The Internet as an Anchor: A Comparative Analysis Model of Internet Advocacy and Web Site Production in Japan and the Issue of History Textbook Reform

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THE INTERNET AS AN ANchor: A GROUNDed THEORY MODEL OF
INTERNET ADVOCACY AND WEB SITE PRODUCTION IN JAPAN AND THE
ISSUE OF HISTORY TEXTBOOK REFORM

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
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Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

THE INTERNET AS AN ANCHOR: A GROUNDED THEORY MODEL OF INTERNET ADVOCACY AND WEB SITE PRODUCTION IN JAPAN AND THE ISSUE OF HISTORY TEXTBOOK REFORM

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Department of Communications
Master of Arts

This master's thesis is a grounded theory study of the development of the Internet as a tool for political action in Japan by groups and individuals producing web pages on the issue of history textbook reform. Through the analysis of 14 in-depth interviews, a framework is developed for understanding the role the Internet has taken in political action in Japan. As activists utilize the Internet in political activism, the Internet appears to be developing into an anchor for continuing political activism. For activists, the Internet is a central point of reference for both mass communication and interpersonal communication activities. The model indicates that the political alignment of an activist is an important factor in determining his or her preference for either interpersonal or mass
communication on the Internet. Activists on the left tend to use the Internet as a tool for interpersonal communication and coordination, while activists on the right tend to view the Internet as a tool for mass persuasion. The model of Internet activism developed in the thesis is also compared with models of communication derived from theories of technological determinism and social shaping of technologies. Consistent with technological determinist ideas, the Japanese case demonstrates that as activists rely on the Internet, other media show signs of becoming content for the new medium. However, the Japanese case also shows that pre-existing needs and the political framework of an activist have a strong shaping effect on Internet use, indicating the importance of a social shaping of technologies approach.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This study assesses the development of the Internet as a political medium in Japan, addressing the following question: As organizations and individuals involved in political action established a web presence, what did the Internet come to mean to their overall political strategy? Previous research and the literature noted an increase in the number of Japanese groups using the Internet, but it was unclear to what degree they felt that the Internet had become a valuable political tool. Nor was it clear what the exact form of Internet activism was. This thesis investigates the perceptions of website-producing groups and individuals, as well as their actual experiences, through in-depth interviews, and it develops a framework for understanding Internet political action in Japan.

After rapid growth throughout the 1990s, the growth of the Internet in the United States and Europe began to stabilize. In many areas of the world, however, the Internet is only beginning to spread. Additionally, the expansion of the Internet is of uncertain benefit for society. In many ways, the Internet brought new freedom and great benefits to society, but the Internet is difficult to control or regulate, and the expansion of the Internet also brought with it a number of negative consequences such as easy access to deleterious materials such as hate-speech and pornography. Some governments view the Internet with great caution, and have attempted to regulate it. As the Internet expands around the world, it is useful to examine how different cultures perceive and view the Internet. Japan as a nation is an ideal location for examining these developments because of its unique media saturation and small-group social orientation (Krauss, 1996 p. 368).
Japanese usage of the Internet is starting to reach levels similar to those seen in the United States. Although past research has been critical of Japanese Internet growth, recent trends such as the widespread use of cellular phones to access the Internet indicate that Internet growth in Japan and other Asian countries may eventually exceed that seen in the United States. A study of Japanese usage of the Internet will be beneficial because of what Japanese behavior will reveal about the influence of this new technology on society. It will also show how our cultures have shaped the Internet itself, as well as provide insight into Japanese behavior, culture, and the development of democracy and the media.

This thesis will focus on the development of Internet as a political medium. Specifically, it will examine the usage of the Internet for political purposes by individuals and various sizes of organizations. The research will focus on whether or not participants believe in the Internet as a political tool, how important they feel that Internet participation is to political success, what benefits they expect of the Internet, and how well those expectations are being met. Based on the comments of these participants, a model will be developed to account for the role that participation in the Internet plays in political action.

To address these questions, this thesis first examines the existing literature relevant to this study, focusing primarily on the three areas of the relationship between media and politics in Japan and the developing role of the Internet (Chapter 2), general theories for understanding the impact of technology on society (Chapter 3), and finally on the specific political issue of history textbook reform, from which the sample for this study is drawn (Chapter 4). This literature serves as an important guide to help place this
thesis within the larger structure of theory relevant to the development of the new technology of the Internet.

The literature review occupies a unique role within a grounded theory methodology. As the method was originally developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, a researcher is urged to take great caution in how preexisting theory and literature are handled. Heavy exposure to such literature has the potential to damage the sensitivity of the theorist to the data. Although Glaser and Strauss do not categorically rule out the use of pre-existing theory in a grounded theory approach, they do warn that such an approach must be handled carefully, noting that exhaustively absorbing all of the literature on a subject “increases the probability of brutally destroying one’s potentialities as a theorist” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p. 253). Strauss later elaborated on the place of literature, suggesting that handled carefully literature serves as supplemental data to “foster” the researchers own developing model (Corbin & Strauss, 1998 p. 53).

Within this thesis the literature occupies two different roles. The first is to establish important background information on the specific environment of mass media and politics into which the new medium of the Internet has emerged in Japan. To establish this background this thesis will first consider the traditional role of the mass media in Japanese democracy and society, and second, the issues surrounding the development of the Internet in Japan. This background information is essential to sensitize the foreign researcher to the complexities of the Japanese media environment. It is important to understand the effects of the mass media on politics in Japan thus far to understand how the Internet might function as well.
After establishing this background, this study will also examine theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between the development of new technologies and society. This body of literature provides many important theories for understanding the impact of the Internet on politics. Most notable among these theories are ideas such as technological determinism—an idea that long predates the development of the Internet—as well as the more recent work of social shaping of technologies. This thesis offers several interesting insights into what the development of the new medium of the Internet has revealed about these theories.

As additional background information, this thesis will consider how the mass media and the Japanese media environment have contributed to the development of an urgent crisis over history textbooks in Japan and Asia. Although this issue has been divisive since the end of World War II, events over the last ten years appear to have particularly exacerbated the negative impact of this issue throughout Asia. Moreover, the development of the Internet appears to have contributed heavily to a resurgence of this issue in Japan and abroad. In addition to its urgent consequences for Asian relations, a basic understanding of this issue is also important as a methodological consideration in this study, since the sample for the study is drawn entirely from Japanese activists concerned with this issue.

Having established this important background information, Chapter 5 explains the methodology for this thesis. This method is based primarily on the grounded theory approach outlined originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Key features of this qualitative method of data analysis include starting out with a particular instance of data or case relevant to a general question, and purposively selecting further samples to
elaborate on this data. The concepts and questions that emerge from initial data collection guide the selection of future samples, as the researcher seeks to elaborate a growing model or theory.

Data collection for this thesis was conducted during the period of May to November 2003 in locations throughout Japan. Subjects were selected to participate in this study based on their production of web sites addressing the pressing political issue of history textbook reform. In total, thirteen interviews were conducted with participants affiliated with groups and organizations of varying size on both sides of this divisive issue. In accordance with a grounded theory method data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection. Additional data analysis and coding were conducted in the United States at the end of the data collection period.

Chapter 6 reports the results of the data analysis, and explains the details of the model of Internet activism that emerged from the data. Based on the experiences and reflections of history textbook activists, a model of Internet activism based around the central concept of the Internet as an anchor is developed. These activists paint a picture of the Internet becoming a central point of reference or focus for a great variety of interpersonal interaction as well as mass communication. Chapter 6 includes detailed discussion of the researcher’s experiences collecting and analyzing this data, as well as discussion of the process by which the final model was abstracted from the data. It is hoped that by making explicit the process by which data was coded and the final model developed, readers will be better able to assess the rigor and credibility of this thesis. Finally, Chapter 7 refers specifically to the major theoretical issues identified in Chapter 3, and discusses insights that this data and model provide into the Internet and ongoing
questions of the relationship between the development of new communications technology and society. Japanese names throughout this thesis are presented in the Japanese order with the surname preceding the given name.
Chapter 2

The Internet and Mass Media in the Environment of Japanese Politics

Traditional Mass Media in Japan

The media environment into which the Internet emerges in Japan is quite different from that seen in other parts of the world. In his study of the evolving relationship between the press, television, and politics, Kraus (2000) observed that television in Japan has had a much more subdued effect on politics than has been seen in other industrialized countries. The press has been the primary political mover in Japan and television has supplemented that role. However this relationship has changed over the last ten years, and television has begun to have more impact since the 1993 election. In addition to these two primary media, Japan’s sensationalistic magazines have also played a particularly potent role as an outsider media, breaking controversial news that television and the press have been reluctant to handle (Cooper-Chen & Kodama, 1997; Farley, 1996).

The combined power of the Japanese press to reach the Japanese public is quite formidable. In terms of total circulation as of 1995, six of the top ten, and all of the top three newspapers in the world were Japanese. The reach of these newspapers is also very significant, with many Japanese subscribing to multiple newspapers (Cooper-Chen & Kodama, 1997 52-54; Sugiyama, 2000). As of 2003, the total daily circulation of the Japanese press accounted for the world’s second largest national daily newspaper circulation of 70.8 million copies per day. The daily newspaper circulation rate per 1,000 people remains the highest in the world at 653.5 copies per 1,000 people (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, 2004).
Kraus (2000) roots the strong growth of the Japanese press in the way it was promoted during the American occupation. The political role of the press in Japan is as an informative, but rarely critical, observer. The Japanese press has been particularly effective in educating the public through the democratic transition following World War II.

The major newspapers in Japan seem to have very little variation in content between papers. One reason for this is that Japanese papers are more dependent on sales for income than their American equivalents. The reporting is high quality, but competition for a large homogeneous audience inhibits diversity in content. Political content is extensive and usually gets printed on the front page. Articles tend to be factual with little argument or commentary (Kraus, 2000).

Although criticized for close ties to the government, the important role of the press as a political counterweight in the Japanese political system must be emphasized. The Japan Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has had almost uninterrupted control since the parliamentary government was established at the end of World War II. The press in Japan has come to play an important opposition role offsetting uninterrupted LDP power. Reporting on the legislative process is highly informative, and unique among world newspapers in its detail (Krauss, 2000; Ito, 1993). However, this extreme attention to politics in newspapers has an unintended effect in that extensive scandal reporting has been shown to increase public cynicism towards elected officials (Krauss, 275).

Similar to the press, the role of television in Japan can be traced directly to United States policy during the occupation. When United States policy makers were establishing Japanese television they looked to the model of the British Broadcasting Corporation
(BBC). The Japanese public television network Nippon Housou Kyoukai (NHK) was set up as an independent organization subject to limited government oversight. Although patterned after the BBC, the Japanese television system was set up as more of a mixed system than the British system on which it was based, since NHK must compete with independent commercial networks (Krauss, 2000). Political candidate use of TV and the appearance of politicians on TV are highly regulated. Party position advertisement is unrestricted, but promotion of specific politicians is carefully controlled (Rosen, 1997).

Historically, NHK has dominated the TV news industry. A large proportion of NHK’s total programming is news. News tends to be hard political news, as opposed to soft human-interest news. This political content focuses mostly on the powerful bureaucracy. NHK is also the only network to consistently give attention to parties other than LDP (Kraus, 2000).

Local commercial stations are legally independent of national media. Direct licensing, such as is seen in the United States, wherein a local station must run all of the content of a national network, is prohibited. Local stations pick and choose news programs freely from major Tokyo networks. The five major news-supplying Tokyo networks are all partially owned by a major newspaper. These networks rely on the affiliated newspapers to provide news content (Krauss, 2000).

The position of TV changed dramatically in 1993. In the 1993 election, TV played a significant role for the first time. Late night syndicated news shows, characterized by charismatic, openly critical, and opinionated anchors had started to become popular on the private networks. Their critical comments on the LDP were a strong factor in the only major LDP defeat since its establishment. For a brief while, an
opposition coalition controlled the parliament. This style of confrontational TV journalism continues to have a strong influence on politics today (Krauss, 2000).

*The Entrance of the Internet*

The development of the Internet provides new opportunities for political action. Traditional media are architecturally limited in the options they present for grass roots and small-scale political action. The Internet allows a much more diverse group of people the opportunity to express their views. Because of this the democratic potential of the Internet is significant. There are many important factors however, that may interfere with the Internet achieving this potential.

Much of the past research on the development of the Internet in Japan has found reason to be skeptical of the potential impact of this new technology. Rosen observed that Japan is not a personal computer-using society, finding that in the workplace, even in the tech industry, there were often only a few shared computers in the office (Rosen, 1997). It was also noted that only one in ten homes had a personal computer (Cooper-Chen & Kodama, 1997). However, the growth of the Internet in Japan began to accelerate rapidly in the year 2000. In 2000, the Japanese population accessing the Internet from computers stood at 24.6%. By the end of 2003, it was projected that this figure number would have nearly doubled to 48.4%. Moreover, when cellular phone access to the Internet is added in the total percent of the population accessing the Internet from either a personal computer of portable phone climbs to 73% (Japan Internet Kyoukai, 2003).

In a study of Japanese government regulation of the Internet, Kim observed that as the Internet has expanded the government has avoided managing content directly, but has legally empowered Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to control harmful content and
has encouraged them to do so. The principle for government action in the rare instances when it has taken action is that “whatever is illegal offline is illegal online” (Kim 1999, p. 171). The government has also been concerned with protecting secrecy of communications on the Internet, particularly secrecy of expression in order to protect holders of unpopular opinions. The collectivistic nature of the community mandates this strong protection of secrecy of the individual. Proponents of unpopular opinions are at serious social risk (Kim).

A strong Confucian ethic of personal responsibility and loyalty also influences policy on Internet behavior. Personal responsibility is expected, but not enforced. Pornography is not a significant concern of the Internet-using public in Japan (17%). Japanese tolerance of pornography and lenience towards child pornography threatens to become an issue in relations with other countries because of the international nature of the Internet (Kim, 1999).

Another factor that has affected the development of all Japan media is long commute times in urban areas, sometimes several hours a day via public transit. This has helped to promote the growth of a vigorous magazine industry (Yazaki, 1993). Because of this, there is a good chance that Internet usage in Japan will take on a more portable character with most users accessing the Internet from cellular phones. This may tend to simplify political content on the web. Other issues that have been observed to impede Internet development in Japan include English domination of the web, (Cooper-Chen & Kodama, 1997; Rosen, 1997), lack of a developed cable industry, and the reluctance of telecommunications companies to produce multimedia content (Rimmer & Morris-Suzuki, 1999).
Early analysis has also shown skepticism of the potential of the Internet as a tool for political action. In an analysis of current grassroots-movement usage of the Internet in Japan, Rimmer and Morris-Suzuki discovered several additional problems that will need to be addressed for the Internet to become an effective political medium for Japanese citizens. Computer and language skills were lacking among activists. People accessing sites on these issues tended to be people who were already interested in the issue, so the Internet did not turn out to be an effective way to sway general public opinion. Politicians are not accountable to the means many protesters employ such as letter or signature drives. Politicians simply ignored these campaigns and in the end there was little change. Rimmer & Morris-Suzuki (1999) suggest that because of these problems Internet movements seem likely to turn into a form of virtual democracy, creating an illusion of involvement, but not leading to any real change. Also politicians themselves have seemed reluctant to exploit the Internet as a tool to expand their political reach (Rosen, 1997).
Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Technology and Society

Theories on the general relationship between society and technologies have become increasingly current, as the development of new media such as the Internet create changes in society. These new technologies bring with them many changes in the way we live, but it is not yet clear whether inherent qualities in technologies actually create change, or if rather society imposes its needs on new technologies.

