REFRAMING FUTŌKŌ
(SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE) IN JAPAN
– A SOCIAL MOVEMENT PERSPECTIVE

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines futōkō (school non-attendance) in Japan from the perspective that futōkō is a social movement. It analyses citizens’ activism in support of futōkō students over the twenty year period from 1984. Drawing upon social movement approaches the thesis examines how futōkō citizens successfully grasped political opportunities, established a network of organizations, launched a new interpretive frame for futōkō, and challenged the dominant representation of futōkō in society – that ‘futōkō is an illness’. To explore in detail the ideological aspect of the futōkō movement’s framing, a content analysis of 140 editorials in the movement newspaper – the Futōkō Shimbun (School Non-attendance Newspaper) was conducted. Commencing with a critique of schooling practices that create futōkō, over the survey period Futōkō Shimbun expands its analysis to develop a critical appraisal of Japanese society that has broad implications for many different aspects of the everyday life of its citizens.

Adopting the typology of movement outcomes, this thesis assesses the outcomes of futōkō movement framing through two sets of factors: first, changes in government policies and attitudes and second, cultural and ideational changes as experienced by the movement organizations, futōkō activists and children, and as represented in shifts in media representation of futōkō. Government policies in the handling of futōkō students have become more flexible although not always positive, while government interactions with the movement are suggestive of recognition that futōkō citizens are valid spokespersons with a legitimate set of interests in relation to futōkō children. Futōkō movement activists have been successful in framing their movement in terms of: expanding and increasingly sophisticated networks of futōkō movement organizations; the professional development of activists; and a more positive media discourse.

The thesis concludes that the futōkō movement has influenced government policies, the media and wider social commentary about the phenomenon of and responses to futōkō. The thesis contends that the social movement perspective enables us to understand the issue of futōkō beyond the educational context, in its wider social, cultural and political contexts.
Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any others degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for photocopying and loan, subject to the provision of the Copyright Act 1968.

SIGNED: ___________________________      DATE: 05 November 2007

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Notes on Style

Japanese names are written in Japanese style, with family names first followed by given names.

Quotations of works published in Japanese, including data and information acquired from Japanese language websites and the Futōkō Shim bun (the School Non-Attendance Newspaper), the raw material on which the major part of this thesis is based, are translated by the author unless otherwise specified.

The words ‘futōkō’ and ‘tōkōkyohi’ have been preserved in the text because they have some specific features which distinguish them from the English words ‘school refusal’, or ‘school phobia’ (see Chapter 1). Also, Japanese words are either used or referred to when they are regarded as key words in the Japanese discourse on education and sociology, or when the Japanese expression carries a special nuance which is difficult to convert in full into English, for example, ‘kokoro’, ‘ibasho’, ‘jūmin undō’, ‘shimin undō’ etc. Likewise, names of Japanese organizations, for example, ‘Oya no Kai’, ‘Kibō no kai’, and ‘Tōkyō Shūre’, as well as titles of Japanese publications, for example, the ‘Futōkō Shim bun’, have been preserved with translation in English provided whenever these terms first appear or reappear when deemed necessary for the convenience of readers. Some translations are official translations but others are the author’s own translations.

Japanese words are rendered in the style of Hepburn romanization and italicized, with macrons indicating long vowels, for example, ‘ō’ as in ‘futōkō’. However, macrons are not used for Japanese words of places that are familiar to English readers, for example, Tokyo.
Chapter One
Introduction

1.1 Thesis overview: motive, objective and approach

Futōkō, literally meaning school non-attendance, has been recognized as a significant educational and social issue in Japan since the mid-1980s. It has drawn continuing attention from the government and generated powerful discourses at different levels of Japanese society. At the same time, the phenomenon of futōkō has actually created a space for a citizens’ movement to take place at a national level. Citizens who support futōkō children and seek alternative opportunities of education have acted collectively to challenge the dominant views on futōkō.

Although futōkō has been studied as a phenomenon as well as at a discursive level, it has not yet been examined as a social movement. Nevertheless, a social movement perspective to the study of futōkō is important for several reasons. Firstly, futōkō activism has engendered a changed public perception, in which society has become more tolerant of futōkō. Secondly, it has significantly influenced government measures and responses to futōkō. Thirdly, it has wider implications for the development of civil society in Japan: it has presented a model whereby futōkō activists create a social and discursive space which enables them to engage successfully in addressing social problems. Lastly, it has actually helped thousands of futōkō children and their parents, by providing them with helpful information, social and communication networks, supportive discourse, and political power, through which many were encouraged and empowered. A social movement perspective thus enables us to understand the issue of futōkō beyond the educational context, in its wider social, cultural and political contexts.
It is the aim of this thesis to analyze futōkō as a social movement. This thesis endeavours to explain the nature of the futōkō movement, and why it has become one of the most powerful social movements in contemporary Japan (Yoneyama 1999:215). An underlying hypothesis of the thesis is that the movement has been successful because futōkō has been framed and constructed as a critical appraisal of Japanese society that has broad implications for many different aspects of the everyday life of its citizens, including education, the judicial system, the medical system, the media, and more broadly, issues related to human rights, social values and individual identities.

