

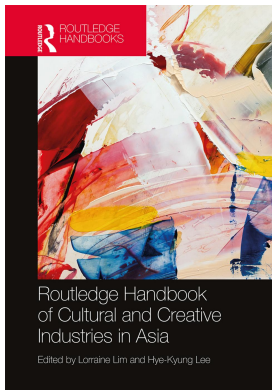
This article was downloaded by: 10.3.98.93

On: 15 Sep 2019

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



Routledge Handbook of Cultural and Creative Industries in Asia

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Governance and policy development of creative and cultural industries in Japan

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315660509-4>

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Published online on: 18 Dec 2018

How to cite :- Christian Morgner. 18 Dec 2018, *Governance and policy development of creative and cultural industries in Japan from: Routledge Handbook of Cultural and Creative Industries in Asia* Routledge

Accessed on: 15 Sep 2019

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315660509-4>

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Governance and policy development of creative and cultural industries in Japan

Christian Morgner

The latest report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2010: XXIII) indicates that exports of creative or cultural goods were worth US \$592 million, which accounts for about 7 percent of world GDP. The global creative and cultural industries have shown considerable growth (nearly 15 percent) over the last ten years, even in the wake of the financial crisis in 2008. These developments reinforce the picture of the creative economy as a key driver of the world economy. In this global market, Japan is usually seen as a successful export economy and is among the top ten exporters of creative goods (UNCTAD 2010: 132). This international success is largely attributed to Japan's advances in new technologies, gaming, and anime (Hemmert and Oberländer 1998; Westlund and Caldoni-Lundberg 2007; Tschang 2009). In the global creative and cultural industries strongly influenced by US products, Japan's dominance in the global videogame, animation, and comics market can be seen as an exception. Videogaming was invented by Atari, but this market would not have become a global industry without companies like Nintendo and Sony. As demonstrated by Aoyama and Izushi (2003), this success can be attributed to the social and historical foundations of a creative imaginary of vibrant cartoons and animation films, in combination with a highly skilled and innovative consumer electronics industry.

Despite the configuration of the gaming industry within Japan, however, its artistic and creative potential is largely ignored. Although videogames play a significant role in the global cultural industry, they appear 'culturally odourless' (Iwabuchi 1998) in that they do not compete with cultural icons from the USA or *haute culture* products in film and the arts. Indeed, few studies or publications currently focus on the development of cultural and creative industries policy within Japan, and only a few government schemes foreground such policies. Recent publications in this area have focused mainly on China, South Korea, and Singapore or creative cities like Shanghai, Seoul, or Hong Kong (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Yusuf and Nabeshima 2005; Kong and O'Connor 2009; UNCTAD 2010; Howkins 2013; Flew 2013). Lee and Lim's (2014) publication on cultural policies and creative industries in East Asia also devoted most attention to China, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan, with only minor reference to Japan.

In focusing on cultural policy development at municipal and national levels within Japan and the rise of the creative industries, the present chapter looks at early-twentieth-century initiatives – in particular, those following the cultural restoration during the Meiji period. It is worth noting that terms such as *creative industries* and *creative economy* did not exist in Japan before the 1990s, although notions of culture and cultural identity were prevalent in governmental schemes and initiatives before that time. The chapter also includes a foray into Japan's cultural policies and industries during WWII and post-war developments until the late 1980s. However, the main focus is on more recent initiatives – especially government and policy-related initiatives – since the early 1990s, as Japanese policy makers became more engaged in debate on cultural policy and *content industries* (replaced in the late 1990s by the term *creative industries*). For instance, the foundation of the Creative Industries Promotion Office under the Manufacturing Industries Bureau at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 2010 meant official recognition for the creative and cultural industries. This was an acknowledgement that Japan's cultural industries would play an important role in the government's New Growth Strategy under the unifying long-term theme of 'Cool Japan' (Cool Japan Advisory Council 2011).