While the degree to which specific technologies actually produce an effect on receivers (and senders) is debatable, it is certain that technology does have at least an effect on content. Reduced to the most simple level, it is clear that there is a difference in impact between a message delivered on a piece of paper and a message towed through the sky behind an airplane (Meadow, 2002). The degree to which differences in technology actually account for a significant media effect however, is debatable. Grunig (1999) asserts that although changes in technology obviously change patterns of behavior, these changes are “by no means changes which have rearranged the fabric of our society” (p. 16). Still as media-effects research increasingly focuses on the way myriad small intervening factors add up to produce large media effects, disregarding technology effects because they have not “rearranged the fabric of our society” is not sufficient.

Additionally, while most of this research has focused on technological change and the characteristics of specific new technologies, questions of the larger relationship between channel and message are also fundamental. Although a focus on change runs through the literature, this study will address the general relationship between technologies and society in producing media effects.
This first section will first explore the current state of thinking regarding Marshal McLuhan’s classic theory of technological determinism. This important theory, although criticized as being inadequate (Grunig, 1999), represents the central current in explaining how technology shapes human communication. In many ways this theory was ahead of its time and it continues to gain popularity as the Internet and other new media change the way we live.

The second portion will look at other relevant theories about the effects of technological change and the interrelation between technology and media effects. Cultural shaping of technologies is an important theory that attempts to redeem technological determinism by more fully taking into account intervening factors, such as culture, that have a strong defining role in the way technology shapes our society.

Before moving into a discussion about the effects of technology on society, it is important to develop a good definition of what technology includes. The original and oldest definition refers specifically to human knowledge. This sort of technology can be “systematized and taught” (Mackenzie, 1985, p. 3). Contrary to the modern usage of the word, this concept of technology as “a systematic knowledge of the practical arts” (p. 3) is the oldest meaning. The common concept in current usage refers to actual technological hardware, such as a television or a computer. When we are speaking of technology and effects in these terms, we are often concerned with questions of design (Mackenzie). This aspect of technology is captured in the word technologies, referring to “pieces or systems of hardware” (Winner, 1985, p. 28). The next component is that of human activities in relation to a piece of hardware. An example of this is “steelmaking”
where we are no longer concerned with just the physical tools of the steel plant, but also the human activity involved with the process (Mackenzie, p. 3-4).

This study focuses on the later two of these definitions. Specifically, this study is interested in qualities of the Internet as a technology, and with identifying instances where inherent attributes of the Internet account for the behavior of the subjects of the study. This definition of technologies fits well with a technological determinist perspective on Internet activism. The second definition of relevance to this study is in technology as a description of human activity relative to the new medium of the Internet. This definition is more characteristic of social shaping of technologies, but is relevant from determinist perspective as well.

**Marshal McLuhan’s Technological Utopia**

Marshal McLuhan’s influential technological determinism theory of media effects is but one of the better-known strains of a cluster of communications theories developed in Canada called the Toronto school. The most influential figure in this group is Harold Innis (McQuail, 2000). Innis developed a way of looking at world history as shifts in power based on successive changes in the dominant means of communication. According to this theory, the influence of key media throughout history was not understood through a simple analysis of the physical characteristics of technology, but through a comprehensive consideration of the elaborate historical conditions surrounding its influence. This focus on the effect of historical context on the development of technologies makes this idea distinct from technological determinism that followed it (Comor, 2001).
To Innis, the driving force behind these changes is the concept of bias. Bias is an inherent property in a communications technology towards a certain type of society. The development of a writing-based culture, for example, lead to the development of the Roman Empire, because writing has a bias towards the creation of the legal bureaucratic institutions necessary for this social structure. Correspondingly, the development of the printing press lead to the development of individualism and nationalism. The theory is particularly concerned with how the bias of certain technologies towards space and time has a tendency to support the development of empires. By extending the reach of authority over greater distances (Rome), and over longer stretches of time (Egypt), writing supported the development of empires. Conversely, the development of new technologies also has a revolutionary aspect to it, in response to the monopolization of existing technologies by the dominant group in a society. Although new technologies most often are developed by ruling groups in response to threats to their dominance, the development of new technologies can also undermine the foundation of existing power structures (Comor, 2001; McQuail, 2000).

Comor (2001) asserts that this final aspect of Innis’s theory is particularly important with the rise in Internet research. According to Innis’s theory, although the Internet has potential to break down monopolies of power, it could also serve to further consolidate power along existing lines. Basing his own research on the radio, the dominant new medium in his time, Innis expressed skepticism of the tendencies of capitalism to dominate this new media to consumerist and sensationalistic ends. Comor analyzed how the Internet has revolutionized society based upon Innis’ two primary biases of power, namely space and time. Comor found that the time bias of the Internet is
dramatic, that is, the Internet vastly increases the speed with which decisions are made, particularly decisions to consume. Space barriers are also reduced with new technologies, giving the Internet an expansionist character. Although the changes that this medium imposes on space and time are revolutionary in character, economic interests appear to have come to dominate all points of access, giving the Internet a strongly commercial, rather than democratizing tendency. To the extent that global corporate interests come to dominate, the Internet would likely reinforce existing power relationships.

Although heavily influenced by Innis, McLuhan’s ideas are much more optimistic about technology effects. McLuhan turned from the question of the relationship between communication technologies and power toward the question of how different media shape the way we experience the world. For McLuhan, technological progress was the process by which new technology expanded the range of experience that previous technology had allowed (McQuail, 2000).

McLuhan’s most influential ideas revolve around two key concepts. The first is the idea of technological determinism. This theory divides world history up into eras based on the development of revolutionary technologies such as the printing press and television. The theory is evolutionary in nature, holding that technological development is usually beneficial in nature. The development of new technologies becomes a sign of human progress. This theory is commonly summed up with the maxim, “the medium is the message.” Applied to mass media effects, this theory holds that the characteristics of individual media account for a significant part of media effects. Although the degree to which this is the actual case has been widely questioned within communications studies, this idea remains popular, particularly for explaining the effects of new media.
The use of the phrase “technological determinism” to sum up this body of work carries with it a great deal of bias against the ideas it includes. The term has come to carry a strong derogatory connotation. Work that is labeled technological determinist is considered to be naïve and underdeveloped. The degree to which this term has taken on this negative meaning reflects the degree to which McLuhan failed to define his own ideas sufficiently, as well as his wandering style of discourse (Levinson, 1999).

McLuhan’s critics, such as Grunig and Schramm, have seemed to hold that if his theories do not produce significant direct observable effects that the theory is flawed (Grunig, 1999). This is an unfair standard when compared objectively to the results that have been produced by communications studies as a whole over the last 50 years. Moreover, this simplification of McLuhan’s research is probably not fair to the ideas of McLuhan himself. Few theorists would claim that such a broad theory accounts for effects in their entirety, and there are good reasons to believe that this holds true for McLuhan himself. Faced with relative inattention to the influence of medium on media effects, McLuhan constructed a theory to focus attention on a neglected question. McLuhan’s main intention was clearly not to define an exhaustive theory, but to stimulate further thought by posing questions or “probes” (McQuail, 2001 p. 108). It is not reasonable to hold this theory to a standard higher than we hold other theories, or to assume that McLuhan would do the same.

Although often belittled, the work of McLuhan on technological determinism has begun to gain new respect with the coming of the digital age. According to Levinson, McLuhan’s work suffered from the fact that his ideas were developed during a period of limited technological change in the media. Television was the dominant throughout
McLuhan’s career. This fact deprived McLuhan of the opportunity to really see his theory applied to significant technology change. McLuhan’s work appeared to be merely descriptive of existing conditions, lacking predictive power. Now after his death, the development of the Internet and other interactive media is breathing new life into his work (Levinson, 1999).

The primary contribution that McLuhan was trying to make through technological determinism was to point out that a constant focus on content is distracting from significant effects that the medium has on receivers. Content alone is only a part of the story of media effects. To McLuhan, the content of media was a distraction or even a deception. Media content was “the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind” (Levinson, 1999 p. 36-37). The role of content under technological determinism is as the material for technological change. As new technologies are created they consume old technologies for content. When television was created the medium of the novel was appropriated to provide content. Television was again appropriated by movies. The new medium of the Internet with its diverse content offerings has in turn adopted all of the preceding technologies, as it’s content (Levinson, 1999).

This radical conception of the primacy of medium over content in explaining media effects may seem extreme during times of limited technological change. During these time periods we are not conscious of the effect that our choices of media have over us. When McLuhan first started to develop his theory television was a very new medium, and people were fascinated with the changes that it had made in their lifestyle. It was in this environment that technological determinism quickly achieved notoriety. Afterwards,
however, there was a long period of limited technological change. As people began to
take the new medium more for granted the theory fell into disrepute. Entering a new
period of dramatic technological change the theory has again gained currency as people
again become conscious of the effects of these new media (Levinson, 1999).

The second idea that McLuhan contributes to this discussion is the concept of the
global village. The global village is the idea that as technology and the media become
increasingly electronic a mass culture is created (Grunig, 1999). This idea seems to be
quite ahead of its time as mass media continues to become more and more global in
nature, and as electronic communities develop. For McLuhan a key part of this idea,
however, was the creation of a unified mass society, an idea that does not seem to fit well
with the reality of increasing fragmentation and tribalization that has often accompanied
the development of global media (Browne, 1999; Freid, 1999; Grunig, 1999). Although
McLuhan himself viewed conflict as an inevitable part of the creation of the global
village (Freid, 1999), his hopes were highly optimistic, viewing technological change as a
fundamentally beneficial evolutionary process. As technology allowed the creation of
larger and larger mass audiences human understanding and harmony would result.

This idea of globalization as a unifying process is called convergence. Prominent
convergence theorists include McLuhan and Wallerstein, among others. Convergence
theorists view technological progress as having a “transcendent” quality (Gibbs, J.L.,
Ball-Rokeach, S.J., Jung, J., Kim, & Qiu, 2004 p. 341). Another significant teleological
concept of convergence is Rheingold’s idea of a virtual community (Slevin, 2000). In
addition to these positive ideas, the convergence model also encompasses neo-Marxist
critical perspectives of global capitalism. All of these ideas are distinct from divergence
models that hold that technological change is leading to division and conflict (Gibbs et al.).

In a wide-ranging exploration of this question of whether the Internet promises to unite or divide society, Gibbs et al. (2004) completed a study of heavy Internet users to try and assess definitively how the Global Village hypothesis was actually playing out. This large study used surveys and focus groups to look at a wide range of indicators of how global communication is actually perceived and practiced among heavy Internet users.

Initially Gibbs et al. tried to measure the degree to which heavy Internet users felt the Internet to be having divergent and convergent tendencies. Addressing the issue of how heavy users actually felt about the societal effects of this new medium, the researchers found that common users of this new technology had a wide concept of the positive and negative effects of this media that corresponded well with the larger themes shaping the discourse. The authors broke ideas regarding the Internet into utopian and dystopian concepts. The research found that utopian concepts of media effects, such as “inclusion,” “cohesiveness,” “opportunity,” and “the fall of communism” were widely held with 64% of respondents reporting these themes. This type of response was especially prevalent among African American and Hispanic Internet users. Dystopian concepts were reported by 33% of heavy Internet users. These responses included ideas about digital and socioeconomic divergence, corporate domination, and negative personal effects, which tap into neo-Marxist themes. Beyond this there was a 20% incidence of neutral appraisals of Internet effects, and more interestingly a 13% incidence of
extremely negative dismissal of talk about globalization as meaningless rhetoric or hype (Gibbs et al., 2004).

In continuing aspects of the study the researchers tried to measure the extent to which the Internet was actually contributing to the development of global relationships. The researchers controlled for the effects of pre-existing global relationships by dividing ethnic groups based on the proportion of each ethnic group that were first or second generation immigrants and comparing ethnoscapes for each group. The study found that groups that were newer to the United States were naturally much more in touch with their country of origin than other groups, while established groups showed a broader connection with the rest of the world. Both groups however tended to strongly favor contact with members of their own ethnic group. Moreover, for the more established ethnicities it was found that only about 5% of their contact was with people outside of the United States. This case against an Internet effect towards creating convergent global relationships was further bolstered in focus groups where there was no sign at all of people actually using the Internet to create and maintain valued relationships that did not previously exist apart from the Internet. Internet-based relationships were viewed with suspicion and caution (Gibbs et al., 2004).

Gibbs’s work shows that real virtual communities are being developed through the Internet, but the research casts doubt upon the positive nature that McLuhan and other convergence thinkers have anticipated. This work seems to be particularly damaging to the optimistic ideas of Rheingold and his theory of a virtual community. Rheingold felt that when enough people became involved in virtual relationships real communities would develop that do not exist in the outside world. This research indicated that not only
have these relationships have not been fulfilling, but also that there are indications that they are viewed with distrust (Slevin, 2001).

Alternative Theories to Technological Determinism

Social shaping of technology is a strong new current in technology and society research. This strain of research, developed by Donald Mackenzie and his peers (1985), keeps the focus on the relationship between society and the media, but seeks to develop a more complete understanding of the way that the effect often moves in the other direction. This theory criticizes technological determinism for having too much of a focus on the effect that technology has on its users and not enough consideration for the way in which society shapes technologies. Mackenzie sums up the question as follows:

Social scientists have tended to concentrate on the ‘effects’ of technology, on the ‘impact’ of technological change on society. This is a perfectly valid concern, but it leaves a prior, and perhaps more important question unasked and therefore unanswered. What has shaped the technology that is having these ‘effects’? What has caused and is causing the technological change whose ‘impact’ we are experiencing. (p. 2)

Winner (1999) further expands on this idea with this maxim: “What matters is not the technology itself, but the social or economic system in which it is embedded” (p. 26). Winner identifies two directions in which technology effects can apply. In many cases technology is clearly shaped by society, while in others society seems to be powerless before inherent traits of technologies. According to Winner one key facet in social shaping of technologies is found in “technological arrangements as a form of order” (p. 30).
Decisions about the development and application of infrastructure have permanent effects on the nature of specific technologies that largely determine the effect that these technologies will then have on society. These technological decisions are often made to maintain an existing social order. The creation of technology and infrastructure has the effect of cementing social practices and conditions in place. Once technological decisions are made and usage patterns established these decisions are difficult to reverse. While these decisions are sometimes deliberate they often stem from inattention to the needs of groups such as the handicapped (Winner, 1999).

On the other hand, Winner identifies properties that are inherent in technologies that do not appear to be as flexible to policy and culture. If these technologies do not actually require certain social conditions of society, they at least strongly shape a preference for certain social arrangements. The development of modern industries such as factories and railroads and dangerous technologies such as nuclear energy and bombs all seem to necessitate a kind of hierarchical control. The degree to which an inherent demand for centralized control spills over into democratic process and society becomes a vital debate. However, with technology that has strong inherent qualities, questions of environment and context remain valid. Although technologies such as factories and bombs have strong tendencies towards certain effects, the decision of whether or how to employ these technologies remains a powerful determiner of any influence they might have (Winner, 1999).

Williams (1999) adds to the discussion by asserting by that the discovery of new technologies is always in response to a pre-existing need. When new technology is developed the developers are always working toward a new technology with “certain
practices and purposes already in mind” (p. 47). Examples of this process include the development of electricity, film, and radio, all of which were invented based on ideas developed many years before their discovery. Additionally, regarding the development of television and radio, it can be seen that much of the development of these media systems is not so much a reflection of inherent characteristics of the medium, but social policy decisions related to regulation, financing, and distribution of content.

McQuail (2000) describes the process of society shaping technologies as being circular in nature. Technology effects follow only after being mediated by cultural practices and institutions. Society creates technology, which is first applied to preexisting practices. In time new practices develop, which lead to some institutional change. Finally, new cultural patterns emerge from this institutionalized change, which again leads to the development of new technologies.