In order to conduct this analysis, key concepts from the social movement literature are deployed, the framing perspective being the central concept that this thesis adopts. This thesis argues that the framing perspective best reflects how the futōkō citizens’ group has arrived at a shared definition of futōkō, decided that they should act upon it and in what ways, and how a changing definition of futōkō impacts on changes in other activities undertaken by the movement.

The primary source material for this thesis is the movement newspaper called the Futōkō Shimbun (hereafter the FS). A content analysis is conducted on the editorials, as this is where members of the movement express their opinions. This content analysis, covering the years 1998 to 2004, analyzes the ideological frame of the futōkō movement from FS’s first publication to the 147th issue. The content analysis of the newspaper editorials is complemented by analysis of a selection of the literature produced by movement actors and movement scholars, including information on movement websites. The purpose of this analysis is to identify the existence or otherwise of a collective action frame. Applying the social movement perspective, the thesis explains how futōkō citizens started the movement, mobilized participation, and organized their activism. It will also discuss the outcomes of the movement to assess the overall salience of citizens’ activism on futōkō.

In the context of this thesis, the social movement in support of alternatives to conventional schooling for futōkō students is referred to as the futōkō movement, and its various organizations as futōkō social movement organizations (or futōkō SMOs). Those who are strongly engaged in the movement are referred to as futōkō
activists, and those who take part in the movement as futōkō citizens. The term ‘actor’ is also used interchangeably with ‘activists’ in this thesis to refer to the carrier of a challenge to the political system.¹

This introductory chapter seeks to provide background information that is central to the objectives and approach of this thesis. They are:

1) what is futōkō and how it is defined and discussed;
2) evidence of futōkō activists’ collective action in support of futōkō; and
3) rationale for using a framing approach.

The chapter concludes by explaining the structure of this thesis.

1.2 Magnitude of futōkō – a lingering issue and a cause for collective action

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (Monbushō), which is now called the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology (Monbu-kagakushō),² has been counting the number of futōkō students since 1966. First, students who were absent from school for more than 50 days in a school year were categorized as students who are ‘disliking school’ (gakkōgirai), which was the equivalent of the current use of the term futōkō. However, in 1991, MoE changed its way of counting and expanded the definition to include students who were absent for more than 30 days.¹ From 1998 onwards, MoE replaced the category ‘disliking school’ with ‘futōkō’ to neutralize the term as well as to reflect the wide use of ‘futōkō’ in the media and popular discourse. In 1991, the number of futōkō students,

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¹ According to Gamson (1975), the ‘actor’ is usually a formal organization although ‘the degree of “formality” may vary a great deal’ (p.14). The challenging group or organization may be formal or informal. In short, it is ‘an entity capable of taking action – of holding meetings, planning, issuing statements, calling demonstrations and raising money’ (Gamson 1975:14).
² In January 2001, the Japanese government merged the former Monbushō with the former Science and Technology Agency (Kagaku-Gijutsuchō) and founded the ‘Ministry of Educaiton Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology’, which is often simply referred to as Monbu-kagakushō, meaning ‘Ministry of Education and Science’. While MEXT is the acronym that the Ministry likes to ascribe to itself, this thesis adopts the acronym MoE to refer to both Monbushō and Monbu-kagakushō, except in direct quotations because the latter could better reflect the main administrative responsibility of the Ministry, that is, education, than the acronym MEXT.
³ Between 1991 and 1998, the official statistics included students who were absent from school for more than 30 days, as well as those who were absent for more than 50 days. After 1999, the latter category was dropped from the official statistics.
that is, those absent from the school for over 30 days, was 66,817, amounting to 0.47% of the total number of primary and junior high school students. As figure 1.1 shows, since 1991 the number has increased substantially. By 2002, 1.23% of the total number of students was defined as futōkō students, that is, over twice the number in 1991 and 10 times the number in 1978. The phenomenon can be found in 56% of all schools (MoE 2004a). In 1992, MoE proclaimed that tōkōkyohi (i.e. futōkō) ‘can happen to anyone’ (MoE 1992).\(^4\) This marked a significant change in the government’s position from seeing futōkō as an individual problem to acknowledging the social significance of the problem. On 10 August 2005, MoE released the figure of futōkō students for the year 2004, which was 123,317 or 1.14% of the total student population. The figure indicated an improvement of only 0.01 percent from the previous year. MoE had to admit that futōkō remains a serious problem for the Japanese education system, as reported in the Asahi Shimbun (hereafter AS):

Despite measures like placing school counsellors in schools, and the fact that the number of futōkō students fell for the third consecutive year, it is estimated that there are still about 120,000 futōkō students. This remains a serious educational problem.