Meiji restoration, cultural policies, and economic development

During the Meiji period (1868–1912), Japanese society went through an intense process of modernization. These fundamental changes affected the country's political, education, economic, and military structures and also had a lasting impact on Japan's cultural activities. Although the terms *cultural* or *creative industries* did not yet exist, many of the cultural and economic policies that emerged addressed areas such as art and design education, the formation of a film and recording industry, participation at international trade fairs and the promotion of cultural products overseas, especially in competition with China. The general framework underpinning these early policies was a modernization narrative known as Meiji ideology (Gluck 1985), driven by concerns such as rationalization, efficiency, and detraditionalization.

As in other countries (e.g., the USA, Holland and Britain), art education was introduced in primary and secondary schools in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century, emphasizing manual drawing, with clear intent to support industrial development. At that time, Western paintings were not recognized for their aesthetic pleasures but rather as 'a true representation of reality based in a spirit of rationalism' (Isozaki 1998: 23). In 1873, the first art school book was published, and art curricula were formulated (Okazaki 1985), and there were similar developments in tertiary education. The Technological Art School (Kobu Bijutsun Gakko) was founded in 1876, and art courses were subsequently offered at the newly formed Tokyo Academy of Art and at the Kyoto Higher Polytechnical School. The Japan Institute of Fine Arts (Nippon Bijutsu-in) was founded in 1898 (Kawakita 1976).

In combination with changes to the country's economic structure, these cultural developments also spurred Japan's early cinema and recording industry, and films have been produced in Japan since the late nineteenth century. Many of these early films were produced by networks of collaborators, but major studios like Nikkatsu, Shochiku, Teikine, and Toa Studios were founded soon after, and the first film magazines (such as *Katsudō shashinkai*, founded in 1909) began to emerge. These early silent films were not only popular in Japan, where they could compete with imports from Hollywood, but were also exported to other Asian countries. By the mid-1920s, the import of foreign films had declined to less than 30 percent as Japanese productions gained a market share of more than 70 percent (Raine 2014: 109).

Prior to the nineteenth century, Japan had no encompassing term or concept for music, and the Sino-Japanese compound *ongaku* referred more to orchestral sound. The emergence of 'Japanese music' was not driven by musicians but by educators, policy makers and intellectuals. As music became part of the early educational curricula, music schools such as the Tokyo Conservatory of Music (1907) were founded. This was followed by the emergence of music periodicals; the first music magazine (*Ongaku Zasshi*) was published in 1890 (see Mehl 2017). Many of the early writers in these magazines were employed at the Ministry of Education (Mori 1989). The first recordings of Japanese music using phonograph records (also known as 'Talking Machines') were conducted in 1902 by the American company Victor (Mason 1992). In the following year, a number of British and American companies visited Japan to produce a large number of records. They opened their first offices in 1907 in prestigious areas of Tokyo such as Ginza and Yokohama (Inoue 1977). Although the music industry took off rapidly and easily, Japanese policy in this area changed following the great earthquake in 1923, as the government focused on domestic production of certain goods to limit spending on imports. A new import law on luxury goods, which included films and records, came into force in 1924, and Japanese record companies were created in collaboration with British, American, and German companies, including Japan Columbia (1927), Japan Polydor (1927), and King Records (1930). As the main center of these cultural activities, Tokyo served as an inter-Asian hub for activities such as the import and localization of jazz into Asia, as well as the export of Japanese music to China and Taiwan (Miller 2006).

Japan's great tradition of craftsmanship in the areas of furniture, ceramics, and fashion (silk) generated international demand, and exotic and high-quality goods were exported to Europe and North America. The Japanese government (more than entrepreneurs) invested heavily in the modernization of these industries. As Ferguson (2004: 181) argued, these state-funded industries were afforded sufficient stability to produce these cultural goods efficiently. As well as being keen to encourage the production of these items, the Japanese government deployed a range of policies and measures to showcase them at home and abroad, notably through the international exhibitions and fairs that it organized or attended. One perennial Japanese national exhibition called *bunten* resembled the French Salon. The first was held in 1907 and attracted about 200,000 visitors – about one-eighth of the population of the metropolitan region of Tokyo (Omuka 2000). The Meiji government made it part of its political agenda not only to attend world fairs but also to manage and fund such expositions. The fairs provided a platform for presenting two images of Japan to the world: the strength to equal Western power, and a culturally unique and ancient nation that resisted Western influence (Christ 1996, 2000). While this careful planning and extensive use of government funds to highlight Japanese products (luxuries, arts, and design) was intended to boost international trade, these cultural events also served Japan's colonial policy (Park 2003). The twofold thrust of these cultural policies, showcasing Japan's superior skills and productiveness as well as the outstanding quality of Japanese culture, was particularly fierce in competing with China (Teow 1999).