Ellenworth (2003) faults the field of media studies in general for too often following a standard formula for effects studies. According to Ellenworth the field needs to pay more attention to the specific attributes of media that produce media effects. By applying a mix of attributes in the framework, quantified measures of the effect of technologies can be produced. Ignoring qualitative conceptions of technologies and focusing on measurable attributes will become even more important, particularly as the boundary between specific technologies continues to merge. For example, in applying the attributes of control, components, textuality, and content to television Ellenworth observes:

For instance, consider the mix of attributes definition of television news discussed above. I argued that television news is low on control, high on audio and visual
components, low on textuality, and with content focusing on news. Perhaps some readers would disagree with my explication of television news. A benefit of the mix of attributes approach is that we could settle our debate about the attributes of television news by conducting a content analysis to compare television news to news in some other medium on the various attributes, or to compare it against the criterion implied in my explication. (p. 404)

Theory developed this way will be better defined, and will allow medium studies to be more applicable to effects studies.

Briefly reviewing other recent studies of the relationship between technology and media effects, a good example of this type of medium-specific technology effects research comes from Hinds (1999). Using “Media Richness” theory, Hinds is able to show strong differences in cognitive processing abilities among users of different media. According to this theory some media offer richer information and less ambiguity than others. Hinds studied audio only and audio-video from a media richness perspective to determine why it seems that richer media does not result in less biased social judgments. The study confirmed that richer media requires more mental processing increasing the cognitive load on participants. The research also strongly confirmed that under the higher cognitive load, audio-video condition viewers fall back onto pre-existing schema to cope with the information, resulting in more biased appraisals. In a related study, Robinson examined how television contributes to obesity because of the sedentary nature of the act of viewing television. This study is not concerned with content, such as advertising of salty snacks, but on the form of the medium and how it alters behavior patterns by replacing other activities (Eveland, 2003).
In another recent example of technology centered research, Nisbet (2002) tried to measure the specific contribution of television and newspapers to account for differing attitudes towards science. This study was based on the cultivation theory findings of Gerbner and others that heavy exposure to television leads viewers to have reservations about science. The study explored a wide variety of demographic variables and content variables in addition to comparing various media. The authors found no evidence for strong technology effects, but were able to identify general television and newspaper use as significant variables in reservations about science. These variables only account for a portion of the variance by themselves, but the authors identified several intervening variables, including science knowledge, that mediate the effect of these media (Nisbet). Although this study was unable to measure the effects of inherent properties of the technologies of television and newspapers, it was able to establish these two media as significant factors in the overall distrust of science that cultivation theory has previously identified as being related to television viewing.

New media questions such as the development of virtual communities and globalization (Elkins, 1997) and the developing digital divide (DiMaggio 2001; Servon 2002) are also significant trends in technology research. In another strain of this research Stewart, Pavlou, and Ward (2000) studied changes made in marketing communications as a result of the development of the Internet. According to these authors the question of the effectiveness of advertising on consumers has been altered significantly by the development of new interactive media. The development of new media has altered the media mix that management has used to plan and allocate resources for marketing. The development of new media has complicated management decisions by blurring the
distinctions between different phases of the relationship between corporations and their customers. Formerly distinct phases of customer contact such as advertising, product acquisition, and service are increasingly interrelated (Stewart et al., 2000).

In spite of these results a technique for developing widely acceptable technology studies is still far from being established. McQuail (2001) concludes that demonstrating a technology-culture effect may not be possible at all. Technologies are inherently a part of culture and there is no way of breaking down a starting point in what is essentially a circular process. “Such theory as we have is little more than description of observable patterns in the cultural meanings offered via mass media which may be influenced by various characteristics, not only technological, of a given medium . . . technologies are unlikely to have a direct impact on cultural practices, and only as mediated through a relevant institution” (p. 108). The pattern described by McQuail of society and culture producing an effect on technologies, which in turn effect society only through the filter of cultural processes and institutions is well in line with similar trends in general communications effects research. Although the dramatic effects that McLuhan envisioned may not be plausible, technology effect studies will continue to make incremental contributions to the construction of a clearer picture of the complex question of the influence of media on human behavior.
Chapter 4

Mass Media and the Controversy over Japanese History Textbooks

This section of the thesis provides a brief background into the role of the mass media in the development of political controversy over school history textbooks in Japan. This important crisis provides a good example of the ongoing role of the Japanese mass media in national politics, and in particular the role that the Internet has come to play in these politics. This background also serves an important purpose as an introduction to the groups and individuals sampled for this study, all of which are active on this issue.

The evolution of the controversy over history textbooks in Japan is well documented. Since the end of World War II, countless scholarly and not-so-scholarly works have been published documenting or disputing the actual events of the war. There has also been significant research completed on the development of the history textbook controversy itself since the end of the war. As a matter of priority, these works have not focused on the specific role of the mass media in the development of this controversy. Rather these works have concerned themselves primarily with the historical details and politics of this controversy. By analyzing these sources, however, a reasonable picture of the role of the mass media emerges.

Domestic Japanese events such as court battles and protests, as well as international conflict, make up the central events of this growing controversy. Trade disputes, the end of the cold war, and other major real world events are also closely tied to this issue. Mass media organizations have undeniably been important actors in this controversy. Also, mass media have often been a significant tool used by the governments, groups, and individuals involved in this issue. Finally, the development of
the Internet appears to have significantly expanded the access of individuals and smaller groups to this issue, further widening the debate.

The History Textbook Controversy

History textbook reform is a divisive issue in Japan and Asia. There is much disagreement within Japan about how to teach World War II history in schools. Currently, there are many active groups and organizations that believe that teaching children Japanese fault in the war is harmful to children and to the country. These groups demand stronger evidence of Japanese war crimes in Asia, yet often ignore existing evidence entirely. These groups also publish revisionist history textbooks. On the other side some groups take a reconciliatory position. A reconciliatory stance argues that children should be taught about war atrocities to prevent a reoccurrence of militarism, and to improve Asian relations. Many Chinese and Korean political groups as well as the respective governments are also active on this issue. The Japanese government comes under heavy international pressure to teach World War II atrocities in school from these groups (“Problems of Textbook Screening,” 2002).

Conflict over history textbooks content began to surface soon after the end of the war in 1945. For many years the central figure in these debates was the Nobel Prize nominated Japanese historian and peace activist Ienaga Saburo. Ienaga published Japan’s first independent postwar textbook. He also was a key figure in drafting the first national textbook under the U.S. occupation. With the end of the U.S. occupation in 1952 however, things began to change. The use of one nationally approved textbook was soon abolished, and the early workings of a national system for screening textbooks began to be put in place (Yoshihiko & Hiromitsu, 1998).
Immediately after the introduction of the newly established textbook screening system in 1952, for the first time a work by Ienaga was rejected. For ten years Ienaga worked with the screening system, whittling away more and more historical detail on World War II from his book each year to get it to pass as the system continued to grow more demanding. Finally at his limit, he filed his first lawsuit in 1965. Ultimately, he filed three lawsuits in 20 years. These lawsuits in their various forms continued through numerous appeals by Ienaga and the government until the final case was ultimately decided in Ienaga’s favor in 1997. Although Ienaga was never able to see his goal of having the national screening system overturned, his lawsuits freed himself and others to begin addressing war atrocities in textbooks, and succeeded in limiting the power of the Ministry of Education in enforcing ideological changes on textbooks (Yoshihiko & Hiromitsu, 1998). As a result of Ienaga’s work, by 1986, mention of war crimes in Japanese textbooks had come to be almost universal (Yoshida, 2000).

The victory of Ienaga and his supporters turned out to be mixed. Although the system was liberalized, this very liberalization in turn opened up the door for the Japanese ultra-right to begin introducing nationalist textbooks into the mix (French, 2001). Like Ienaga’s textbooks, although these textbooks too were subject to screening, particularly under pressure from China and Korea (“Problems of Textbook Screening,” 2002), the confrontational ideological content of these textbooks has also been protected (French, 2001).

To the so-called revisionist, the battle over textbook reform is a more recent issue. Although the revisionist movement is critical of earlier postwar textbooks, these textbooks were relatively free from attacks by the right. Ienaga and the left had been
fighting this battle virtually since the end of the war, but for the nationalist, the issue started in earnest as foreign pressure on Japan to accept more responsibility for World War II began to flair up in the 1980s. Additionally the development of counter-movements on the right, specifically the publishing of revisionist textbooks, has met with unexpected resistance at home and abroad, pulling many different groups into a rapidly expanding fray.

For the Japanese nationalist, the issue of textbook revision is first of all not an issue of revision at all. Rather, to the revisionist, the fact that foreign pressure to reform textbooks was much less visible until the 1980s is a sign that the way history was taught previously was essentially correct and that the current controversy is a result of expanding anti-Japanese sentiment. “Revisionism” is what has already occurred, and the current “revisionist” movement is trying to simply restore balance. To this group the fact that these issues were not a significant obstacle until recently shows that they are not questions of historical fact so much as they are a question of meddling by the Japanese left and foreign governments.

Feelings that foreign governments were forcing an unfairly self-critical view of history on the Japanese peaked in the early 1990s after the death of wartime emperor Hirohito renewed criticism of the emperor as a war criminal. Then for a brief period in 1993, the LDP lost its majority in the lower house of the Diet. In a major reversal of Japanese foreign policy, the new liberal Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro began to make apologies to China and Korea and to admit Japanese fault for the war (Yoshida, 2000).
Into this environment emerged the ideological leader of the current revisionist movement in Japan, Fujioka Nobukatsu. Fujioka is a professor of education at the University of Tokyo. Fujioka worked first through his organization Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyuukai, or the Study Group on the Liberal Historical View, which he founded in 1995. This organization was particularly devoted to fighting textbook reporting on war atrocities in Nanjing. Six months later, prompted by criticism that his existing movement was too negative, Fujioka teamed up with fellow academic Kanji Nishio and the popular cartoonist Yoshinori Kobayashi to form Atarashi Rekishi wo Tsukuru Kai, or The Japanese Institute for Orthodox History Education (Hein & Seldon, 1998; McCormack, 1988; Yoshida, 2000). The primary purpose of Tsukuru Kai, as Atarashi Rekishi wo Tsukuru Kai is called by both its supporters and detractors in Japan, is to publish Nationalist textbooks, and its existence has exacerbated the history textbook controversy to a whole new level. There have been official protests from both the Chinese and Korean Governments against Tsukuru Kai textbooks. Currently Tsukuru Kai textbooks have been adopted in a very few private schools in Tokyo as well as in some public schools in Ehime Prefecture (“Problems of Textbook Screening,” 2002).

For Tsukuru Kai the study of modern Japanese history can be divided into only two basic viewpoints. Victor’s justice and the ideology of the U.S. occupation define the “Tokyo Trials” viewpoint, while the other nationalistic “Japanese perspective” takes pride in the Japanese nation and state. Any intermediate or humanistic perspective is rejected. Tsukuru Kai argues that the content of textbooks should be determined by each nation based on the interest of the state. Specifically, rejecting the need for objectivity in the face of the greater need to construct a national consciousness, Tsukuru Kai textbooks
are openly biased and “willfully ignorant” (Fogel, 2000; Hein & Seldon, 1998). These polarizing textbooks are highly criticized both in Japan and abroad, but are nonetheless popular.

*Mass Media and The History Textbook Controversy*

*A Publishing War.* Although mass media has always had an important role in the continuing controversy over history textbooks, the sudden expansion of the issue throughout the 1980s and 1990s has clearly magnified that role. Of the major media the influence of the book publishing industry appears to be the most influential. Particularly since the 1990s, Japanese citizens have begun to attack questions of World War II with great openness. The early 1990s saw a flood of “testimony, books, documentary films, and archival research on previously suppressed or ignored aspects of the war.” In this sense the history textbook controversy is simply one very divisive element of a process of reappraising modern history since the end of the cold war (Hein & Seldon, 1998).

Additionally, the development of a more unified voice among Chinese nationals living abroad, in the last decade in particular, has tended to focus attention on the Nanking Massacre. The end of the Cold War has open Mainland China to research and lead to extensive publication by the Chinese Diaspora. Because of this, both the Chinese government and Japan have come under pressure to properly address aspects of World War II that were swept under the rug during the Cold War. American Iris Chang’s well-known book *The Rape of Nanking* is part of this movement (Fogel, 2000). Criticism and the extensive development of English language scholarship and publishing by this increasingly unified group have exacerbated nationalist anger in Japan. Much of the nationalist literature, particularly the work of Fujioka Nobukatsu and Kobayashi
Yoshinori, including the conspicuous absence of reference to the Rape of Nanking in their history textbook, is part of a reactionary response to this pressure.

Fundamentally, this furor over what to teach in Japanese schools questions why exactly textbooks are so important. Tokyo University professor Kariya Takehiko (2001) asserts that it is doubtful textbooks actually have the power to influence large numbers of people. Certainly the influence of textbooks is mitigated by a person’s life experiences after finishing school. Current textbooks combined with an ineffective education system may even be criticized as contributing to an increase in historical ignorance. Rather than a question of education, the history textbook debate is more an issue of creating a sense of historical continuity and national identity. History textbooks and civics textbooks are about the creation of a national narrative and a national consciousness (Hein & Seldon, 1998; Kariya, 2001).

Additionally, the selection of textbooks in Japan is particular because the national government performs the initial selection of textbooks, specifying a range of books from which local school districts then choose. In this case where the national government plays a strong role in the selection of textbooks, the communicative power of textbooks is much stronger than may be seen in other countries. Where textbooks are not nationally regulated, the publishing of one particular textbook or another is not nearly as large of a controversy. In Japan however, views expressed in textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education can appear to be officially sanctioned (Kariya, 2001; Murai, 2001). Thus in the case of the Tsukuru Kai book, although the book is an almost completely unused distant eighth among eight approved history books (0.039%) (“Problems of Textbook Screening,” 2002), it remains very controversial.
The approval of the work produced by the textbook reform society has turned into a major diplomatic flap because people in countries like China and South Korea see the society’s view of history as having been officially certified by the Japanese Government (Murai, 2001, p. 28).

As the post-war controversy over history textbooks has played out over the years, the constant publishing of books has continued to dominate media action on this issue. In addition to the publishing of the history textbooks themselves, both sides of the debate continue to publish books debating particular aspects of history and history textbooks. Commentary or reportage by newspapers, magazines, and occasionally television, has also been influential, but a steady stream of books has kept the controversy alive.

The publishing war has only grown bitterer through the 1990s, and shows little sign of abating. A trip to some major Tokyo bookstores reveals hundreds of books on this issue. Books debating or presenting different perspectives on World War II can be found in abundance in the political commentary section. The actual history textbooks produced by the varying sides are difficult to spot in the textbook section scattered on the same shelves, among dozens of books about the textbooks debate. Finally, to a much smaller degree, these books can be found sprinkled among texts on education theory and practice.

Backed by several independent presses, nationalist groups are clearly dominant in the publishing race. Nationalist groups are characterized by their publishing power and their access to the media (Yoshida, 2000). Prominent publishers include Fusosha, the actual publisher of the New History Textbook, among others, as well as the powerful Sankei Press, a sub-company of the conservative Sankei group. The reconciliatory groups
are mostly smaller independent publishers, although the well-respected Iwanami Shoten produces several works including the books of Ienaga Saburo.

*The Press.* Outside of the publishing industry, the press, in the form of Japan’s national newspapers, have played the strongest role in exacerbating the crisis over history textbooks in Japan. The nationalist *Sankei Shimbun* and the wide-reaching *Asahi Shimbun* have taken opposite stances on this issue and both have been active in the debate. The attention of the foreign press has also been very powerful. The press response to this controversy, both home and abroad, became particularly strong in 1982 as the textbook controversy began to really catch fire all across the region.