(AS 2005)

As futōkō becomes a social issue, the social milieu surrounding futōkō students is increasingly seen as the key to comprehending the issue. Japanese society has long been known for the high priority it attaches to school education. Japan has been called a ‘mass education society’ (Kariya 1995). Going to school and achieving good results are deemed pre-requisites for having a happy future (Kariya & Rosenbaum 1987). ‘School faith’, that is a belief that it is absolutely necessary for children to go to school, has long held the hegemonic position in Japan (Okuchi 1992:35-37). This belief has created enormous pressure on children, not only to go to school, but also to perform well and conform to group norms. Within this social milieu, not attending school has generally been regarded as ‘abnormal’, ‘shameful’ and wrong (Yoneyama 2000).

\(^4\) Tōkōkyohi means ‘school refusal’ and is often used interchangeably with the term futōkō. See discussions on the meaning of the two terms in section 1.3.
The growing instances of school problems, including futōkō, have forced some changes in the Japanese education system. At the governmental level, awareness of the problem has been translated into active initiatives to implement education reforms. Since the late 1990s, education has become one of the six reforms initiated by the Japanese government. The cabinet of the then Prime Minister Obuchi identified it as their ‘top-priority agenda’ in March 2000 (Yoneyama 2002). For the Abe administration (2006-), education reform has been central to its political strategy (Curtis 2006). Formal structures have been set up to support futōkō children. For instance, futōkō children are referred to counsellors, psychiatrists, and mental hospitals. Some of the local boards of education provide free counselling for these children, and offer them the option of enrolment in a so-called flexible classroom, or education support centre (tekiōkyoshitsu).¹ There is also the option of enrolment in non-conventional learning facilities established by various citizen groups supporting futōkō children. As a result, it is reported that there is less pressure than before on children to attend school when they are not willing or able to. Nevertheless, not all attempts by MoE to introduce new educational methods are successful, and the number of futōkō students has been kept at a consistently high level.

Fig. 1.1 Increase in the number of futōkō students (who were absent from school over 50 days until 1991 and over 30 days thereafter in a school year) from 1970 to 2005.

From 2001 to 2005, there has been a slight decrease in the nominal number of futōkō students (Fig.1.1), which could be explained in a number of ways. First, some of this decrease may be an artifact of other educational trends as mentioned in the previous paragraph, i.e. the availability of more receptacles for futōkō students. Second, the phenomenon of shōshika (reduction in the birth rate) has contributed to an ever-shrinking population of school age children, which has gone down from 14,345,743 in 1991 to 10,864,446 in 2004, a reduction of 24.3%. Third, MoE has been vigorously promoting educational reforms, including the establishment of counselling rooms and facilities to accommodate futōkō children. Such students are counted as ‘tōkō’ students (students attending schools) even if they do not enter the classrooms. Lastly, there is skepticism concerning MoE’s figures. It has been pointed out that there are a large number of futōkō students who have been left out of the official figure (Kano 2001; Yamada 2002; Yoneyama 1999). Thus, despite the slight apparent fall in futōkō numbers, the issue of futōkō is still a source of acute concern. Even MoE acknowledged this when they released the futōkō figure for the year 2004 (AS 2005). In fact, after four consecutive years of reduction, the number of futōkō increased again from 122,255 in 2005 to 126,764 in 2006 (4,477 more than the previous year) despite an ever shrinking student population. Furthermore, the number of secondary futōkō students for the year 2006 was the highest ever recorded: 2.86% of the total student population.

The state of futōkō and other school-related problems such as ijime (bullying) and gakkyyūhokai (literally meaning ‘collapse of class’, that is, anarchy in the class where students become unruly) has given rise to the speculation that schools are ‘falling apart’ or ‘melting down’ (Ogi 1998), and that the school system is collapsing (Kobayashi 1998). In other words, the magnitude of futōkō is one indication of the on-going deficiencies of the school system in nurturing and socializing children.