Cultural policies as propaganda and post-war renewal

Japanese remission policies¹ in China did not differ greatly from those of their Western counterparts, which were driven by a mixture of pragmatic interests, ethnocentric rivalries, and idealism. However, as argued by Teow (1999: 197), their means and scope were quite different: 'Japan stood out as the only country that used its remission to institutionalize a

cultural policy toward China'. In 1923, the Ministry of Finance in Tokyo established the China Cultural Affairs Bureau to enhance its cultural activities on the mainland. The rise of nationalism in Japan meant that the modernization project now became part of a culturally shaped agenda of colonization to integrate the colonies and occupied territories under the banner of the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'. In this environment, the cultural industries were principally used to 'protect' Asia from the influence of Western cultures. To this end, the Japanese copied the American model, using Hollywood actors to create propaganda films. Well-known artists, writers, film-makers, and musicians – the so-called *Bunkajin* or people of culture – travelled to the colonized territories and were involved in organizing a wider range of educational and cultural activities.

According to Kurasawa (1991), more than 20 films were produced and shown in Java between 1942 and 1945. Similarly, under the Japanese-led government in 1930s Manchuria (northern China), where a large number of Japanese films were exported, Japanese broadcasts were aired, art festivals were organized, and Japanese books and magazines were translated in large numbers (Suzuki 2005). Although these activities influenced cultural policies in these regions, they were largely considered a failure. The Japanese were ill-prepared, as they were largely unfamiliar with these nations' cultures, customs, and languages, and they often had to communicate with their Asian neighbors in English. Additionally, the US embargo prior to WWII and the large-scale industrialization during the war severely constrained Japan's cultural industries, for instance, materials for the production of films, musical instruments, and broadcasting equipment were scarce. Large parts of the film industry were shut down; modern music and dance, specifically jazz, had to go underground. This at least meant that some survived at a minor level to become influential in the post-war period.

Post-war modernization and rebuilding shifted Japan from a cultural policy-driven narrative to an economic version. The Japanese government considered cultural industries a risky investment, as nationalist cultural propaganda had harmed Japan's cultural standing in Asia. The government believed that the export of cultural products or ideas that had clear associations with contemporary Japan might hamper the formation of economic relationships with other countries. As a consequence, they did very little to support the commercial export of culture (Otmazgin 2012). This inactive position was further reinforced by American policies for rebuilding the country, which sought to neutralize political attempts to promote Japanese culture on the Asian continent. Cultural policies therefore had a strong inward focus and became an important element in the domestic rebuilding of the country but concentrated mainly on traditional arts (tea ceremonies, pottery, flower arrangements, and calligraphy). These policies were aimed not just at a cultural elite but at the entire Japanese population; the intention was that everyone should enjoy a healthy and culturally rich lifestyle at some minimum level (Watanabe 1999). Cultural diversity, access to cultural institutions, and financial support of non-profitable cultural industries became the main responsibility of the post-war Japanese government (Zemans 1999).

To support the traditional arts, the Agency for Cultural Affairs was separated from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 1968 (see Figure 3.1) and became the main government driver of cultural policies within post-war Japan, consolidating the 'touchstone and desire of people throughout history to enjoy culture, participate in creation and find affirmation of humanity; the most fundamental and basic desire of human beings' (Watanabe 1999: 62). The extensions of Preservation of Cultural Properties Law (1975) formulated and implemented by the agency defined cultural activities in a very broad sense, beyond aesthetic activities, framing culture as an enhancement of life and society. In principle, it would seem reasonable to incorporate the creative industries in this formulation,