In 1982, the ruling LDP launched a series of legislative and regulatory actions in response to a shift in textbooks towards reporting war atrocities that had been unleashed by Ienaga Saburo’s lawsuits. On June 26, the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper ran a front-page article titled “Textbooks return further ‘toward prewar’ position” detailing the government action. Other major newspapers including *Sankei Shimbun* followed suit (Yoshida, 2000). In particular, the decision to require textbooks to substitute the word “advances” for “invasion” in textbooks was a lightening rod. By September at least 2,000 different articles on the issue had been published in newspapers throughout Asia (Yoshida, 2000; Yoshihiko & Hiromitsu, 1998). Press attention was also strong in the 1990s, as Japanese newspapers reported heavily on “Asian grievances such as the comfort women, the Nanjing massacre, and the grisly experiments of biowar Unit 731” (Hein & Seldon, 1998).

*Sankei Shimbun* as part of the powerful Sankei media group is an extremely valuable asset to the revisionist movement. Recently, *Sankei Shimbun* has been an
extremely active proponent of nationalist causes. The paper has been strongly supportive of Tsukuru Kai in its editorial content, frequently publishing defensive opinion articles by revisionists and their supporters. Through its press it also has been responsible for producing many influential revisionist works.

The newspaper also played a pivotal role in launching the work of Fujioka Nobukatsu and Tsukuru Kai. Fujioka’s most widely read works are three volumes of columns that originally appeared in Sankei Shimbun. These articles dealt with Japanese history leading up to World War II (particularly the Meiji Era), the war itself, the U.S. occupation, and postwar economic growth (Hein & Seldon, 1998).

The articles present the Meiji leaders as Heroes, find nothing reprehensible in Japan’s wartime behavior, hold that Japan has been unfairly singled out for criticism, and feel that the occupation meddled with too many elements of Japanese society, leading to most of the problems Japan faces today. They reiterate, in short, the off-repeated litany of Japanese rightwing nationalism (Hein & Seldon, 1998).

The second major newspaper caught up in the history textbook controversy is the Asahi Shimbun. Although the newspaper does not appear to be as actively involved in the history textbook controversy, it is frequently under attack by the Japanese right, and has indeed often been the first voice of reconciliatory groups. In 1952 when Ienaga Saburo’s first textbook was rejected it was the Asahi that published his concerns. In 1971 when Ienaga’s lawsuits began to bear fruit Asahi launched a column documenting the Nanjing Massacre and other war atrocities in China (Yoshihiko & Hiromitsu, 2000). The Chinese press has also played a significant role in this crisis. The Chinese government has often manipulated their control over the national press to allow the maintenance of officially
friendly relations, while at the same time applying pressure on Japan. For the Chinese government the textbook controversy and particular Japanese war crimes has not been made a significant issue unless political leverage was needed in other areas such as trade negotiations or creating political unity (Eykholt, 2000).

In 1982, as the debate over textbook revisionism within Japan and between other Asian nations heated up, the Chinese government belatedly set its national press into action, launching a series of editorial volleys at Japan. During this time official Chinese dialogue toward Japan remained friendly. This pattern has often been repeated. Essentially this control over the national press allows the Chinese government to maintain officially friendly policies towards Japan while at the same time criticizing Japan through the national press (Eykholt, 2000).

This policy has seriously damaged Shino-Japanese Relations. The Chinese government has lost its ability to control anti-Japanese feelings within its populace. Rather than push Japan for an official apology, in official dialogue Japan has been encouraged to make war reparations unofficially through economic aid (Eykholt, 2000). By quietly accepting concessions from the Japanese government, while at the same time criticizing the Japanese in the official media, it has been made to appear that the Japanese have accepted very little responsibility for the war. When Japanese nationalists publish textbooks that then deny Japanese war crimes, the reaction from Chinese nationals and the Chinese Diaspora has been extremely hostile.

*Magazines and Other Print Media.* The Japanese magazine industry occupies a unique place as a maverick within the conservative Japanese media landscape. Japanese magazines are free from many of the restraints of mainstream Japanese newspapers. In
particular the freedom of Japanese magazines from the often-criticized press club system allows magazines a degree of freedom in tackling taboo issues and breaking controversy (Cooper-Chen, 1997; Farley, 1996). This maverick image comes at a price, however, as they are much less trusted among the public than other mainstream media (Farley, 1996).

For the controversy-driven Japanese magazine industry, the developing textbook controversy provides regular content. Popular magazines cover the activities of Tsukuru Kai regularly, and often publish Tsukuru Kai’s historical analysis. The magazine Sapio has had a particularly influential role by regularly publishing comics by the incendiary Tsukuru Kai founding member Yoshinori Kobayashi (McCormack, 1988; Yoshida, 2000). Progressives also have found magazines to be a significant platform for their work. Weekly magazine Shukan Kinyoubi has carried several different articles by notable progressives, including a cartoon making fun of the work of Kobayashi (Yoshida, 2000).

The relative impact of the animated spin on history of Yoshinori Kobayashi is difficult to understand from a non-Japanese perspective. Manga—Japanese cartoon books and magazines targeted at both adults and children—make up a full third of the Japanese publishing industry. Cheap pulp digests of animated weeklies, some of which are the size of phonebooks and carry up to 30 different serial stories, sell millions of copies per week. Popular Manga stories are repackaged as books and resold at a higher profit (Cooper-Chen & Kodama, 1997).

Given the extensive impact of Manga in Japan it is easier to understand the powerful impact of Kobayashi, and his relative strength as one of the ideological leaders and spokesmen of Tsukuru Kai. Many of Kobayashi’s works feature a stylized version of himself, dressed in all black, with glasses, and his hair combed back. (Pons, 2001).
Kobayashi is well known, young, and cool. Kobayashi’s hip style, and the popular *manga* format of his work have been extremely valuable in taking *Tsukuru Kai*’s message to a much younger audience than nationalist groups had formerly been able to reach. The main book edition of *The Sensoron*, or Theory About War series has sold almost a million copies (French, 2001). Kobayashi’s other controversial works include a derisive comic on the Japanese colonization of Taiwan that has caused a particularly angry reaction throughout Asia.

Outside of mainstream magazine publishing and *manga*, the history textbook debate is kept alive on the pages of a variety of specialty magazines and newsletters. Some of the most active groups on both sides of this battle are at heart publishing companies. This of course includes *Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyuukai* and *Tsukuru Kai*, which in addition to publishing various books and textbooks also publish a small monthly magazine called *Fumi* or History and “*Kingendai Shi*” no Jugyo Kaikaku, or the Classroom Reform of Modern History, the original publication of Fujioka Nobukatsu where he launched many of his critiques (Yoshida, 2000).

Other major specialized publications include a quarterly magazine by *The Japan Association of History Teachers*, a group founded by close supporters of Ienaga Saburo, which was heavily involved in the textbook lawsuits. *The Japan Historical Research Society*, an academic journal, publishing research by prominent Japanese historians, is also highly active in the history textbook debate, and has carried critiques of *Tsukuru Kai* textbooks. In addition to these publications many smaller groups publish newsletters or inexpensive monthlies. Many of these smaller groups have also branched out onto the Internet.
Television. Television appears to have played a relatively minor role in the history textbook controversy. In the literature on the history textbook controversy television is almost never mentioned. One significant exception is an all-night televised debate on January 1, 1997, on Asahi Television pitting Fujioka Nobukatsu against historians and other groups opposing nationalist causes. This became “one of the outstanding media events of the time” (McCormack, 2000 p. 57). Fujioka and his group were also noted to have proclaimed proudly on television that they had not read the work of historians, and that “it would take a kind of pervert to do the sort of extensive research on comfort women” that had been done by one of their critics (McCormack, 2000 p. 67).

The limited role of television in developing this controversy may be due in part to the dominant role of the press in Japan. The press first breaks critical stories that then may be reported on television. Political reporting on television has tended to focus on the government bureaucracy and the LDP. Political action on television and particularly appearances by Japanese politicians is highly regulated. At the same time, commercial television has been criticized for exciting controversy, particularly in events surrounding the Japanese death cult Aum Shinrikyo and the role of the popular news show News Station in orchestrating LDP defeat in the 1993 election. It has also been noted, however, that the tumultuous events of this time have lead to more reflection and caution on the part of the industry (Krauss, 2000).

The Internet. The development of the Internet throughout the 1990s is another significant story of the media and the textbook controversy. The information for this portion of the study is drawn from interviews with groups and individuals directly involved with the issue collected the summer of 2003. As the debate over textbooks
entered a new era with the founding of Tsukuru Kai in 1995, the Internet and the World Wide Web were just beginning to expand in Japan. This new medium began to draw in many smaller groups that did not have access to major mass media. Also, whereas nationalists had been able to dominate the mass media, the Internet initially appears to have been more effective for reconciliatory groups.

Action on history textbooks seems to have broken free of many of the constraints identified in past research as an obstacle to Internet-based political action. Activists have relied primarily on the Internet as a means to organize real world action. Perhaps learning from the failures of earlier Internet grass-root movements, petition drives and protests were for the most part not conducted online. The Internet was used to recruit and coordinate. Additionally many of the groups that were involved in this issue on the reconciliatory side had extensive experience organizing.

Some [reconciliatory groups] draw on decades of social activism directed against the U.S.-Japan security alliance, the Vietnam War, nuclear weapons, environmental destruction, and violations of women’s rights and human rights.

(Hein & Seldon, 1998 p. 12)

These groups were able to use the Internet with particular effectiveness to coordinate activities. Surveillance activities such as an Internet mailing list serve to constantly update peace activists on moves by nationalist groups, as well as school board meetings and petitions in different parts of the country. Also because these groups have established networks they do not appear to have run into the same funding problems that have been observed in purely Internet-based political action.
The expansion of the Internet also allowed for the existing mass media to expand their influence. Asahi Shimbun, Sankei Shimbun and China’s The People’s Daily all produced content relating to the history textbooks. Sankei’s site Sankei Web is extensive, offering comparisons on textbook content from many countries, as well as English language editorials on Asian relations and the textbook controversy. China’s People’s Daily maintains a web site that includes extensive Japanese language material specific to this issue. Korean and Chinese grass roots movements have been able to use Japanese language websites to promote their views as well. Finally, nationalist groups in Japan have also produced persuasive sites with extensive editorial content including both domestic content and limited English language content as well.

The history textbook controversy in Asia shows little sign of tapering. Misunderstanding between Asian nations is as rife as ever, and nationalism on both sides of the Sea of Japan seems only to get more aggravated as time goes on. The degree to which mass media keeps these issues alive in the future will certainly have a strong influence on this growing crisis. Understanding the role, which mass media, both as a tool and as an industry, has played in inflaming passions in Asia, will continue to be relevant as these issues continue to grow. The plentiful references to the media in the existing literature portray a tolerable picture of the role of the media, but future research is plainly necessary.
Chapter 5
Methodology

In this thesis a grounded theory approach is used to develop a model of Internet involvement in Japan. Using this inductive method, producers of Internet political content were interviewed about their use of the Internet and other mass media. Based on these experiences an explanatory model of the developing role of the Internet in Japanese political action was produced. In accordance with a grounded theory method this model is emergent in nature, based primarily on data, rather than literature. Following the development of this preliminary model, this study revisited the literature to see how the new model and the data can be used to elaborate the literature on technological determinism and social shaping of technologies.

Grounded theory as defined for this study is based on the framework developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method refers to a process by which a researcher systematically compares specific data to generate a substantive or formal theory. A central technique of this method is theoretical sampling. As data are collected, individual pieces of data are categorized as concepts. These concepts are not merely labels, but must describe an essential characteristic of each concept. Initial concepts are more specific. As concepts are coded they are then compared and common themes are identified. Comparison becomes gradually more abstract as data analysis proceeds to description of an emergent model. Final concepts are more descriptive and have increasing explanatory power (Dey 1999; Goulding 2002; Thyer 2001).
Sample Selection

Samples for this method must be as broad as possible. Theoretical sampling involves selecting data to allow as much elaboration of data as possible (Thyer, 2001). Samples or subjects are not pre-selected purposively, but as the research progresses additional data is added, as it is needed, until sufficient data have been collected (Goulding, 2002). Data collection proceeds until theoretical saturation is reached. As data are collected a set of core concepts and categories is developed. Researchers seek new samples, adding slight variation. When further data collection ceases to provide new information on these concepts theoretical saturation has been reached (Thyer, 2001). The researcher keeps collecting data until no new concepts are emerging, careful not to come to closure too early (Goulding, 2002).

The sample for this study is made up of groups and individuals active on the issue of history textbook reform in Japan. Fourteen individuals or representatives from different groups producing web pages relevant to the issue were interviewed for this study. Five of the interviews involved individuals active on the nationalist side of the issue, while the remaining nine came from reconciliatory groups. Groups defined as reconciliatory in this sample are groups that support the teaching of war atrocities. These groups have an attitude towards other Asian countries that is generally friendly. The Japan Teachers Union is prominent and influential among these organizations. Revisionist groups as defined in this sample are nationalist Japanese groups that feel that history textbooks should not teach war atrocities. Prominent among these is *Atarashii Rekishi wo Tsukuru Kai*. 
Organizations included groups and individuals primarily active on the Internet as well as major groups more involved in traditional mass media. In addition to the primary sample collected through interviewing, three groups, which refused an interview or were unavailable for interviews participated by answering questions by e-mail. Nationalist groups and individuals who participated in this study include the following: Society for The Creation of New History (Atarashii Rekishi wo Tukuru Kai (Tukuru Kai)); Society of Educational Ombudsman (Kyouiku Omnibudsman Kyoukai); Society for the Study of Freedom (Jiyuu Shugi Kenkyuu Kai); Osaka Education League (Osaka Kyouiku Renmei); and Koji Mori (Great Asia). Reconciliatory groups and individuals who participated in this study include the following: Children and Textbooks Japan network (Kodomo to Kyoukasho Zenkoku Netto 21; Kokoro wo Tsunagaru Network.com; Japan Teachers Union; The Civic Ombudsmen for “Human Rights Violations via The Rising Sun Flag and The National Anthem” (Unofficial English name) “Hi no Maru Kimi ga you ni yoru Jinken Shingai” Shimin Ombudsman; The Center for Japan’s War Responsibility (Nihon Sensou Sekinin Shiryoukan); Yutaka Tsunogae (Kyoto City Council); Peace Ehime; History Educationalist Conference of Japan (Rekishi Kyouikusha Kyougikai); and The Japanese Society for Historical Studies (Nihonshi Kenkyuukai).

In addition to the above listed groups that participated in formal interviews, three groups provided important data through e-mail correspondence: Textbook Information Mailing List (Kyoukasho Jyouhou Meeringuristo; Sankei Shimbun (Newspaper); and Yasukuni Jinja (Temple). Many of these groups have played a central role in the developing controversy over history textbook reform. These participants and sources are presented again in list form below.
Nationalist groups and individuals

Society for The Creation of New History  
Atarashii Rekishi wo Tukuru Kai (Tukuru Kai)

Society of Educational Ombudsman  
Kyouiku Omnibudsman Kyoukai

Society for the Study of Freedom  
Jiyuu Shugi Kenkyuu Kai

Osaka Education League  
Osaka Kyouiku Renmei

Koji Mori (Great Asia)

Reconciliatory groups and individuals

Children and Textbooks Japan network 21  
Kodomo to Kyoukasho Zenkoku Netto 21

Kokoro wo Tsunagaru Network.com

Japan Teachers Union

The Civic Ombudsmen for “Human Rights Violations via The Rising Sun Flag and The National Anthem (Unofficial Translation)”  
“Hi no Maru Kimi ga you ni yoru Jinken Shingai”  
Shimin Ombudsman

The Center for Japan’s War Responsibility  
Nihon Sensou Sekinin Shiryoukan

Yutaka Tsunogae (Kyoto City Council)

Peace Ehime

History Educationalist Conference of Japan  
Rekishi Kyouikusha Kyougikai

The Japanese Society for Historical Studies  
Nihonshi Kenkyuukai

Other sources

Textbook Information Mailing List  
Kyoukasho Jyouhou Meeringuristo

Sankei Shimbun (Newspaper)

Yasukuni Jinja (Temple)

This sample seems to be particularly well suited to studying the Internet, since the controversy over history textbooks in Japan has expanded rapidly throughout the 1990s,
concurrently with the expansion of the Internet. Many of the people in this sample are relatively early adopters of the Internet. Additionally, many of the people in this sample viewed the development of the Internet as being one of the direct causes of the current controversy.