While futōkō continues to undermine the credibility of the school system, there are indications that futōkō activists in support of futōkō children have found success. Collectively, they have constituted a social force that is even perceived as ‘one of the

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6 In 2006, the total number of elementary and secondary students is 10,747,420, which is 41,524 less than the previous year.
most powerful social movements in contemporary Japan, where children and parents are bound together not so much by ideology as by the sheer need to survive’ (Yoneyama 1999:215). This citizens’ group has given futōkō an alternative definition to the hegemonic definition. In fact, in the study of futōkō, the definition, conceptualization and interpretation of futōkō have always been the foci of debate (Yoneyama 2000:78).

1.3 Definition of futōkō

The term futōkō, according to Inamura (1994), comes from the English term ‘school non-attendance’, which was originally used by Hersov (1960). However, the first discussion of not attending school as a phenomenon can be found in Broadwin (1932). According to Broadwin (1932), the concept of school non-attendance was associated with psychiatric disorders like fearfulness and anxiety. Nevertheless, some experts in Japan seem to believe that the Japanese case is a result of social impairment rather than psychiatric disorder (Okuyama et al. 1999).

Regarding the definition or categorization of futōkō, Yoneyama (2000) provides useful guidelines in distinguishing futōkō from other modes of absence from school. Other researchers like Inamura (1994) and Okuyama et al. (1999) offer more details concerning the development of the concept of futōkō.

Before the 1990s, futōkō had always been identified as an adjustment problem and was popularly known as tōkōkyohi, meaning ‘to refuse to go to school’. The term carries anti-school sentiments and thus ascribes the root of the problem largely to students themselves. The term futōkō, literally meaning ‘school non-attendance’, has officially been used by MoE since 1997 to refer to students’ absence from school for reasons other than illness and financial grounds. Currently, futōkō is officially defined as:

a situation in which students do not or cannot attend school for 30 days or more in a school year for whatever reasons including psychological, emotional, physical, or social reasons, but excluding illness and financial reasons.

(MoE 2002a)
Yoneyama (2000) points out that *futōkō* is generally regarded as a broader category that includes various modes of school non-attendance: *tōkōkyohi* in a narrow sense (school phobia/school refusal), truancy, *hiko* (delinquent behaviour) and dropping out (as a consequence of *futōkō*). Although *tōkōkyohi* in a narrow sense is a sub-category of *futōkō*, *tōkōkyohi* in a broader sense has widely been used interchangeably with *futōkō*. This was especially the case until the end of the 1990s. This thesis adopts the conceptual differentiation between *tōkōkyohi/futōkō* and other modes of school non-attendance. Yoneyama (2000) maintains that *tōkōkyohi* (*futōkō*) is different from other modes of not going to school in various ways.

First of all, Yoneyama (2000) maintains that the main conceptual characteristic of *tōkōkyohi* is that it is the avoidance of going to school because of school burnout and/or school-induced anxiety, rather than being akin to school truancy. In general, ‘school burnout’ is seldom mentioned in the English literature but is considered a common denominator of *tōkōkyohi*, especially among secondary students in Japan (Koizumi 1990; Miike & Tomoda 1994). *Tōkōkyohi* is often accompanied by psychosomatic symptoms, like severe emotional upset, and symptoms of physical illness such as stomach ache, headache, nausea, and dizziness when facing the prospect of going to school (Miike & Tomoda 1994; Needle 2000); these symptoms occur without any organic causes (Bernstein *et al.* 1997; Granell de Aldaz, Feldman, Vivas & Gelfand 1987; Lang 1982). As a result, *tōkōkyohi* students become unable to go to school even though they themselves want to.

Second, *tōkōkyohi* is different from truancy in that truants escape school without the knowledge of their parents, spend their time away from home, and are often engaged in antisocial behaviour while *tōkōkyohi* children are not (Pilkington & Piersel 1991:291-2). Third, these features of *tōkōkyohi* coincide largely with that of school phobia (Berg, Nichols & Pritchard 1969: 123). With regard to the relation between school phobia and school refusal, Hsai (1984) points out that they are two ends of ‘a continuum of progression from “involuntary” symptoms on one end to “willful” refusal on the other as time elapses’ (p.361). His argument finds support in the accounts given by *tōkōkyohi* students (Yoneyama 1999, 2000).
In addition, Yoneyama (2000), further argues that tōkōkyohi and school phobia should also be distinguished from ‘separation anxiety’ in that the former happens mostly among younger children while the latter mainly occurs among adolescents (Koizumi 1990). Also, school phobia is considered to be ‘school-induced’ anxiety that forces children to run away from school (Pilkington & Piersel 1991) while children who suffer from separation anxiety run to their mothers. School phobia can therefore be deemed as a ‘normal avoidance reaction to what appears to the child to be an unpleasant situation’ (Pilkington & Piersel 1991:300). Finally, tōkōkyohi is fundamentally different from dropping out in that the former situation presupposes a possibility of students returning to school. In Japan, dropouts are called ‘chūtai’ and are classified as a completely different category of student. Such findings highlight a shift in research focus from the individual child to the school environment.

