedom for innovations, but the wrong innovations might have adverse effects, that is, weaken the position of the single institution in the education market: in principle the government aims at restructuring the whole system and among others at putting the existing – unofficial – ranking on more consistent premises:

The very strict ranking, watched over each year by flocks of analysts, computed in most sophisticated ways, and printed in whole shelves of corresponding books, is based on several factors which are not really standardised, even officially ignored, and, what is worse, are so much based on learning knowledge that they are good indicators for how much time and hard study a student is able to invest, but the exams do not say much about if he/she or the university he/she entered are academically effective. Thus, the reform policy seems to administer a clear division between different levels of higher education institutions, diversified in function, structure, and equipment. Differences between them should be in the emphasis on special core-research programs or the promotion of academic new recruits or between "normal" universities with a emphasis on the linkage between research and teaching on the one hand and colleges – starting with a kind of "community colleges" – on different levels and specialisations and a stress on the teaching function on the other hand. As

a part of the reform, universities also are encouraged to evaluate themselves, their reform measures, their quality of research and education as confronted with their own expectations and the quality of the other institutions in order to make clear which place in the new order they want to take.

Evidently, in this new system a number of institutions would be no longer part of the prestigious "university" system. But also the institutions which will not be endangered in that way (or even in their existence), will have to find their place in this system, and universities which were used to be top by a kind of customary law will have to make new efforts in order to keep that place. In the spring of 1992, for instance, the Prime Minister suggested that recruitment of Tokyo University graduates for top government service should be reduced. Future will show if this initiative will be effective. Presently, Tokyo University graduates come up to as much as 90% of all new employed each year in some ministries and up to roughly 50% of all new employed in all ministries together.

The government policy has gone quite far already in its differentiation policy. As was mentioned already: the proportions of "special subsidies", that is, subsidies earmarked for special purposes, increased considerably during the last 10 years – but at the same time the proportion of regular financing decreased. In addition, universities and colleges are encouraged to search for financing on the "market", that is they are encouraged to seek the co-operation with industry. Between 1983 and 1990 the number of university researchers in joint research projects grew from 66 to 1.031, the corresponding total expenditures from 700 million Yen to 3.8 billion Yen. Correspondingly, the figure of contract researchers increased and the amount of grants and endowments nearly tripled⁴.

In my survey, 55% of those who in the last academic year had some extra-university research money, had been granted this money from public sources. Asked which source was the most important in general (multiple answers possible), public sources were mentioned 112 times, private ones 30 times and international agencies 6 times. Clearly, there are departments which can profit much (science and technology) and others only very poorly. Apart from this, there is criticism about the planned division between teaching and research and too strong ties between industry and

4 Information of the latest available figures by courtesy of Mrs. Sanae Aoki, International Affairs Planning Division, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Tokyo.

university with the danger of universities to become too dependent on industry.

As far as the new freedom of curricula construction is concerned, one can expect definite changes. They will — especially for the public institutions, because many private ones adopted such a strategy since long — bring a greater emphasis on specialised subject studies already in the first and second years, and in fact technological colleges already have started to restructure their curricula in this way. However, especially in technological and other specialised colleges and universities there is a certain concern among the teachers of general subjects that their subjects will lose weight or even be dropped. Curricular and structural changes will certainly also affect the postgraduate studies.

The evaluation issue is still completely open. True, a majority in my survey — 56,2% — advocated ("objective") evaluation of teaching and research qualities. They don't expect from this measure that "examination hell" would lose ground (72,9%) and they are not all clearly convinced that budget allocation would be based on more rational grounds (only 15,2% believe so), but they agree fully (54%), respectively more or less (42%), that such a kind of evaluation could well stimulate the endeavour to rise teaching and research qualities. However, it seems paramount to rely on an evaluation system which can be accepted by common consent. There have been so far first examples of self-evaluation respectively evaluation: one is that of Tokyo's university's college of Arts and Letters with the useful but rather innocuous idea of printing a book with personal histories, research activities, educational extracurricular activities, and other informations about all faculty members, and to present this as an example for "self-evaluation". The real market reacted more quickly and more effectively: in October 1991 a private company started to sell videotapes titled: "Fire such college professors" — giving full names in some cases. Produced mainly on the base of interviews with college students, the tapes recommended that professors should be generally fired (or boycotted) if they: "read the same lecture notes every year, are frequently absent from class, never take up new ideas or publish papers, require students to buy boring books they have authored, speak inaudibly, can not answer student's questions" (THE DAILY YOMIURI, Oct. 27, 1991). One of the criticised already practised public self-criticism and Haruo Nishihara, former president of prestigious Waseda university confessed: "Japanese colleges and professors have gotten off too easily for too long". (ibid.)

4. Conclusions

In Japanese education traditionally has been existing a peculiar blend of government regulation on the one hand and market regulation on the other hand. The state engages itself financially in higher education only to a limited extend — a strategy which stems from the context of Japanese modernisation. As soon as private universities became officially authorised (1918), they served as regulators for the growing demand for higher education. Already in 1923 their enrolment outnumbered that of the public universities by far. They, however, served also to a degree as innovators and sometimes offered courses of studies not covered by the public sector. On the other hand government control in matters of organisation and content of academic life was traditionally strong, both over the public and the private sectors.

The new "deregulation" is ambiguous: on the one hand it weakens government control, on the other hand, more market does not automatically and under all circumstances mean less control — especially not if it goes together with retrenchment, because the control of finances is the most powerful control in economy, and the Japanese educational system is strongly "economised". Its problem probably is not a lack of market elements but an overdose of market. Competition and competitiveness, typical market characteristics, certainly is not the problem in itself and in order to develop and to keep academic standards academic competition is paramount. But in the Japanese educational system competition is based predominantly on an assessment system which has nothing or very few to do with educational qualities but much with economics, both in a very direct sense that the decision for a certain university means an extremely relevant economic decision for all concerned, and also in the sense that the principle underlying the decision is dominated by the rules of the economic, not the educational value system. But this is the unique Japanese feature of the general problem: a massification of university which did not, and, given the circumstances (and means), perhaps even could not adopt properly to this new development. The problems are huge in all industrialised countries. Clearly, a mass university system cannot keep the fiction of offering top academic standard if one fourth or a third or even more of the correspondent population enrol. Neither does this seem to be achievable, nor is this needed on the labour market, nor does this fit the highly differentiated wishes, interests, the previous experiences and endowments of so large parts of the young population. But the uncertainty is great over what should be the structural and, more important, the qualitative features of the system, which should be the criteria to distinguish between "su-

perior" and "inferior", between "necessary" and "unnecessary" research, and much more difficult: between "good" and "bad" academic teaching and education.

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