In the selection of subjects for this study, one significant methodological issue was how to ensure maximum diversity among participants. In order to create a full picture of Internet usage, maximizing the differences between groups becomes an important part of effective grounded theory. This important methodological objective is achieved in this study by attempting to maximize differences between subjects in ideological orientation, as well as the size and organization of groups and individuals interviewed.

Although one apparent way to maximize the range of the study would be by exploring a wide range of causes by searching for groups or individuals active on political issues other than textbook reform, the wide variance between individual groups on this issue was sufficient for the resources of this study. In particular, considering the rapidly expanding, and infinite variety of political issues that the Internet offers, using a single political issue proved to be a valuable tool to keep the scope of the study under control and organized. In order to maximize differences in the criteria most essential to this study, the issue of textbook reform served to control the selection of subjects from the near-infinite variety the Internet offers. Differences were maximized primarily upon four dimensions: the size of the group producing the website; the ideological orientation of the group; the level of involvement with the issue at hand and the level of involvement
with the Internet. However, the fact that broadening this study into other political issues
would almost certainly have revealed more variety is a limitation of this method.

Data were collected over a five-month period, with the selection of samples as
much as possible guided by the data gathered in previous interviews. While time
restraints negated the possibility of thoroughly analyzing each text before expanding the
sample to include additional interviews, where possible, sample selection was based on
the questions and issues that were raised in preceding interviews. In particular,
maximizing ideological differences between groups was a primary concern in the process,
as allowed within the limits of time and the availability of subjects for interviews.

Introducing

Focused interviews were conducted from May through November 2003, with the
groups and individuals identified above as being involved in political action on history
textbook reform. Organizations were identified using major Internet search engines such
as Google Japan and Yahoo Japan. Links on web pages were also followed to find
associated sites. Additionally, the sample was expanded through the recommendations
and introductions of previously interviewed subjects.

Organizations and individuals were contacted initially by e-mail. In the case of
groups, where possible, interviews were conducted with the most senior available
member responsible for Internet policy. In cases where more than one staff member from
a particular group was available for interviewing, all of the available participants were
interviewed together and allowed to discuss questions and answers freely. Participants in
theses group discussions included Tsukuru Kai (3 members), Society for the Study of
Freedom (2 members), and History Educationalist Conference of Japan (2 members).
These group discussions provided valuable opportunities to openly discuss issues and concepts from the emerging model.

Interviews were conducted with these representatives about the role of Internet development and the World Wide Web in their organization’s continuing political strategy. Individuals producing websites on their own were also interviewed regarding their attitudes and beliefs about involvement with the Internet. In-depth interviewing was conducted in various areas of Japan and in the Japanese language. Interviews were recorded for transcription and further analysis in the United States. Comments and impressions of each interview were kept in a field journal. This journal was used to record themes and issues that were discovered during the limited transcription and coding that was completed while in Japan. This journal also served as a guide for selection of future interview subjects and planning interviews.

Interviews focused on experiences in Internet political activism. Questions and points of discussion focused on why these groups and individuals have chosen to become involved on the World Wide Web, as well as the perceived benefits and disadvantages of that involvement. Questions and discussion were aimed at determining what advantages activists see in Internet involvement compared to traditional mass media. In addition to these basic questions of strategy interviews focused on the participants beliefs about the power and influence of the Internet. Later interviews focused on issues and concepts that came up in earlier interviews. A formal interview schedule was used as a rough guide to keep track of points of discussion. It was expanded in later interviews to reflect new questions and points of focus which emerged from previous interviews and coding. The interview schedule served as a rough guide for interviewing, but was not followed strictly
in order to allow the content of the interviews to evolve. The focus of the questions shifted throughout the study from earlier broad exploration toward specific questions related to the developing model.

*Coding and Model Generation*

Coding of data in grounded theory proceeds through clearly defined stages. Coding proceeds through these stages constantly as data is collected, with additional data collection guided by the questions and categories that are generated by the process of coding previous data. The first stage is the generation and integration of categories, or coding incidents into categories. Next, a researcher identifies the properties of these categories. Finally, the researcher builds an integrative hypothesis for developing a model (Dey, 1999). A researcher may code variables openly or selectively. Selective coding involves noting only those variables more closely related to the core concept. It is important that the researcher code the data personally and thoughtfully, keeping a clear track of ideas and thoughts by taking personal notes and memos (Goulding, 2002).

Coding in grounded theory is distinct from coding as practiced in quantitative research; preconceived frameworks for coding data are avoided. The influence of preconceptions can interfere with categorizing variables clearly. Data are usually coded through open coding and line-by-line analysis. In these methods key words are identified and coded throughout the data. This may produce immense amounts of distinct or unrelated codes. In later levels of coding the method employs more sophisticated and abstract concepts to close in on a theory or model. The coding progresses from concepts to categories and then on to theory. Taking a set of data to a higher level of abstraction is
called axial coding. A central category is identified between two concepts collapsing them into a higher level of abstraction more near to a theory (Goulding, 2002).

In this study, the process of transcription of the Japanese interviews becomes an important step in the coding process. In preliminary transcription completely transcribing one interview involved listening to each interview many times. Open coding of the interviews first progresses through a rough translation stage. It is not necessary or desirable to completely translate each interview as doing so may obscure nuances that exist in the original language (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Relevant points identified in the Japanese language interviews are coded into statements in English. Proceeding directly into higher level coding, these English-language statements are collapsed into meaningful concepts for use in higher-level categorization and model generation.

More abstract levels of model generation were conducted in the United States. This will be an issue with the study that will limit the development of the final theory. Ideally the whole project would be completed in Japan, where new data could be gathered as needed until the model is complete. The researcher compensated for this somewhat by reflective journaling between interviews, as well as by completing at least a few levels of transcription and analysis of early interviews in Japan before proceeding with later data collection. Additionally, nine of the fourteen interviews were left uncoded in the primary analysis for use in verification of the final model.

Formal coding of the interviews based on complete transcription was completed on a total of five of the thirteen interviews. These five included the first four interviews, which were collected in May 2003. These initial four interviews already indicated a high degree of saturation. After completing the analysis of these four interviews a later
interview from November 2003 was also completely transcribed and coded to focus on additional concepts had emerged as the data collection progressed. This later interview was selected, based on its broad ranging scope, as the best candidate for challenging the boundaries of the developing analysis. After completing the five interviews selected for formal coding, a reasonable level of saturation appeared to have been reached. The remaining eight interviews were not transcribed or formally coded, but were examined more informally to further refine and to more clearly define this list of categories. Through this process a clear model of the framework from which Internet activists approached Internet activism began to emerge.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

The trustworthiness and rigor of this model for capturing the conditions present in Japan was maintained through several key methods. Many of these methods such as journaling and purposive sampling, are consistent with a grounded theory method as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1989), with additional modifications from Lincoln and Guba (1985). In addition, this thesis has attempted to make the process of data collection, coding, and the generation of the final model clear by presenting a detailed discussion of these processes where relevant.

One of the most important methods for maintaining trustworthiness in grounded theory is reflexive journaling. For this thesis a log was kept of the details of each interview collected and the on site coding work completed in Japan. The journal was also a tool for focusing on the process of selecting the sample, and developing future questions for exploring in later interviews. As outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) this personal log style of journal focuses on the state of mind and expectations of the
researcher, and other introspections on the developing study (281). Keeping a careful log of the impressions and ideas that developed from each interview was important in this study to make sure that each interview provided as much elaboration of the data as possible. Because there was insufficient time in the field to complete a full coding process between each interview, this step was particularly important for this study to make sure that each interview provided as much elaboration as possible of the developing picture of Internet activism.

Triangulation of data by collecting additional interviews is another important tool for maintaining rigor and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which has been used in this study. Triangulation is accomplished through purposive sampling, as is consistent with a grounded theory approach. Although the ideal structure for triangulation within this framework would involve completing full coding of each interview before collecting additional data, selecting additional interviews based on the issues that emerged through reflective journaling and limited coding allowed a reasonable amount of elaboration of the data from interview to interview. Within this study selecting purposively from both sides of the political issue of history textbook reform, to maintain ideological contrast between subjects has been a particularly important source of triangulation.

An additional strategy that was followed in this thesis to compensate for completing data analysis in the United States was using the excess of uncoded data to create a reserve of data for verification purposes. Using this large pool of data as a tool for verification allows the final conclusions from coding and grounded theory analysis to be verified against a large body of information. Lincoln and Guba (1985) observe that “interviews . . not used in the immediate data analysis but . . archived for use only after
the study is completed . . may be used to test whether the constructions that have emerged are adequate to account for them as well. (313-314)”

In addition to these methods a few other strategies, which are specific to grounded theory have been implemented in this thesis. Strauss and Glaser suggest that an essential way of maintaining trustworthiness in a grounded theory study is by sticking to a codified procedure for analyzing the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As outlined above, this thesis has followed a structured coding procedure consistent with grounded theory research, with some modifications for using foreign language data, and completing coding off site. By applying this coding procedure consistently to each interview rigor is increased.

Trustworthiness in this study is further established by presenting the findings of the study in a descriptive format that reveals how interviews were conducted, participants selected, and how key categories and concepts were derived from the data. It is hoped that through adequate description and discussion the reader will be able to assess the credibility of the study. In particular, care has been taken to assure that the reader is able to observe the following criteria outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1997):

Criterion 1 How was the original sample was selected? On what grounds?

Criterion 2: What major categories emerged?

Criterion 3: What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

Criterion 4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulation guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done how representative of the data did the categories prove to be?
Criterion 5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (i.e. among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and validated?

Criterion 6: Were there instances in which hypotheses did not explain what was happening in the data? How are these discrepancies accounted for? Were hypotheses modified?

Criterion 7: How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, and was it difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made? (269)
Chapter 6
Findings and Analysis

Overview

In this chapter a model of Internet activism based around the central concept of the Internet as an anchor is developed. After first introducing the basic model the key concepts and categories that were used to develop and define this model are introduced. Additionally, the contribution that each interview made in terms of developing and refining specific categories and concepts is discussed.

Many of the activists in this sample were among some of the earliest adopters of the Internet in Japan. Because of this their initial usage of the Internet was often very experimental in nature, and many activists did not enter the Internet with a clear picture of what effects and changes involvement with the Internet would bring to their activities. Although activists had different expectations and needs that they brought to the Internet, participation in the Internet was observed to follow a few basic paths. These paths can be divided into the attributes and needs that existed for each activist before beginning Internet activism, the initial patterns of Internet activism followed by activists in developing an Internet presence, and a final evaluation phase in which activists evaluate the effectiveness of the Internet in helping them to achieve their political goals. These three phases are illustrated in figure 1 below.
As their Internet usage evolved, history textbook activists describe a process by which the Internet began to act as an *anchor*, or central point of reference for a wide variety of activities ranging from pure political action to informal interpersonal interaction. As an anchor the Internet serves as a launching-point or a point of reference for a great variety of virtual and real-world interpersonal and mass communications. This concept is firmly grounded in the data, and was identified through coding as being the most central aspect of the range of concepts and categories that activists used to describe their Internet activities. These other concepts are valuable in developing a clear definition of the central concept of the Internet as an anchor, and in placing this concept within the larger model of evolving Internet activism on history textbook reform.

The central feature of the anchor model of Internet activism is the range of usage that activists apply to the Internet within this framework, varying from pure mass communication and mass persuasion to interpersonal communications and organizational communications. The needs and interests that an activist brings to the Internet, the political orientation of an activist and the associated political expediencies, as well as the corresponding success or failure of an activist’s political agenda during the period of Internet activism are key factors in determining the nature of Internet usage along the
continuum from interpersonal to mass communications. This relationship is illustrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Overview of the model of the Internet as an anchor

As illustrated in Figure 2, political framework is the primary factor shaping how an activist approaches the Internet. Based on political framework, material needs, and curiosity about the new medium, an activist adopts a usage pattern along a continuum from mass to interpersonal communication. After, a pattern of usage is established an activist will evaluate that success. Political framework is again an important factor in this evaluation, with activists expressing disillusionment or optimism about the Internet-based in part on the success or failure of their political agenda. The next section looks at these relationships in more detail.
Factors preceding entry into the Internet

The exact character that the Internet takes as an anchor varies for each history textbook activist based on the circumstances and desires driving entry into the Internet. These differing circumstances brought with them expectations and attitudes towards the Internet. Generally, activists applied these pre-existing beliefs to the Internet in a pattern that was consistent with their experiences with other media and previous political action.

The forces driving an activist online were not always urgent. There was often a playful exploratory aspect or curiosity driving early involvement with the Internet. For many of these early adopters creating a web page was in part driven by a desire to experiment with what they saw as an exciting new medium. This was particularly so for individual activists not associated with a major organization. Another aspect of this concept is that for many activists there was a sense was that the world had changed and they needed to become proficient in the Internet to be effective in the new Internet era.

Kyoto City Councilman Tsunogae, one of the earliest adopters in this study, touched on this point quite frequently. Tsunogae was fascinated with the technical powers of the Internet, and spoke at length about how the Internet enriched communication with friends at home and abroad. Tsunogae also referred to the desire to develop Internet skills noting that it was a necessity of the current era. Another Kyoto activist Togashi reported opening a home page because it seemed omoshiroi, meaning fun or interesting. Togashi further elaborated on the mix between curiosity, material needs, and political urgency, reporting that

We didn’t think things through. We just decided to get started for the moment.

After we opened the homepage the members that had knowledge discussed
things…and proposed things. Anyways, our starting point was that we did not have any money or anything, and we felt we had to get something done about the textbook problem . . . At that time opening a homepage was so available, in reality free. (personal communication, May 2003)

As illustrated by Togashi, in many cases activists were driven online because of a lack of other resources or material needs. Activists on both sides often felt a sense of helplessness to counter the moves of what they saw as a better-funded opposition with better access to traditional media. Activists on the revisionist side felt that the left was exercising a disproportionate influence over domestic affairs by stirring up anti-Japanese feelings abroad. The right felt that by exercising pressure through foreign governments and media the left possessed a significant material advantage. Reconciliatory activists on the other hand, felt that nationalist forces had a substantial financial advantage, as well as much better access to the mainstream Japanese media and political establishment.

Political orientation has also been a key factor in how activists have approached the Internet, as well as a factor in how activists have evaluated the final effectiveness of the Internet for accomplishing its presumed purposes. This key aspect of this model is labeled political framework referring to both the ideological orientation of an activist and local political circumstances. This aspect of the model stands out from curiosity and material needs in that it not only drove activists online, but also had a particularly strong influence on the shape that Internet activism would eventually take.