While futōkō and tōkōkyohi share many commonalities, there is one distinguishing element between them, that is, tōkōkyohi implies anti-school and thus anti-institutional sentiment. Tōkōkyohi carries an implication that students are ‘actively and intentionally’ refusing to go to school, while futōkō may or may not carry such an implication. The implication may explain the change in terminology adopted by MoE from tōkōkyohi to futōkō. Until the early 1990s, MoE regarded tōkōkyohi as an illness. However, since 1992, it has replaced the term tōkōkyohi with futōkō to reflect the change in perception it articulated in 1990 (as mentioned in Section 1.2). Meanwhile, since futōkō has become a social concern, a change in public perception towards futōkō students has occurred, and the idea that school is not the only place for education has gradually come to be accepted in society. Since the early 1990s, the term futōkō is increasingly preferred over tōkōkyohi in academic papers (Nakayama 2003:109; Yoneyama 1999:189-90). Although Okuchi Keiko, leader of the futōkō citizens’ movement, used futōkō and tōkōkyohi interchangeably in her letter of appeal to the AS in 1988 (Kangaerukai 1989:99), in this thesis the term futōkō, rather than tōkōkyohi, is adopted except when the term tōkōkyohi was used in original quotations.
1.4 The futōkō discourses

The literature on futōkō has proliferated in Japan since the mid-1980s. By 1993, over two hundred books on this topic had been published (Ishikawa, Uchida & Yamashita 1993:ii). By 2005, there were 1,757 titles on the topic. Critical voices questioning the rationale underlying Japanese schooling have been raised (e.g. Okuchi 1992; Yokoyu 1992). Also, the voices of futōkō children (e.g. Asakura 1995; Ishikawa, Uchida & Yamashita 1993; Okuchi 1992; Yoneyama 2000), along with the concerns of parents, are documented (e.g. Okuchi, Tada & Yamada 1999). All are pointing to a need to acknowledge diversity in education in today’s Japan, a need which is felt to be all the more pressing since the 1990s. Yoneyama (1999) is the first researcher to classify this vast array of literature into two broad categories: the adult discourse and the discourse by futōkō students themselves. Yoneyama’s succinct analysis of the discourse of futōkō by adults (1999:187-222) classifies it into four main types as shown in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 (Yoneyama 1999, 2000). This complements the earlier work by Asakura (1995) in illustrating the three phases in the development of futōkō discourse. This in turn sheds light on how the issues have been constructed, that is framed, over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tōkōkyohi</th>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Not illness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal problem of adjustment</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discourse</td>
<td>Psychiatric discourse</td>
<td>Behavioural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural problem</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caused by school</td>
<td>Socio-medical discourse</td>
<td>Citizens’ discourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Yoneyama 2000:81)

---

8 Result of web-based search using BOOKPLUS, the largest citation database for books published in Japanese from 1927 to the present. Another database Webcat Plus indicates that a keyword search for 'futōkō' in both English and Japanese languages returns a result of 2,354 items.
Table 1.2 Analysis of the discourses on 토끼요이.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leading advocate</th>
<th>The Psychiatric Discourse</th>
<th>The Behavioural Discourse</th>
<th>Citizens' Discourse</th>
<th>Socio-Medical Discourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>寺村弘利</td>
<td>神之学廠 (特別在1990年)</td>
<td>大量学の教師</td>
<td>清木健子 (東京初等専門学校)</td>
<td>郵信健和 &amp; 本多明美</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>繁田基夫</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>藤原健</td>
<td>富田恒司</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General support</td>
<td>Psychiatrists and other medical practitioners</td>
<td>Teachers and other educationists</td>
<td>Some parents and psychiatrists</td>
<td>Small number of doctors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>토끼요이 as:</td>
<td>Mental illness</td>
<td>Laziness</td>
<td>Normal response of normal students</td>
<td>Structural chronic fatigue (karō)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘토끼요이 syndrome’ (Tōkōkyō-shō), ‘Apathy Syndrome’ (mukiryoku-shō)</td>
<td>‘Gašakā’ (nonattendance due to laziness) ‘Gakkō girai’ (disliking school)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labelling</td>
<td>Medical treatment</td>
<td>Discipline and punishment</td>
<td>Sufficient rest</td>
<td>Good rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical confinement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total acceptance by others</td>
<td>Some medication if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to do</td>
<td>Mental hospital</td>
<td>Special training schools</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reformatory</td>
<td>Alternative school (if so wished)</td>
<td>General hospital if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place to go/be</td>
<td>(Source: Yoneyama 1999:193)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4.1 Phase 1 – the psychiatric discourse (since the mid-1950s)