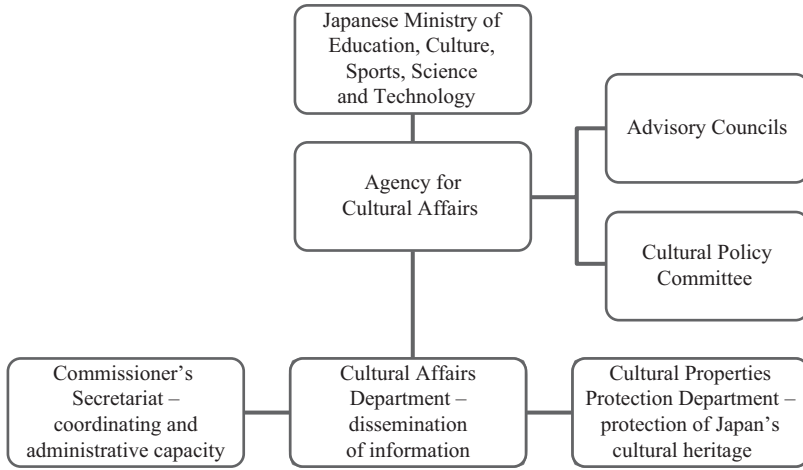


Figure 3.1 Organizational chart: Agency for Cultural Affairs (Source: Commissioner's Secretariat Agency for Cultural Affairs 2015: 1)²

but these were regarded as more viable and therefore received less support. Instead, the agency focused mainly on traditional art associations known as IEMOTO (tea ceremonies, pottery, flower arrangements, and calligraphy) or sought to legitimize the import of classical art forms from Europe (e.g., French and Italian paintings). During the 1970s and 1980s, public theatres (*Kokyo horu*) in particular received strong financial support from the government. This type of public spending was criticized in the Japanese media as 'box-building policies' (*Hakomono Gyosei*), referring to the many inefficient buildings financed through public spending (see Yamamoto 2005).

In addition to the Agency for Cultural Affairs, a number of initiatives were implemented at local level, including prefectural and municipal policies, promoting community development through culture. As one example, Yokohama's administration enacted a policy of 'culturalization'. In the 1960s, only a small number of prefectures had offices responsible for arts and culture, but since the 1990s, all prefectures have established such offices. The Japanese Arts Council was created in 1990, mainly to oversee arts funding. This agency is supported by a range of advisory councils and exerts considerable influence on the policy making process. Some cultural activities are spread across other ministries – for instance, art education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and cultural exchange programmes are overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For cultural industries, the focus on cultural preservation, heritage, and traditional arts inside Japan had two effects: the Japanese cultural market has remained self-sufficient for a long time (Kawasaki 1996), and cultural creativity and commodification were left entirely in the hands of the private sector.

The rise of 'Cool Japan'

The collapse of Japan's bubble economy in the late 1980s had a significant effect on the national cultural policy agenda and severely impacted the cultural and arts economy (Sugiyama 2006, Hiraki et al. 2009). Suddenly, Japan's industry that had traditionally focused on its domestic market needed to develop both a more international disposition and new industries that could drive future economic development. At this time, the Japanese government was

coming to terms with a more ambitious cultural policy approach – notably, the term *cultural policy* itself was just beginning to enter the lexicon of Japanese arts administration and government policy (Wyszomirski 1998), appearing for the first time in a report for the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1990. Japan's first official cultural policy plan was drafted in 1992 and led to the establishment of the Cultural Policy Office under the umbrella of the Agency for Cultural Affairs (see Figure 3.1). The Ministry of Education began to use the phrase 'cultural policy' from 1993. The Japanese Arts Fund was set up to provide grants to kick-start creative projects, awarding more than 3,000 grants annually. This policy also referred to supporting wider creative activities and led to a range of new legislation that made it easier to establish creative spaces, especially art galleries and small-scale event venues, and creative spaces of this type increased substantially in number during the 1990s.

In 2003, a first attempt was made to copy classifications of creative industries developed in Australia and the UK (such as the UK Labour Party's use of 'Cool Britannia' in its 1997 election campaign) for secondary analysis of market data in Japan (Yoshimoto 2003). The most comprehensive report that used these classifications was actually published by a non-governmental research agency (NLI Research Institute) and aimed to demonstrate the capacity of the cultural industries in Japan and confirmed the need to develop categories to fit the Japanese market (Yoshimoto 2009). This initial analysis showed that total revenues in this market had almost doubled in the course of a decade. In 1989, creative industries in Japan had total revenues of about US \$145 billion; by 1999, that figure had reached about US \$280 billion. While considerably larger than UK figures at that time (about US \$160 billion), this accounted for only a very small part of the Japanese economy as a whole. The report also demonstrated that Japan had the lowest overall employment rate in the creative industries as compared to Australia, UK, USA, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Additionally, the cultural goods produced and exported by Japan's creative industries were mostly games software (see Hanzawa 2004).