*Development of initial usage patterns following entry into the Internet*

The anchor model is central to understanding the patterns of usage that activists developed as their usage of the Internet evolved. This usage of the Internet fell along a
continuum between interpersonal and mass communications. As this usage continued the Internet began to take on a central anchor role in both of these types of communications. Web addresses and links began to occur in communications of all types as activists increasingly refer back to the Internet as a point of focus and stability for communications of all types. On the mass communications side, activists discovered that the Internet was an invaluable tool for carrying the bulk of information, and usage of other media began to rely on the Internet as a point of reference for heavy loads of information. On the interpersonal side the body of information contained on the Internet became a tool for reference and self-disclosure in a large variety of interactions.

For many activists the tendency was to view the Internet as the World Wide Web. For these activists the goal of Internet activism was to persuade and inform as many people as possible of their views on history textbook reform. For others the Internet was a tool for organizational communications and sending e-mail. These activists did not see the Internet as much as a tool for reaching new audiences with their communications, as a tool for improving and streamlining relationships with others already in their social network.

Because, no one group practiced an exclusive mix of one type of communication or another it is helpful to view the difference in approaches to the Internet as being a continuum. Although Internet activity ranged from interpersonal to mass communications with each participant, however, each participant did show a definite tendency to view the Internet one way or the other. The tendency to view the Internet as either a tool for mass communication or interpersonal communication was very strong, particularly on the issue of organization. For groups that viewed the Internet as a tool for organization and
coordination of political action the concept of the Internet as a tool for mass persuasion was nearly absent. Groups focused on persuasion on the other hand really did not tend to place much focus on organizing through the Internet, focusing more on the telephone and face-to-face coordination. Factors in this basic difference in communication styles are captured under the concepts labeled curiosity and material needs above, but the strongest factor by far is political framework. Of the groups preferring organizational interpersonal communications on the Internet the overwhelming majority were on the left. The right on the other hand preferred mass persuasion uses of the Internet. This complicated relationship will be examined a little more closely later.

Reevaluation of the effectiveness of Internet action

The final stage in the model of the Internet as an anchor for Internet activism is the process by which activists evaluate the perceived effectiveness or utility of the Internet for accomplishing their goals. It appears from this study that the Interpersonal uses of the Internet, preferred by reconciliatory activists, presents a much more effective uses of the Internet than the mass communication purposes observed with revisionist groups. The most interesting aspect of this part of the model, however, is that activists consistently tied their evaluation of the Internet back to the success or failure of their political agenda, again tying in the importance of political framework to the overall model.

Political circumstance is an important factor in the evaluations that experienced activists expressed regarding the Internet. To activists the perceived effectiveness or utility of the Internet was often judged based on political reality or the success or failure of their ultimate agenda of changing the way history is taught in schools. This
demonstrates that although this sample was made up mostly of early Internet adopters with a high interest in technology for its own sake, the ability of the Internet to provide real political results remains the ultimate criteria for evaluation. For the right, defeated in most of the country as of the time of this research, this contributed to disillusionment with the Internet, while for the left political reality often lead to a guarded optimism about the Internet. The discovery of political differences in approach to and evaluation of the Internet is a complicated aspect of this model that needs closer examination.

**Political framework reconsidered**

The relationship between political orientation and the Internet is a complicated aspect of this model that deserves close exploration. Internet usage patterns in this study broke down into two basic dimensions based on political orientation. For the left there was a general tendency to view the Internet as a tool for organization and interpersonal communication, while for the right the Internet was more a tool for mass persuasion. These differing expectations brought with them varying degrees of success with the Internet appearing to be more effective for the organizational purposes of the left.

Although the tendency of the different political sides to approach the Internet differently is certainly interesting, this is a very difficult finding to interpret. There is undoubtedly some merit to assuming that the different ideological assumptions of these groups has lead the left to view the Internet as a tool for organization and the right to view it as a tool for indoctrination. The varying sizes and organizational structures of these groups is also an important factor. However, it appears to be more accurate to view these differences in terms of the varying political advantages of these two groups in this case. Specifically, the left has found itself in the position of protecting the status quo,
while nationalist groups such as *Tsukuru Kai* are trying to pull the educational system further to the right. Action by the left has involved protesting and blocking the adoption of *Tsukuru Kai* textbooks, while Internet action on the right has focused more on generating ideological sympathy for its cause. These political circumstances are likely a strong factor forcing the left to use the Internet to organize while the right focuses on persuasion.

For the purposes of this model it has not been necessary to clearly determine which aspects of this question play the largest part in the influence of political orientation on Internet usage. Rather it is sufficient to observe that the political framework of the individuals examined in this case is a multi-faceted aspect of the important tendency of the left and the right to approach the Internet differently among the activists in this study. Needs of the specific political circumstances and advantages that each activist operates under are also clearly a factor in whether an activist views the Internet as a tool for organization of persuasion. The influence of needs on taking an organizational approach to the Internet was particularly strong on the left where groups often found themselves without funds and under sudden assault from nationalist groups. The Internet was a key tool in helping reconciliatory groups to organize quickly and cheaply in these straightened circumstances.

*The Internet as an Anchor*

As outlined above as an activist engages in Internet-based activism the Internet begins to play an important role as an anchor for their activism and communications. This key concept emerged from the data as the result of the coding process outlined in chapter 5. Interviews were first transcribed and then translated into key concepts in English.
Following this process the codes that emerged from this analysis were categorized into like groups, as the data moved towards increasingly abstract concepts with higher explanatory power. The process by which these categories emerged is elaborated in the next section, discovering the model. From these categories the central concept of the Internet as an anchor eventually emerged as the best overall framework to view the diverse categories and concepts that activists revealed in their descriptions of Internet activism on history textbook reform. These final categories are listed below.

**Core Categories**

**Recruiting**: This category includes Internet-based activities and conceptions of the Internet specifically tied to the ultimate goal of increasing the number of supporters of one’s cause or organization. Key properties of this category include membership and action.

**Political disadvantage**: This category refers to feelings experienced by many Internet activists that their views were not fairly represented or that the opposition had dominated other means of political expression.

**Openness**: This category reflects a strong sense of a need for transparency relative to the Internet.

**Social network**: The larger network of activists that an Internet activist becomes involved with, includes a range from purely Internet-based relationships, to face-to-face relationships not related to the Internet.

**Horizontal relationships**: An expanded social network including persons who are unknown to the activist, but are connected through other activists.
**Coordination**: Internet-based coordination of political action. Not always necessarily a process of specifically planning action with other activists, so much as making other activists aware of one’s own actions by making that information available online, and adjusting those actions based on information provided by other activists online.

**Knowledge creation**: An Internet specific concept wherein the participatory and argumentative nature of Internet involvement helps to sort out weak ideas from strong ideas, leading to closer approximations to fact.

**Disillusionment**: Feelings of long-term activists that the Internet has not produced significant change in the desired direction.

**Economic concerns**: The prohibitive cost of other media, and the relatively limited financial resources of citizen action, a common factor preceding entry into the Internet.

**Digital world**: The belief that the development of the Internet has created a new society, or ushered in a new phase in history. The belief that Internet skill and an Internet presence are necessary to function in this new era.

**Information society**: An Internet-based society in which spatial limits on information and ownership of information become relatively free.

**Solidarity**: A feeling of strength and belonging generated by the presence of ideologically agreeable Internet content, and acquaintance with other activists.

**Permanency**: The creation of a stable, enduring ideological position or body of information about oneself created by putting information online.

**Borderlessness**: The sense that as a result of the Internet barriers have been broken down or weakened. These barriers include geographic barriers, social barriers, economic barriers, and medium specific technological barriers.
Richness: A quality of Internet-based information and communication relating to the removal of the spatial and economic limits of prior media.

Sense of action: The feeling of empowerment that activists, who are often underpowered by other media, get that they are taking action by creating a web site, or the desire to have this feeling that leads to Internet involvement.

Exploration: Entering the Internet because it seems fun or adventuresome.

Circumventing gatekeepers: Direct local information on the conditions and political situation in a certain part of the world free of the filter of mainstream or official media.

Discovering the model

Data collection for this project began the last week of May 2003. Although most of the data collection was done in Tokyo, interviewing first began in the Osaka area. Beginning on May 27 and 28, interviews were conducted with two different reconciliatory activists who had been active in a successful bid to stamp out nationalist textbooks in the area. On May 28 another interview was conducted in Kobe with Fujimoto, a local activist from a nationalist movement. Of these three initial interviews, the wide-ranging discussion with Fujimoto was judged to be the most productive place to start the analysis.

Fujimoto Tatsuo and Japan Educational Ombudsman Association. Fujimoto Tatsuo was the first face encountered in this thesis from the nationalist side of the Japanese history textbook controversy. In response to an e-mail inquiry, Fujimoto had arranged to meet in a coffee shop inside a posh Kobe hotel. The frequent sight of angry men driving around in big black vans screaming nationalist propaganda through loudspeakers made meeting
with someone from a Japanese far-right group intimidating; however, Fujimoto proved to be a charismatic, polite, and friendly businessman. This encounter was to be a model of future encounters with nationalist activists who, eager to have their views understood, never failed to respond with courtesy.

Fujimoto was selected as an early participant in this thesis in connection with his group *Japan Educational Ombudsman Association*, a nationalist group based around a website posting and critiquing excerpts from history textbooks. This small group carries out almost all of its activities online, and is a good sample of purely Internet-based activism. Fujimoto’s involvement with this group however, has tied into major involvement with several other major projects that are much less dependent on the Internet, including *Tsukuru Kai*.

Internet involvement has not always been a positive experience for Fujimoto. He has received a great deal of angry e-mails from opposition groups, many carrying viruses, and he has also had to deal with repeated assaults on his server. More significant to Fujimoto, however, was not being able to see his political agenda of revising history textbooks succeed. This led him to report some disillusionment with the Internet. He reported great frustration with this issue, and indicated a growing preference to focus on economic issues. Still, Fujimoto asserted hope that political success in other areas would allow him to return to history textbook reform with more leverage in the future. He remains optimistic about the Internet, since he has had much more success with other political issues, particularly via Internet networking.

From Fujimoto’s comments several important categories and concepts were identified that were of great use in shaping the questions and issues for future data
collection. Many of these concepts eventually became key features in the final model as outlined above. The most central of all of these categories was the idea of the Internet as an anchor. Although the Japanese term for an anchor, Ikari, was never actually used, and this specific English label was not coded until later interviews, anchor is a good label for the idea expressed by Fujimoto and other activists of an Internet presence as a point of constancy and stability from which to launch and maintain political action. This central concept was first identified at this early stage of coding as a category to capture the idea of constancy and the Internet as a reference point, ideas which occurred frequently in this interview. As data collection progressed and further interviews were added it became apparent that many other concepts Fujimoto discussed, such as issue clusters, disclosure and exploration, fit into this idea as well. In all of these ideas the Internet serves as a constant resource for accomplishing important goals and methods of Internet activism on history textbooks.

Issue clusters for example, is the label given to the idea Fujimoto discussed of using linking between web pages to create a wide reaching network of issues to gather support into other areas of political action. Each issue or topic may be given its own web page or even attached to its own political action group, which are in turn connected to each other via the Internet. Linking between issues allows an activist to draw support for other issues of importance as each topic attracts interest over the Internet. This concept helps to delineate the central feature of this model by showing how the existence of a web page within a web of linked content serves as an anchor for recruiting action. Fujimoto talked specifically about recruiting muscle for his economic agenda based on interest his
textbook site had generated. Describing the role of the Internet in this process, Fujimoto notes that the role of the Internet is exceedingly large. The reason I say it is very large is because there is a link on Educational Ombudsman that comes here to the *Nihon Keizai wo Hukkatsu no Kai* [Japan economic recovery society]. This too is one of the wonderful parts of the Internet, gathering people with the same way of thinking from all over Japan . . . (personal communication, May 28, 2003)

Linking between issues need not be a passive process restricted only to the Internet, however, as cross-issue recruiting also occurs after virtual relationships have become real world relationships through cooperation on political action.

Another aspect of the final model of Internet activism that this early interview revealed was the relationship between political reality and an activist’s evaluation of the Internet. In the context of this discussion of the Internet and history textbook reform Fujimoto expressed significant disappointment in the power of the Internet. As Fujimoto explained his feelings of disappointment about the Internet he revealed that to him the significance of the Internet was limited only to its ability to provide him with success in his final objective of changing the way that history was taught in junior high schools. In other words, for an activist the Internet is not really interesting as a curiosity, but only as a tool for changing society.

Fujimoto’s disillusionment with the Internet is a concept that was at first difficult to tie into the rest of the model. As data collection and coding progressed this idea remained unexplained in the list of categories and concepts, not really going anywhere. Attempts were made to elaborate on this idea in future interviews. In general, however,
activists preferred to answer questions related to this point by listing specific positive and negative consequences of Internet activism, rather than declaring a final opinion on the effectiveness of the Internet. Because of this, the category “disillusionment” which was so apparent within Fujimoto’s comments remained an orphaned and unexplained concept, not specifically related to other concepts brought out in later coding. Stepping back and looking at the data more broadly however, it became easy to see how, with Fujimoto, the concept of disillusionment is but one end of a range of feelings spanning from disillusionment to optimism. Although when restricted to the question of history textbook reform Fujimoto’s comments revealed great disillusionment, he in turn expressed optimism about the Internet when discussing success that he had had in other fields. Overall Fujimoto expressed a great deal of optimism about the Internet, particularly related to success in his economic platform. However, when discussing textbook reform, the overriding feeling about the Internet was clearly one of disillusionment. The most interesting part of this idea then becomes not the simple existence of either of these two emotions, but the way that Fujimoto based these feelings on real world events, rather than inherent qualities of the Internet.

A similar range of emotional judgments can be identified in the comments of other activists. Along these lines the right clearly shows more caution and disillusionment than the left, while the left feels good about the Internet, further expanding the growing picture of a distinct left and right experience of the Internet. These value judgments are based primarily on the fact that the Internet does seem better suited to the use the left has applied to it than the use that the right has applied to it. However the total success or failure of one’s agenda clearly plays into that feeling. A good example of this comes from
comparing the optimism of Kyoto activists to the pessimism expressed by Okumura, an activist from Ehime-prefecture. In Ehime, the left is the side that has seen their agenda threatened, and Okumura does express a much more guarded tone regarding the Internet than do Kyoto activists, who have had much greater success driving out *Tskuru Kai.*

*Kyoto City Councilman Tsunogae Yutaka.* Tsunogae Yutaka, the first participant in this thesis, is a city councilman from Kyoto. Quite different from Fujimoto, Tsunogae is a longtime politician. He is a member of the *Komei* Party, a powerful Japanese political party that is tied to the *Sokka Gakkai* Buddhist sect, and part of the current ruling coalition in the national Diet. Tsunogae was identified to participate in this thesis because he posted a lengthy speech on history textbook reform on his web page. Tsunogae had originally delivered the speech to the Kyoto city council in June 2001.

For Tsunogae the Internet serves as a supplement to his personal political activities. Since he is a city councilman he does not have a large budget or need for mass media, compared to a major politician. The Internet is a way for him to extend the reach of his campaigning and to stay in touch with his constituents at a low cost. Although the Internet is not central to his activities, Tsunogae has been online for a relatively long time, reportedly opening his website five or six years earlier, about 1997. He feels optimistic about the Internet, and feels that it will have a strong impact on society.

For Tsunogae the Internet has been primarily a means for interpersonal communication. Most of the time when he speaks of the Internet he is referring to e-mail, and not the World Wide Web. Although Tsunogae showed awareness of the potential mass communication tendencies of the World Wide Web, he did not feel that he had put enough effort into trying to “voice his opinion” via the Internet. On the other hand,
Tsunogae did show a higher awareness of the dual nature of the Internet as a tool for both interpersonal and mass communication, than was encountered in many later interviews. Tsunogae remained one of the only participants to voluntarily make this distinction without direct questioning on this point, indicating that this is probably not a significant distinction to many Internet activists.