According to Asakura (1995), the development in 푼로祗 discourses can be divided into three phases (Asakura 1995:47-81). Based on the comparison with the classification by Yoneyama (1999), these phases indicate the sequence of the emergence of various 푼로祗 discourses. However, the beginning of a subsequent phase does not mean the ending of the previous one. Rather, the various discourses developed alongside previously emerged discourse(s) after they appeared. The first phase emerged in the mid-1950s, when psychiatrists, in particular paediatric psychiatrists, dominated the discourse on 푼로祗. In this period the issue of 토끼요이 first surfaced as a problem and was viewed as a kind of illness (이요리) that needed to be treated. The cause of the ‘illness’ was believed to be found in the personality of the child (Asakura 1995:51). The prevalent view was that 푼로祗 happened because ‘children are immature’ and ‘parents fail to educate’ their children correctly (Kudō 1999). 寺村弘利 is the leading advocate of the psychiatric view. He contends that:

*T오키요이* is mostly a kind of social maladjustment which includes a specific pathology. It starts around adolescence when individuals are at school. They
first fail to go to school; if it is left without appropriate treatment, or if it
becomes aggravated, the state of maladjustment continues into their twenties and
thirties. In order to overcome this, their foundation as human beings must be
rebuilt, so that they can learn to adjust to society. Otherwise, it is possible that
they may ruin their whole life, doing nothing and in a state of autism. 9

(Inamura 1988:ii)

When the above claim was published in the AS on 16 September 1988, it aroused the
objection and anger of citizens who had been actively supporting futōkō students.
Their protest against Inamura’s claim quickly developed into a nationwide
movement in support of futōkō students.

The psychiatric discourse has a grave impact on the lives of futōkō students as many
have been hospitalized and treated as mentally ill patients. As a result, these children
and their families were discriminated against and ostracized by society (e.g.
Kodomotachi 1991:217, 200-240). It is even argued that some medical institutions
function as a sub-system of the school – as a medicalized school (Yoneyama
2000:83). Children are ‘treated’ because they fail to fit into the group environment
of the school (Lock 1986:105), and are labeled ‘abnormal’ (ijō). Treatments
prescribed for them are primarily in the form of behavioral training (Inamura
1988:175-250). Yoneyama argues that this is actually a social process that
‘formally’ and ‘institutionally’ labels futōkō students as abnormal (Yoneyama
1999:200). Narratives by children themselves reveal that such treatment actually
subjects them to a feeling of inferiority and further isolates them from society (e.g.

The psychiatric discourse is also criticized for excluding an analysis of the school
environment and focusing solely on tōkōkyōhi children themselves and their families,
in particular their mothers (Lock 1986: 105; Yoneyama 2000).

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1.4.2 Phase 2 – the behavioural discourse (since 1970)

The futōkō discourse entered the second phase with the emergence of the behavioural discourse, that is, category (2) in Table 1.1 above. The behavioural discourse was espoused by MoE especially before the 1990s and was supported by a majority of teachers and educationists, and others who do not belong to the medical or psychiatric field. It shares the underlying assumption with the psychiatric discourse that futōkō is the problem of students. However, in this school of thought, futōkō is categorized with other forms of socially deviant behaviours and laziness. Solutions to these problems are, therefore, more stringent discipline and punishment to ‘correct’ the behaviour of futōkō students, such as special training schools and reformatories (e.g. Fujita 1997; Akuzawa, Hasegawa & Shiokura 1997). Parents were again targets of criticism by advocates of this school (Asakura 1995:56).

According to Asakura, the behavioural discourse assumed significance from around 1970 to 1984. During the ‘behavioural’ phase of futōkō discourse, the cause of tōkōkyohi was ascribed to ‘the shattering of self-image’ among students, and ‘the attitude of parents’; the ‘way to treat’ futōkō was ‘to give more authoritative guidance [to students] that they go to school’ and to offer students counselling (Asakura 1995:56). This phase was also marked by an increase in the attention MoE paid to tōkōkyohi. In fact, tōkōkyohi was tabled as one of the main topics addressed in all five issues of ‘Information on Student Guidance’ compiled by the government between 1974 and 1983. Meanwhile, by the mid-1970s, speculation that Japanese education was falling apart (kyōiku kōhai) was rampant. Media reports on ‘tōkōkyohi by good children’ – that even good children were susceptible to futōkō – circulated, and led to a more sympathetic view towards futōkō children in society (Kudō 1999).