Unlike the UK, as reported by Yoshimoto (2003), Japan left the development of creative industries to private enterprises. However, noting the growing success of these companies, the Japanese government began to use the slogan 'Cool Japan' around 2005 for nation-branding projects (Valaskivi 2013). Finally, in 2010, the creative industries gained official recognition with the foundation of the Creative Industries Promotion Office under the Manufacturing Industries Bureau –not within the Agency for Cultural Affairs but under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (see Figure 3.2). The new office favors the term *creative* or *content industries* rather than *cultural industries* (Hui 2007),³ and adopting the 'Cool Japan' slogan was an acknowledgement that Japan's creative industries would play an important role in the government's 'New Growth Strategy' (Cool Japan Advisory Council 2011).

The 'Cool Japan' strategy is at its core a re-branding policy, presenting Japan not only as a manufacturing and tech-led nation but as a cultural and creative powerhouse. This mainly involves inter-ministerial activity to cultivate overseas markets, disseminating relevant information abroad by hosting international events. Formulated in the context of internationalization of the creative industries, the intention is to support Japanese industries entering new markets abroad. However, the approach has attracted considerable criticism (Daliot-Bul 2009; Morgner 2015), including the observation that the policy fails to define what is meant by *creative industry* and is based on questionable data and anecdotal evidence. According to the *Interim Report* (Creative Industries Internationalization Committee 2013: 2), 'There is no specific definition of "creative industries" in Japan'. A slightly modified version of this report, the 'Cool Japan Strategy', published by the Creative Industries Division of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2012a, 2012b) listed the examples of fashion, food, animation, daily

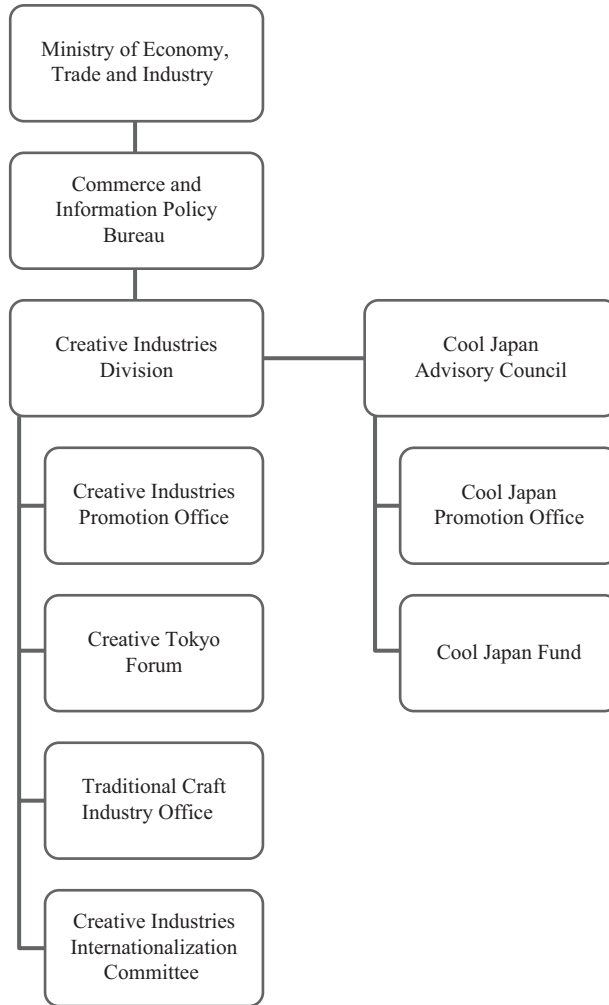


Figure 3.2 Organizational chart: Creative Industries Division (Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/aboutmeti/data/aOrganizatione/index.html>)⁴

goods, traditional craftwork of Japanese origin. A more recent version labelled the ‘Cool Japan Initiative’ (Creative Industries Division 2014) now includes tourism, advertising, music, and publishing, which are distinguished from traditional craft industries. These changing definitions make it difficult to assess the scale of the creative industries (Zuhdia, Prasetyob and Sianipara 2013). However, based on these examples, total domestic production in these sectors equals US \$594 billion, with employment of approximately 5.9 million people.