As the tendency to view the Internet as a tool for e-mail and interpersonal communication, rather than mass communication or persuasion, began to become apparent in later interviews, this topic was identified for deeper exploration. Although all of the participants in this thesis did maintain web pages, for many this was simply not the focus of their Internet activity. For many, the homepage itself seemed to be an obligatory aspect of Internet use, but it was clearly not the most significant aspect of utilizing the Internet. This trend held up particularly well on the left, in the reconciliatory movement. It became apparent that these groups tended to use the Internet to organize, rather than to persuade. For the right, the intent to persuade was much more common, reflecting an observed operational difference between groups on the left and groups on the right that forms a central feature of the final model. Although these differences represent a significant difference, the basic model of the Internet as an anchor proposed in this thesis accounts well for both of these distinct patterns, which serve as a key parameter for defining this central element of this model.

*Togashi Yutaka and Kokoro wo Tsunagu Network.* The next interview to be coded was Togashi Yutaka, a young political activist from Kyoto. Togashi is a full-time employee of the Japan Communist Party, who started an informal action group with his friends to fight against the revisionist textbook movement. Togashi was drawn into the fray by the
comments of a Kyoto City Councilman from the LDP denying WWII war atrocities in Nanking and sex-slavery in Korea. Togashi and a group of friends organized to protest this new current in local politics. Based on their primary objection to the revisionist movement, Togashi and his friends named their group *Kokoro wo Tunagu Network*, or Heart-to-Heart Network, capturing the idea of connecting to other Asian nations.

Togashi and his group had more or less ceased activity by the time I met them. The primary activity of the group had revolved around collecting signatures for a petition to the Kyoto City Council demanding that they not adopt revisionist textbooks. True to their name, the group tried hard to reach people overseas, particularly in Korea. As part of this goal the group also produced an English-language web site, which included a form for non-Japanese speakers to add their names to the petition.

*Kokoro wo Tsunagu Network* was ultimately just one part of a very well organized opposition to the revisionist movement in the Kyoto area. Revisionist groups never made much progress in Kansai and particularly not in Kyoto. After delivering their petition, and seeing the opposition subside, *Kokoro wo Tsunagu Network* halted activities. Although Togashi insists that they are still vigilant, as of the time of this writing, his web site layout was outdated and many links broken. The site is one of a handful of slowly disintegrating web-sites from areas of the country where reconciliatory movements have slipped into inactivity due to lack of a credible threat from revisionist groups.

This interview was key in clarifying and developing the concept of the Internet as an anchor. The earliest concepts labeled as an anchor came from the interviews with Tsunogae and Togashi. It was not until Togashi’s interview was coded however, that the overwhelmingly central role of this concept in understanding history textbook Internet
activism began to become apparent. Togashi described the central social role that the Internet had come to play his activism. Echoing comments made by Tsunogae, Togashi spoke of information stored on the Internet serving as a source for reference in conversations with others. By relying on this information to elaborate or clarify their views, these activists found that other media, and other interactions could be made more efficient. When crunched for space or time it was relatively simple to refer others to the potentially unlimited amount of information stored online. This information is unlimited because it includes not just content that the activist has personally uploaded, but the potentially infinite universe of related ideas that the activist directs to the receiver through linking. Examining the concept of the Internet as an anchor in this light demonstrates that this concept, that of the Internet as a reference point or anchor for information, can be divided into the two related concepts of information society and social network.

Looking first at information society, the Internet as an anchor concept becomes a key for understanding what this abundance of information actually means to activists. Because the term information society is such a widely mentioned aspect of the Internet it carries with itself an incredible amount of baggage in preconceptions about how the Internet functions and what it means to society, and it is used as a label here only with great caution. The anchor concept is central to clarifying the meaning of this phrase from the common usage, by defining it in terms of what the massive amount of information the Internet offers means to activists. Specifically, this information serves as an anchor for persuasion and interaction. The body of information that an activist is associated with online becomes a tool to reveal to others who these activists are and what they believe in.
Additionally, although the concepts that lead to the development of this idea were identified originally from leftist reconciliatory activists, there is no reason to assume that this concept does not hold true on the right, as Fujimoto illuminated many of these same concepts. This model applies equally well to the left’s concept of the Internet as a tool (anchor) for organization, and to the right’s tendency to view the Internet as an anchor for persuasion.

The category of social network also helps to elaborate the concept of anchor. As described by Togashi and Tsunogae data stored on the Internet becomes a source for introductions and revealing oneself to others. This process is important in developing a social network. Togashi describes how the Internet serves as an anchor point for self-introduction:

With a homepage when you introduce yourself to someone you don’t have to spend all day explaining- by just saying “look at my homepage please” if you look at each other’s pages you can see as much as you want about that person. Introductions become easy, without exchanging e-mail you can go to that person’s homepage and see things like “Ah they are linked to this organization.” Because you can understand where they are at currently, I regularly look at groups in this way, even now. (personal communication, May 28, 2003)

Beyond simply referencing someone to the homepage as a process of clarifying one’s views, this process also includes leaving oneself open for exploration and discovery by others, regardless of one’s own actions. The role of linking in this process is exceedingly important. Beyond anything someone can say about himself or herself in person or on a homepage, by looking at the pattern of links on a web page, an activist can
understand a great deal about where a person really stands. Additionally, Togashi
describes a process where, through horizontal relationships, e-mails are forwarded
beyond the reach of their original recipients. This process is largely beyond the control of
the individual activist. By creating a web presence and participating in Internet activism,
activists draw attention to themselves far beyond the reach of their own immediate social
contacts. The Internet serves as an important anchor point for establishing these
relationships.

_Fujioka Nobukatsu and Jiyuu Shugi Shikan Kenkyuukai_. The next participant in this study
was Fujioka Nobukatsu. Fujioka is one of the ideological heads of the revisionist
movement, his name well-known among activists on both sides of the issue. The
interview with Fujioka was carried out in his office, a converted apartment with all
internal walls removed to create a large room. The office was crowded with books and
magazines, including countless copies of books and pamphlets awaiting distribution.
There was a long conference table in the middle of the room, and a computer against the
wall, where a basically silent assistant continued to toil away throughout the interview. A
woman in her thirties sat in on the interview. She had spent significant time abroad, and
volunteered for Fujioka translating web pages and materials into English, making this
group one of the only groups in this sample that had put significant effort into translating
web content into English. She commented extensively, eager to tell her story of
discovering Fujioka and being attracted to his work. Fujioka Nobukatsu himself was soft
spoken and serious. As the interview progressed he proved to be friendly, but cautious.
He often took time to think, and did his best to answer each question with precision.
One thing that became rapidly apparent with Fujioka was the similarity of his ideas about the Internet to those of Fujimoto. Fujioka and his group viewed the Internet first and foremost as a tool for persuasion and mass communication. Coordination and interpersonal communication, although enhanced by the Internet, were generally reserved for telephone, meetings, and direct contact. This was also one of the only nationalist groups to produce a newsletter, showing a clear awareness of the importance of organization and coordination, however these activities had not been moved online.

Different expectations of the Internet brought with them entirely different results for Fujioka, leading to a much more guarded appraisal of the overall value and effectiveness of the Internet. For Fujioka, the purpose of the Internet was to persuade, and the success of that persuasion was measured by the success of his agenda. His agenda had not yet succeeded the way he wanted it to and to him this reflected badly on the Internet. This was very similar to the experience of Fujimoto, although Fujimoto had experienced a sort of redemption of the Internet by branching out into different political issues.

Fujioka’s interview revealed only a few new concepts. Much of the comments focused on how the volunteer who translated Fujioka’s page into English discovered the group. While this made the interview a little long, good examples of several previous categories were found and elaborated. In particular, Fujioka’s answer when asked about the purpose of the Internet to his organization was very useful for elaborating the central model, by showing how the Internet functions as an anchor not only for interpersonal communication as described by Togashi, but also as a source of permanency for persuasive communications as well. Fujioka explains that the original goal of the Internet for his group was “to let people correct [their understanding of] what it is that we are
really thinking even a little. We began with the Internet because we would like it to become that window, that reception area.” (personal communication, June 2003)

Additionally, Fujioka touched on some ideas mentioned by Fujimoto about using the Internet as a tool for creating knowledge, which helped to further define the concept of information society as an attribute of anchor. History textbook activists believed strongly in the Internet as a tool that allowed them to take control of information. For Fujioka an important part of the Internet and his overall agenda were creating knowledge by agitating the public debate. This harmonized well with Fujimoto’s belief that by stirring up debate we move towards truth or better knowledge. In this way the Internet becomes an anchor for creating knowledge as users put their version of truth on the Internet where it becomes available to the public debate. In this way the Internet is changing the nature of information, empowering activists to use the Internet as a tool for taking control of information. Both of these activists hoped that this process would inevitably lead the public to their conception of history and the way it should be taught in schools.

Another aspect of shifting patterns of control over information that was important to Fujioka was the power to circumvent gatekeepers. This concept was very similar to the idea of citizen journalist, which other participants described. Although other activists were referring specifically to circumventing the mass media, Fujioka was referring to circumventing schoolteachers and other authority figures. This concept further illustrates the way in which activists describe the Internet as a tool for taking control of information from official sources, shifting the nature of information and power. One way Fujioka planned to accomplish this was by establishing his website as an all-purpose reference for
children studying history, and thereby encouraging them to come directly to Fujioka for information rather than their teachers. Fujioka describes his goal of creating a permanent presence for children to come to without going through their teachers.

By doing that we can have the children, junior high, and high school students learn directly of our ideas without having to go through teachers. We want it to speak of a correct knowledge about Japanese history, which cannot be stolen, but also interesting. We want to make [the website] into that kind of trigger. (personal communication, June 2003)

Okumura Etsuo and Peace Ehime. Okumura Etsuo, a peace activist in the small town of Imabari in Ehime Prefecture was one of the final participants in this thesis. The first encounter with Okumura was on the evening of November 9 in Matsuyama City where local reconciliatory activists were holding a strategy session. This was followed by a formal interview on November 10, conducted at Okumura’s business in the small town of Imabari. Okumura’s case is particularly important, because it is the only case in this study involving a small-town activist. Moreover, Ehime was the only area of Japan where Tsukuru Kai textbooks had been officially adopted. Although it would have been nice to meet with members of both sides of the issue in this unique environment, Okumura was the only activist in the area that could be identified. Because of his unique situation, Okumura’s interview was selected as the final case for complete transcription and formal coding. The late coding of this distinct and wide-ranging interview was highly useful for clarifying key aspects of the developing model as well as confirming the saturation of the data.
Okumura is a small-town peace activist who has taken it upon himself to be involved with as many different political issues as possible, determined to leave no major issue uncovered due to lack of support in his rural area. The first evening in Ehime was spent observing Okumura and about 20 other activists from around the prefecture at a planning meeting. One of the activists, a lawyer in a purple suit, was giving a lecture about the legal steps in pursuing one of what would eventually become around a dozen lawsuits filed by Ehime activists against the prefecture. This particular lawsuit was seeking monetary damages for pain and suffering caused to the activists through rough treatment by the courts, which had all but ignored their original lawsuit over the adoption of the *Tsukuru Kai* textbook.

A formal interview was held with Okumura at his business, a comic book shop, where he maintained an office for Peace Ehime above the garage. Okumura epitomized the trend among reconciliatory groups to use the Internet for interpersonal communications and organizational purposes. For Okumura the biggest contribution of the Internet had been in replacing many functions of his fax list with an Internet mailing list. By using an e-mail list, activists from any part of the country could easily coordinate activities and monitor conditions in other areas of the country with great effectiveness. Okumura described a three-pronged communications strategy with e-mail, mailing lists, and fax lists. As the newest part of this strategy e-mail was fast and unlimited in the amount of information it allowed. However, Okumura was also concerned that this debate over World War II attracted a high number of elderly World War II era members. Many of these members did not use the Internet. Additionally, because of the cost of computing, Okumura worried about the fairness of relying too much on the Internet in
citizen activism. Because of this, Okumura expressed the intention to keep up the fax list and mailing list.

Another interesting thing that Okumura brought up was the use of cellular phones to send reports on legal proceedings directly from hearings. This is one of the only mentions of this trend among all the activists in this sample. When Okumura and his group became caught up in protesting the selection of the *Tsukuru Kai* textbook they could not spare staff from the hearings to send fax updates or even e-mail updates from a computer terminal. The activists on site were able to send updates to the entire mailing list every 30 minutes, punching messages into cellular phones. Okumura feels sure that the first time they did this, in August 2001, was the first time portable phones were used this way in political action in Japan.

Okumura also expanded on the idea of creating a network of homepages through linking. By building on the relative strengths of each activist or group a sophisticated network can be created. Because of this, activists do not need to worry about producing content outside of their area of expertise. For Okumura this expertise comes from extensive battles with courts, government, and school boards. His homepage focuses on making the information gathered from these activities including letters and forms available to other areas. Okumura is therefore not particularly concerned with persuasion or targeting his own page to the general public, feeling that this sort of persuasive site is better left to "scientists" and others who can specifically address the issues involved with *Tsukuru Kai* textbooks.

This idea of an informal network built on the skills of each independent group and individual provides important elaboration of the category of social network. For Okumura
the power that linking to other activists gives him to overcome his own limitations is a highly significant part of the Internet. The reason that he has noticed this so much more than other activists is certainly partly to do with the fact that he is a small-town activist, one who must tackle many issues. It is not possible for him to tackle each issue on his own. The process of searching out other web sites to link to has made him more aware of this aspect of the Internet.

Study of Okumura and Peace Ehime was also interesting because it provided one of the best pieces of evidence that suggests differences in how the left and the right view the Internet. In Ehime prefecture, where revisionists have had a powerful hold on the government, it was very difficult to identify any instance of the right going online at all. It could very well be the case that, because the primary purpose of Internet involvement for the right has been one of persuasion, revisionist activists have not felt a need to bolster their persuasive power with the Internet here. Moreover, the activities of Okumura and Peace Ehime also provide the very best fit of the developing model of leftist Internet action found in all of the interviews. For this Ehime leftist group coordinating and reporting on action is, overwhelmingly, the majority of their Internet action.

Okumura’s interview served mostly to shed light on categories discovered previously. Although he talked long and in great detail he was mostly elaborating on or confirming ideas that had been identified earlier, indicating that the data was starting to reach some level of saturation. One new concept that seemed to be particularly important included his concerns about the cost of computers and Internet services, age gaps, and insufficient diffusion, which can all be categorized as concerns about the fairness (or
unfairness) of the Internet. Although Okumura had been successful using the Internet in his activities he had significant reservations about its fairness.

Okumura also revealed much more detail about the use of an Internet social network to set up a fence around an issue to guard it from the opposition. This idea had occurred frequently in other interviews, but never before with such emphasis. Okumura relied heavily on this sort of network, and felt this sort of Internet-based coordination between different regions to be crucial. Okumura devoted a lot of his own time to creating a library of resources for activists in other areas dealing with school boards and courts. By focusing on his own experiences and linking to other sites, he did not need to expend effort on areas beyond his expertise. As each activist uses the Internet to provide his own area of social strength to others a strong network is created and coordination is accomplished without too much actual planning, or even contact with other activists he may not yet know. The Internet thereby serves as a central anchor point for connecting to other activists. Okumura observed:

Of course there is the question of the skills of the staff. For example there is a type of web page that can only be made by a researcher after all. So there is a type of page that can only be produced by citizen action groups actually involved in that action in the field. I think there is that sort of role for each homepage. In that way the Ehime homepage is there to convey the conditions in the field from the field. Not only that, but to provide the materials in a form that even working by themselves activists in each area can prepare them for use. (personal communication, Nov. 2003)
Creating a library of information to help activists in other areas is a good illustration of how the concept of Anchor ties the informational aspect of the Internet and information society to the social network, as activists use the Internet to coordinate action and information with other activists. In this way Okumura’s detailed descriptions of this process of coordination provided critical information for tying the final model together, and clarifying the relationship between information and coordination.