The behavioural school, like the psychiatric school, faced strong contestation from futōkō children themselves (Kodomotachi 1991:166-168). This is because neither of these discourses consider school a factor leading to futōkō. The stories given by futōkō students themselves (Kodomotachi 1991) illustrate that the behavioural discourse, when deployed by ‘non-experts’, serves to further stigmatize futōkō and futōkō children, and to reinforce the dominant ‘school faith’ or ‘school absolutism’ in the mass-education society of Japan (Yoneyama 1999:202, 207; see also Kariya
The term was first introduced to describe a fundamental assumption in the postwar Japanese society in which the pursuit of high economic growth was the top priority in government policy. Under such circumstances, school education became a state engine to produce highly competitive individuals with excellent academic performance in order that this ‘human asset’ (Okuchi 1992:35) could contribute to the state’s economic growth. It then became absolutely necessary for children to go to school, and ‘abnormal’ and ‘wrong’ if they did not. Tōkōkyohi is therefore regarded as ‘shameful’ and tōkōkyohi children are stigmatized (Yoneyama 1999:202).

Both the psychiatric and behavioural discourses dominated the discursive field of futōkō and public perception on what futōkō is and how it should be treated until the late 1980s. It was not until the emergence of the citizens’ discourse that public perception started to change.

1.4.3 Phase 3 – the citizens’ discourse and the socio-medical discourse (since 1984)

Tōkōkyohi discourse entered the third phase with the setting up in 1984 of Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai (‘The Association to Think About Tōkōkyohi’, hereafter the Kangaerukai) – the first key futōkō movement organization. Leading advocates of this school include Okuchi Keiko, representative of the Kangaerukai and leader of the futōkō movement, and psychiatrist Watanabe Takashi, the futōkō expert who inspired Okuchi to start the movement. Their views are supported by some parents and psychiatrists (Yoneyama 1999:192). The Kangaerukai was instrumental in the development of the citizens’ discourse. This is because the Kangaerukai and other similar groups have created both physical and discursive spaces for troubled parents and guardians to share their concerns and exchange views on the futōkō of their children. Through participation in these citizens’ groups, parents were gradually transformed from passive recipients of the discourse into active participants who took part in the reframing of futōkō.

The inauguration of the Kangaerukai and their activities were antithetical to the psychiatric discourse in phase one, and the behavioural discourse in phase two. In both phases, futōkō was considered a situation to be ‘treated’. In contrast, according
to Yoneyama (1999, 2000), proponents of the citizens’ discourse maintained that ‘tōkōkyohi is not an illness’ (tōkōkyohi wa byōki janai), but rather something which is caused by schools and, by extension, by society both of which are ‘sick’ and in need of change. Proponents of this discourse shifted the focus of analysis onto the school system and society. They believed that futōkō was a ‘normal response of normal students’ when facing life threatening situations, and the solution was found in total acceptance of such students by others and in providing them with a support network (Yoneyama 1999:192, 211-215).

Evidence of this shift in the focus of futōkō discourse can be found in the media representation of tōkōkyohi. The shift is particularly obvious from 1988 when the Kangarukai emergency meeting took place (Asakura 1995:73, also see Chapter 3). Views that futōkō children were victims (higaisha) of school-related problems like ijime (bullying) emerged. Media illustrations of the struggle of futōkō children to go to school raised concern and sympathy among the general public. Since then, the view that children should be left alone to decide whether or not they go to school has started to take hold. Futōkō activists have introduced the ‘human rights’ perspective into futōkō discourse; futōkō began to be framed as ‘a way of life’, and the term tōkōkyohi started to be replaced by futōkō.

Concurrent with the citizens’ discourse was the so-called socio-medical discourse proposed by Miike Teruhisa and Tomoda Akemi (1994) and supported by a small number of doctors (category (4) in Table 1.1 above). Their propositions were similar to those of the citizens’ discourse in that they believed that the cause of futōkō lies in the social structure of schools rather than within the individual futōkō child (p.107) and they challenged the underlying ideology of ‘ganbaru’ (to persevere) that dominates Japanese schools and society (p.103). They differed from the citizens’ discourse in that they believed futōkō students do have real health problems that resemble those of chronic fatigue (karō), which are a result of school-induced anxiety (pp.103, 104). They therefore sought to ‘treat’ futōkō children from a clinical perspective.