As noted earlier, the ‘Cool Japan’ initiative is principally a re-branding strategy and is therefore intended to support Japan’s economy as a whole rather than the creative industries alone. Most of the relevant policy documents stress that the spillover effects of this cultural re-branding will impact all industries. An often cited example is the game Pokémon; originally launched as videogame software, it has developed into a major media franchise, with

a large number of associated products, including anime or movies, that are popular abroad as well as in Japan. This development impacted the videogame business in Japan as a whole, quadrupling overall sales from US \$9 billion to almost US \$37 billion. As one example, the Sanrio Company has become extremely successful in selling licences for its Hello Kitty products (rather than actual products) to businesses abroad. Other examples include the success of J-Pop and TV dramas overseas, which have impacted positively on Japan's image and contributed to an increase in tourism and interest in learning the Japanese language. This is acknowledged by the Creative Industries Internationalization Committee (2013: 3, my emphasis):

Therefore, development of creative industries overseas can lead to significant ripple effects in both economic and non-economic effects, and greatly contribute to formulating and improving the *Japan brand* in the objectives.

Policy makers base this assumption on a range of 'evidence': (1) the creative branding of Japan by foreign countries; (2) the general popularity of Japanese cultural products; and (3) the small market share enjoyed by Japan in this global cultural economy (Creative Industries Division 2014; Creative Industries Division 2013a, 2013b).

1. The 'Cool Japan' initiative (Creative Industries Division 2014: 3) conducted a survey on the creative status of Japan, in which 36 percent of respondents judged Japan to be the most creative country. These results prompted policy makers to characterize Japan as 'the most creative country in the world' (Creative Industries Division 2014: 3).

However, a closer look at these data reveals that this characterization as the world's most creative country relies on a highly selective comparison with certain Western countries. No other Asian countries were included in the survey, and Japan's self-assessment of its own creativity is among the lowest (26 percent).

2. The second source of evidence is largely anecdotal. Policy narratives have highlighted the international success of a few products, including Pokémon, Hello Kitty, and Japanese weekly manga. For instance, because the manga anthology *Shonen Jump* is enjoyed by a wide readership, including many Western countries, this is interpreted as a successful cultural export. In the same way, Japanese fashion and design are said to be in high demand at international fashion weeks and fairs (Sugiura 2008). This kind of anecdotal evidence prompted the American journalist Douglas McGray (2002) to coin the phrase 'Gross National Cool', which has since influenced the conception of 'Cool Japan' and the Japanese outlook on its own popular culture and creative industries (Fujita 2011;

Table 3.1 Comparative data on creative status

<i>Creative status as seen from</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>Others</i>
USA	34%	47%	5%	5%	1%	8%
France	37%	20%	8%	25%	5%	5%
UK	40%	10%	6%	3%	35%	6%
Germany	40%	15%	27%	7%	3%	8%
Japan	26%	39%	12%	16%	3%	4%

Source: Creative Industries Division 2014: 3

Mori 2011). However, these examples are based on a few exemplary cases, and the overall market size of these cultural products remains very small (Sugiura 2008).

3. The policy narratives in items (1) and (2) seek to legitimize the role of creative industry policies on the basis of already existing facts and figures and the current strength of this sector. This third item supports cultural policies by presenting a narrative of its future growth and possibilities, as in market reports reflecting the global scale of the creative industries, which is expected to double between 2009 and 2020 (A.T. Kearney market report, cited in Creative Industries Division 2014: 1). While growth in this market seems impressive and refers to future potential as a reason for supporting cultural industries, this relies on a different classification that includes food and beverages, which account for more than 70 percent of the total revenue of 'creative industries'. Other industries such as fashion are also likely to grow but they have a considerably smaller market share and are unlikely to attain the status of Japan's more traditional economic base in automobile or electronics.