The concept of coordination, an important concept captured under the category of social network, ties very well into the model of the Internet as an anchor. As elaborated by Togashi, this process is not always necessarily a process of specifically planning action with other activists, so much as making other activists aware of one’s own actions by making that information available online, and adjusting those actions based on information provided by other activists online. This description specifically refers to a sort of very low-level coordination with a great number of widely dispersed others, who share an ideological agreement on one or more issues. This coordination might never involve specific person-to-person interaction, but it can easily evolve into this sort of high-level close interpersonal planning and coordinated action if a local or national threat requires it. The best example of this type of interaction comes from Okumura who is a key participant in an active Internet mailing list coordinating textbook activists from all over the country. Through this mailing list Okumura is able to draw supporters from all over the country to Ehime to pack courtrooms and school board hearings whenever necessary. By ensuring a large turnout at each stage of litigation, Okumura is able to keep the courts from sweeping his group under the rug as they have done in the past. In this
way coordination functions of the Internet serve as an anchor; by keeping social networks
current and ready to rise to whatever level of action is necessary.

These examples paint a basic picture of the role that the Internet plays as an
anchor. As activists increasingly become involved in the Internet they rely on it as a
reference point in an ever-increasing variety of circumstances. Moreover, although
information on the Internet is in reality vulnerable to a wide range of viruses and other
assaults activists view this information as a source of permanency. They rely on it to
establish their presence within their world, and to reveal the place of others within that
world. In this way the Internet provides a sense of security and reference for many other
aspects of their day-to-day lives and their political action.
Chapter 7

Implications for Theory on Technology and Society

This chapter attempts to place the model of Internet activism detailed in Chapter 6 within the larger context of theory on the relationship between technology and society. As identified in Chapter 3, one major theory relevant to the relationship between the Internet and society is McLuhan’s classic theory of technological determinism, which theorizes a direction of effect from inherent traits of technology towards society. Although this thesis did not identify a strong relationship of this type, this model does indicate a few areas where McLuhan’s ideas are revealing. The second major area of theory of this type identified for this thesis is the newer framework of social shaping of technologies, which describes a direction of influence from society towards technology. This theory appears to be the most applicable to this thesis. Additionally, social shaping of technologies fits most nearly the specific ideas about the relationship between the Internet and society expressed by textbook activists.

Evidence for technological determinism

Although signs of social shaping of the new technology of the Internet were most prevalent, and in spite of the fact that activists openly believed in human control, there are a few trends that seem to indicate that inherent characteristics of the Internet are shaping the use of the Internet. The model developed by this research of the Internet as an anchor appears to be friendly to this theory. Specifically, the practices surrounded by the use of the Internet as an anchor seem to fit well with McLuhan’s idea of new media consuming past media for content. In the case of the Internet, the new media has
consumed not only pre-existing media for content, but also interpersonal forms of
communication.

For history textbook activists, the Internet has not become a medium for strictly
interpersonal communication, nor has it become a tool for persuasive mass
communication. It is the anchor aspect of the Internet that allows it to fulfill both of these
attributes at once. This aspect of the Internet has changed the way that activists interact
with each other on many levels. By maintaining a web presence, activists put their beliefs
on the line for others to see. This is not a simple act of communication but a pool of
information about one’s self that is constantly in flux as an activist changes and adds
content, and as patterns of linking between pages changes. This pool of information
becomes a tool for persuasion, as well as a tool in interpersonal interaction with others.

Activists can learn about each other much more efficiently, seeking out an almost
unlimited amount of information about each person based on the picture that person
paints online through content and links. This aspect of the Internet has greatly
streamlined interpersonal interaction, as well as inter-group and intra-group
communications. Activists introduce their homepage as part of themselves and encourage
others to learn more about them through the homepage. Communication is also
streamlined because of this anchor point, an activist can reference their homepage
whenever needed, inviting listeners to elaborate on each point of a conversation, thus
allowing the activist to compress presentation of views or information to the time allowed
by the situation.

The communication skills of the individual activist are key to this aspect of the
homepage. In this way the activist becomes a marketer of the web page. When an activist
is effective in building up interest in an issue or point, the activist will then be able to reference the web page. If the activist is not effective there is a good chance that the receiver will not go to the trouble of seeking out the information online, and an opportunity will be lost. For an effective activist a quick introduction may be all that is required to draw someone to their web page, with its potentially unlimited supply of information and persuasive power.

Activists frequently expressed reservations about this passive nature of the Internet however. They felt that with the traditional media of activism, fax, mail, and telephone there was more certainty that the message was reaching its audience. Because of this activists have not abandoned these media. These media too have been changed, however, becoming in some ways media for marketing the web page with its unlimited amount of information. The web page address is included in all communications, and activists try to draw receivers online where they can be reach a greater understanding.

This concept of the Internet as subverting all of these other media is remarkably well-fitted to McLuhan’s concept of new media turning prior media into content. This finding is in line with Levinson (1999) who identifies this overlooked concept as one of the key insights that McLuhan brings to the dialogue over the Internet. Levinson adds that although the Internet has broad potential to subvert all media, the text-based input method of computers makes the written word the “common denominator” of prior media becoming Internet content.

This concept is particularly useful in explaining the activities of the activists in this study, who have not previously relied on audio-visual media such as television or radio, but have focused on text-based media such as books, newsletters, and fax lists as
their primary means of communication. Although these media are all still used, the Internet has definitely changed their role. Because these media are costly and difficult to use they begin to take on a supplementary role to an activist’s web presence. The web presence is a constant point of reference for all of these other media, which refer back to the web presence and draw people into it. Moreover, many of these media, particularly the fax list, have been almost completely replaced by the Internet in the form of e-mail.

The web presence also becomes a constant point of reference for interpersonal communications as well, consuming some aspects of interpersonal interactions in addition to mass communication. When activists rely on their web presence to fill in information, interpersonal communications can be more streamlined and less detailed. This excess information that is no longer communicated directly has in essence become content for the Internet. This effect constitutes an effect that although not necessarily technologically determined at least represents a major tenet of McLuhan’s ideas.

In spite of these findings, the question remains one of whether or not the aspects of the Internet reflected in this study actually represent an inherent trait of the medium that is having an effect on activists, or rather whether activists are applying a pre-existing need to the Internet. It does seem certain that the mixed utility of the Internet for both interpersonal and mass communication represents an inherent property of the medium, as it is currently constituted. However, this still does not really address the issue of whether or not the Internet could have taken another form, if different social needs had driven its creation.
**Social shaping of the Internet**

Although the advent Internet has clearly brought with it changes in the behavior of activists, much of this behavior change clearly comes from activists taking their pre-existing fundamental strategy for activism and applying it to the Internet. Activists of all types engage in the hope that open-minded receivers who can be persuaded, or better yet recruited to their point of view, will discover their web page. They have also experienced greatly improved interpersonal communication. These are not necessarily automatic benefits of Internet activism however, but reflect needs that activists have brought to the Internet. The choices activists make in how to use the Internet have a great deal to do with the shape that the Internet has taken, and the skills that activists have developed through years of experience with other media are a powerful determiner of the effect of the Internet.

Most tellingly, the shape that the Internet has taken for history textbook activists is in large part a reflection of their pre-existing experiences. On the left, activists have traditionally relied on interpersonal methods of communication such as newsletters and fax lists. Although the fax list is has been mostly replaced, Internet activities approximating the same function, particularly e-mail, are still regarded as an important part of their Internet activities for reconciliatory activists. The effectiveness of these activities seems to have improved as information moves more quickly around the country. However, the direction of effect in this case is clearly from activists to the Internet.

On the right, where there is more experience with mass media, there is more of a focus on persuasion. Although some groups on this side of the issue use the newsletter, there is much less indication of fax lists or other types of mass mobilization. For the
revisionist, the goal of media usage has always been trying to persuade as many people as possible of their point of view. Rather than trying to coordinate day-to-day political action, these groups have sought to create a national ideological shift in their own direction. Before the Internet, these groups published heavily, and their Internet usage reflects this. Within this sample web pages on the right are argumentative and persuasive, more so than is seen on the left.

The model of Internet and society painted by the activists interviewed for this study is primarily one of new technologies being shaped by society. However it is also clear that as they have used the Internet new patterns of behavior have developed. This process is expressed well in McQuail’s model (2001) summarizing the state of technology and society research as first introduced in Chapter 3 of this thesis. This model of new technology being first applied to pre-existing uses—which in turn lead to changes in old uses and subsequent development of new uses—accurately reflects the narrative of the textbook activists. Within the scope of this thesis it is apparent that as the Internet has developed, activists have applied this technology first to existing patterns of political action. In this process new uses have also developed as the Internet began to open up new possibilities and techniques to the activists. According to McQuail’s model it can be expected that this process will lead to further cultural change, and eventually the development of new technologies.

*The Last Word on Social Shaping of Technologies: Activist beliefs about the Internet and Society*

Although this study revealed evidence for both technological determinism and social shaping of technologies, one thing that is clear is that the activists themselves
believe that they are shaping the Internet. These activists believe that the effect the Internet will have on society is very much in the hands of humans. They also expressed some skepticism that people would not ultimately make the decisions that would most empower the Internet to have a positive effect on society.

Near the end of each interview activists were always asked what kind of effect they pictured the Internet having on Japanese politics in the future. This was a troublesome question because with an interviewer coming from the other side of the world to interview them about the Internet, it would be very easy for interviewees to momentarily overestimate the impact of the Internet. Additionally, it was feared that activists would tend to overstate the impact of the Internet because they did not want to provide a boring answer after a researcher had made the effort to come to Japan from overseas.

It did indeed turn out that most activists would start out by reporting that the Internet was going to have a large impact on politics whether their preceding comments indicated otherwise or not. However, after offering this possibly sacrificial answer, activists consistently asserted that the ultimate effect of the Internet was entirely a matter of the way that we chose to use it. Additionally, the nuance and the tone of this oft-repeated statement clearly indicated that due to human shortcomings the effect of the Internet on politics would probably not reach its full potential. In their final rejection of McLuhan, activists not only believed that humanity held ultimate control over the effect of the Internet, but consistently expressed skepticism that humanity would shape the Internet into a tool that would revolutionize society in a good way.
Chapter 8
Conclusions

The role of the Internet continues to evolve in Japan as in other countries. The final effect that this technology will have on society, and the final shape that human beings will choose for this new medium remains to be seen. This qualitative thesis has highlighted several important forms that this medium is going to take. In addition to developing a model to account for a broad range of activity by Internet activists, this thesis has also provided unique insight into ongoing theoretical questions about the relationship between new technology and society.

The model of the Internet as an anchor for other media and political activities developed by this research promises to explain a great deal of Internet-based political action. Although activists rely on a great variety of media and interpersonal strategies to further their cause, all of these activities increasingly point back to the web page, indicating the growing central importance of this technology. This model for viewing the Internet as an anchor or a base for political action and interaction of all sorts is a very useful tool for understanding changing patterns of human interaction with new media.

Additionally, this model may usefully be expanded to account for a much of the usage of the Internet in business and personal communications. Although the political nature of the sample for this study limits the ability to generalize these findings to other areas, some applicability is apparent. For example, activists described using the web page as an anchor point for self-disclosure in interactions of many kinds, notably self-introduction. It is evident that this sort of behavior also occurs in business and personal circles, where people are increasingly relying on their web presence as an information...
base for self-disclosure. Additionally this concept also promises to be useful in defining the role of newer technology such as the personal computer or cellular phone, which are central to developing an Internet-based personal presence. Further research on the applicability of the anchor concept is certainly called for to clarify its applicability in these additional areas.

In addition to developing this useful model, this study has further clarified theoretical issues relevant to the development of new technologies such as the Internet. Although activists revealed aspects of the Internet that appeared to be shaping their activities based on some sort of inherent trait of the Internet, there was also very strong evidence indicating that activists actively shape this new media according to their own needs. In the end a mixed model was supported indicating a circular process by which activists first applied the Internet to pre-existing techniques and strategies. In the course of this application new uses developed. According to McQuail’s model (2001) we can expect that those new uses will change institutions and organizations, which will in turn lead to a continued cycle of evolving needs and continuing technological development.

The History Textbook controversy in 2005

As of the time of this writing, a new round of battles about teaching history is set to begin throughout Japan and Asia. Selection of textbooks by local school districts is conducted every four years in Japan, and the next selection is to be carried out in 2005. As this issue continues to unfold opportunities to observe how the Internet is used will continue to abound. It will be revealing to see how decisions by local school boards to adopt or reject the Tsukuru Kai textbook in different areas of the country bring different groups into action on both the left and the right in the future. In particular it will be
interesting to contrast how changing political climates change the overall strategies of
groups on the right and the left. For instance, if the right begins to see the adoption of the
Tsukuru Kai textbook in Ehime threatened by lawsuits it will be interesting to see if a
rightist group structured similarly to Peace Ehime emerges. The differences between the
activism of the left and the right observed in this study may reflect more of a difference
in political advantage rather than any inherent difference in ideological strategy.

It may also turn out that as activists’ experience with the Internet becomes deeper
that Internet usage will converge. It is feasible that groups that initially turned to the
Internet for interpersonal communications, may eventually focus more on mass
communication once immediate needs have been met, while groups that have
concentrated on establishing a persuasive presence will in turn develop the Internet into a
more effective tool for organization. If this sort of result develops it would again be a
strong indication that the differences observed between right and left in this study are a
function of the relative political advantage of the left.

The central governments approval of the controversial Tsukuru Kai textbooks
stands unaltered, but the actual decision to use that textbook remains in the hands of the
local school boards. Because of this the extent that this issue turns into a major political
crisis again in the next year is very much in the hands of local governments. Although the
adoption of the Tsukuru Kai textbook has spawned nearly a dozen lawsuits in Ehime
Prefecture over the last few years, it appears that the book is headed for at least another
four years of use in that area. Additionally, the city of Hiroshima is threatening to turn
into a new hotspot. The Hiroshima textbook selection committee appears keen to adopt
the Tsukuru Kai book, and has stirred up a frenzy of action by the Japanese left through
aggressive action—most notably doctoring up *Tsukuru Kai* propaganda to appear as independent research, and distributing that information to the public.

Although aggressive action by nationalist groups in Japan such as has gone on in Hiroshima and Ehime poses a significant threat to Asian relations, it should also be noted that this sort of nationalistic behavior is a problem that infects much of Asia. Additionally and in favor of Japanese nationalist groups, it should be noted that the history textbook controversy is just one of many particularly divisive issues of national identity that leftist activists have successfully fought since the end of WWII. These issues include leftist attacks on Yasukuni Shrine, a religious landmark of great importance to many Japanese, as well as leftist opposition to maintaining an active military, singing the national anthem, and pledging allegiance to the flag. Additionally, the Japanese left consistently sides with Korea and China on political disputes of all kinds, including touchy issues such as how to deal with past North Korean abductions of Japanese citizens, in which the views of the Japanese left are the opposite of the majority Japanese citizens. It is clear that until leftist activists in Japan begin to compromise on many of these other important cultural issues of great importance to their fellow citizens, and allow room for responsible outlet of patriotic feeling, support for nationalist groups and revisionist movements will continue to grow.
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