The above assumptions have led Japanese policy makers to conclude that the country's creative industries can make a significant contribution to the Japanese economy if better integrated in the global market. Internationalization policy has sought to achieve this by creating a momentum for creative industries that would in turn reinforce the image of 'Cool Japan', principally by developing consistent communication channels and platforms with partners overseas and clustering small and medium companies in associations and consortia to lend them more weight and visibility abroad.

A first policy scheme proposes to educate overseas customers about the unique nature of Japanese products, linking this understanding to local profiles and enticing overseas customers to visit Japan and to experience the products directly. This policy is in principle an intercultural re-branding strategy to help foreign audiences to understand the cultural significance and attractiveness of products from Japan, linking sales and resources to local markets, and making Japan more attractive to foreign visitors and investment. This re-branding process attempts to create a Japanese brand that is more technical than content-driven – for instance, by subsidizing the subtitling of Japanese films, supporting large-scale festivals, and exploiting Japanese and overseas fan networks. With support from the Japan Brand Fund, the re-branding includes the development of international collaborations and of branches and operations abroad (Creative Industries Division 2013a), as well as large-scale events promoting fashion, design, or food.

The second policy scheme is much more local in focus and aims to build more capacity at urban level. This includes the Japanese Creative Cities Network; launched in 2005 in Osaka, this has been extended to a range of other cities that aspire to more creative status, including Yokohama, Kobe, Nagoya, and Kanazawa (Landry 2006). Some of these cities have also participated in international schemes, such as the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, UNESCO City of Design, and UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art. However, the Creative Tokyo project launched in 2011 remains the Japanese government's flagship project, with the slogan 'Tokyo will become the creative hub of Asia' (Creative Industries Division 2013b). This initiative adopts a non-interventionist approach, advancing internationalization of the Creative Tokyo brand by inviting leading talents from abroad, building links with other creative cities in Japan, and organizing art nights, festivals, and fashion weeks. As such, it does not really promote the creative industries already based in Tokyo, which account for 17.1 percent of Japan's creative establishments and 35.0 percent of creative employees (Yoshimoto 2009: 4).

‘Cool Japan’ was expected to gain momentum between 2010 and 2013. A number of new ministerial offices were created, and a number of policy initiatives were informed by the overarching idea. However, these policies were based on data that excluded other Asian countries (see Table 3.1), making the empirical evidence questionable or anecdotal. It should also be noted that categories and definitions of creative industries change over time, and none of these initiatives sought to develop a more profound understanding of this evolution or engaged in a more conceptual discussion of that term. With the exception of games, Japan’s creative industries have largely declined in revenue terms in recent years (Kakiuchi and Takeuchi 2014). Additionally, the ‘Cool Japan’ strategy has encountered challenges in identifying measurable targets or units of assessment, and an increasing financial shortage has made it more difficult to fund large projects. As a result, the ‘Cool Japan’ initiative has waned, and early hopes for a quick re-branding to gain significantly improved access to the global market have not been fulfilled. As a consequence, important websites promoting projects have not been updated (Creative Tokyo was last updated in 2014), festivals have been discontinued, and some funding has been scrapped.⁵ It should again be emphasized, however, that ‘Cool Japan’ is principally a re-branding policy to improve exports of cultural products, and neither the Japanese government nor any other municipal or governmental organization has developed a comprehensive policy targeting the internal composition of cultural and creative industry in Japan. In that light, it is perhaps unsurprising that Japan does not feature strongly in the recent commentary on the creative industries and receives little mention in the wider research.

Summary

Research on Japan’s cultural and creative industries has focused primarily on the success, impact, and influence of these industries abroad, with particular emphasis on Japan’s videogame and software industries at international level. However, little of the research to date has addressed related policy development within Japan. This chapter redirects attention to cultural policy development in Japan at municipal and national levels.

The early phase of Japanese modernization was driven by an ideology of cultural growth and improvement as Japan sought to join the league of global players by modernizing its economic, political and cultural structures. At that time, a range of new policies led to the formation of new educational organizations (schools and universities) teaching drawing, arts, and design. The Japanese government also invested heavily in key industries to develop new technologies while also promoting the country’s craftsmanship and related cultural products at international fairs. A number of cultural policies were formulated to protect its cultural industries, notably film and music, but this changed somewhat with the rise of nationalism, as this ideology of Japanese modernization was forced on other countries in Asia. China was among the prime targets for this cultural transformation, and the arts and cultural industries formed part of an agenda to spread these ideas and to educate overseas audiences. Ultimately, however, most of these initiatives failed.

After WWII and the restructuring of Japan, the government planned to support the arts on a much broader scale providing access not only for cultural elites but for the whole population. Government initiatives sought to support arts and culture without interfering with the actual production or selection of cultural goods. A number of state-funded agencies were created for these purposes, but they mainly supported traditional arts and culture or were education-driven. This picture changed in the early 1990s, when Japanese policy makers discovered the potential of the cultural and creative industries. As part of this

shift, a new strategy called ‘Cool Japan’ gained official recognition with the foundation of the Creative Industries Promotion Office under the Manufacturing Industries Bureau in 2010. The intention was that Japan’s cultural industries would play an important role in the government’s ‘New Growth Strategy’, overseen and managed by the Cool Japan Advisory Council. This re-branding strategy incorporates a range of policies to promote Japanese creative industries abroad or to enhance their status in other countries. This can be seen as a reversal of the earlier perspective, when the Japanese government was insufficiently active in this area. Despite all these new initiatives, the government did not intervene in the actual selection or promotion of particular cultural goods but focused mainly on ensuring a more concise narrative.

Some of the interviewees for this study (including local government policy makers and directors of creative industry festivals and creative companies) noted a lack of government urgency and knowledge and an unease about touching on arts and culture because of Japan’s past. The lack of cultural clusters or concentrations of creative skills and knowledge in Japan’s main urban centers means that this focus on enhanced presentation and representation seems inadequate to the needs of Japan’s cultural industries (see Morgner 2014). Additionally, the main international market is for more traditional arts forms and cultural activities that are not integrated into the Cool Japan growth narrative. It seems that the lack of policies to strengthen the skills and infrastructure of Japan’s creative industries may have undermined the ‘Cool Japan’ initiative, as the dispersed structure of the creative industries has been unable to support the narrative.

It seems clear that the difficulties described here are part of a larger historical entanglement of nationalism and cultural policies, hindering the development of cultural policies at municipal and national levels. As a consequence, there is no comprehensive strategy that supports the creative and cultural industries. More research is needed if these issues are to be addressed in a more profound way, offering more support for contemporary arts and creative activities. These industries’ peripheral status and minor public support are important issues that need to be addressed more openly, as the cultural value of innovation, change, and deviance are not always cherished and promoted as a positive influence on society. In particular, the lack of a public forum and public debate to lend acceptance and legitimacy to these activities must be addressed more seriously and more openly by future policy initiatives.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Mariko Ikeda and the editors for their valuable comments and suggestions to improve this chapter.

Notes

- 1 Remission policies or procedures returned money to the country concerned. Most of the colonial superpowers had such remission policies in China, largely as political tools to control or influence the Chinese government without occupying the country.
- 2 This organizational chart represents a simplified version of the various branches of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Only those branches and departments discussed in this chapter are included here; for a more detailed picture, see Commissioner’s Secretariat Agency for Cultural Affairs (2015: 1).
- 3 Iwabuchi (2002) suggests that the terms *creative* or *content* reflect the government’s preference for Otaku Bunka (Japan’s geeky, but highly popular anime, manga and videogame subculture) rather than the more radical and alternative underground art scene. This image of Japan had already enjoyed some success abroad and could therefore be used as an international intermediary.

- 4 This organizational chart presents the various branches of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in simplified form. The focus is here on the Creative Industries Divisions and its subdivisions and advisory councils. For a more detailed description, see <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/aboutmeti/data/aOrganizatione/index.html>.
- 5 It seems that the government has not given up on this direction. The Olympic Games in 2020 will probably serve as a platform for Cool Japan, with a range of selected creative industries promoting this 'new' image. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's appearance at the closing ceremony of the 2014 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, dressed as Super Mario, offers a taste of what to expect.

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