As mentioned in Section 1.4.1, the various futōkō discourses, though emerging in different time periods, have been competing for significance since their emergence
(Kudō 1999). Figure 1.2 below indicates the emergence and concurrent development of futōkō discourses from the 1950s to the beginning of the twenty-first century. While the figure does not show this, competition was most obvious between the citizens’ discourse on the one hand and the psychiatric and behavioural discourses on the other as the former is the antithesis of the latter two. Among the four types of discourse identified, the citizens’ discourse has the most significant political implications in that it is translated into collective actions that have triggered a process of reframing of the issue of futōkō (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion of framing). More than that, citizens’ activism has produced an alternative system of learning. Moreover, unlike the other three types of discourses, advocates and supporters of the citizens’ discourse came from a broad social spectrum rather than from a small group of medical experts and educators. The broad social base of support enhanced the resonance of the citizens’ discourse with the general public. Advocates and supporters formed a potentially influential social force that has readily mobilized to defend their discourse. Citizens’ framing of futōkō, therefore, has become an important challenge to the psychiatric and behavioural discourses.

![Fig. 1.2 The development of futōkō discourse.](image)

In addition to these popular discourses on futōkō, there has been since the 1990s a growth in futōkō literature taking a sociological perspective. Some Japanese scholars believe that the ‘deficiency’ of a sociological perspective may be one of the reasons for the continual prevalence of futōkō (Kano 2001:5). The sociological perspective draws on cultural factors including values and beliefs, such as ‘school absolutism’, or
the ‘sacredness’ of school in Japanese society (e.g. Kado, Takaoka & Takikawa 1998; Morita 1993; Takikawa 1994, 1996, 1999; Yamamoto 1991). It also explores various notions in relation to futōkō: school, education, self-hood, freedom, normalcy, happiness, and even ‘Japaneseness’. As such, some scholars and activists maintain that the problem is no longer the problem of futōkō itself, but of the way adults talk about it (Kudō 1999; Tada 1999). This gives rise to a new level of discourse, that is, discourse on futōkō discourse. The focus of this discourse is on the controversy over the framing, or meaning construction, of futōkō by the citizens’ group. As such, this thesis suggests that the new meta level discourse be referred to as discourse on the framing of futōkō.

1.4.4 New meta level of discourse: discourse on the framing of futōkō

This new meta level of discourse has become the focus of academic debates on futōkō in recent years (e.g. Kano 2001; Kido 2004; Kitayama 1999; Tōkyō Shūre 2005; Yamada 2002). One interesting aspect of this debate is that former futōkō students, as young scholars, have come out to critique the way futōkō activists framed futōkō (e.g. Kido 2004).

Before the 1990s, discourses largely focused on the ‘why’ of futōkō. However, from the 1990s onwards, discussion shifted from the phenomenon itself to ‘how we perceive futōkō’ (Kano 2001:12). Hence, constructionist approaches and discourse analysis on futōkō discourse itself began to appear. As an approach, constructionism in the social sciences involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, and made into history by humans. Socially constructed reality is seen as an ongoing, dynamic process; reality is reproduced by people acting on the basis of their interpretations of certain aspects of the world. The interpretive dimension and the element of ‘human choices’ emphasized in the constructionist approach are similar to what is found in discourse analysis; both analyze the representation of the world by individuals through the discursive aspect of a phenomenon (e.g. see White 2004). The latest debates in the study of futōkō concern largely the ‘representation’ or ‘misrepresentation’ of futōkō and futōkō students by various parties, in particular by the futōkō movement group led by
Okuchi Keiko. The debate has significant bearing on the credibility of the group as offering a legitimate representation of the interests and voices of futōkō children.

In this respect, the book *The Ethnography of Tōkōkyohi* by Asakura (1995) can be regarded as one of the most significant works in this genre. Instead of focusing on the ‘cause’ (genin) and ‘treatment’ (taishohō) of futōkō as psychiatrists did, Asakura (1995) first examines how futōkō has been constructed as a ‘problem’ in Japanese society. He then, using an ethnographic approach, elucidates the processes through which individuals and groups of citizens seek to define (teigi) or redefine (saiteigi) the meaning of futōkō, as well as the identity of futōkō children themselves through their own experiences and activities in the free school, Tōkyō Shure. The importance of this approach is acknowledged by researchers like Kano (2001). He asserts the significance of examining why and how perspectives are constructed.

In her work, Yoneyama (1999) illustrates the plight of students in the machinations of the school system. Studies indicate that adult discourses on futōkō have a much stronger impact on measures in response to futōkō and on the lives of students (e.g. Asakura 1995; Ishikawa et al. 1993:ii; Okuchi 1992; Yoneyama 1999, 2002). Her works highlight the structural factors and social contexts in which futōkō discourse is embedded through giving voice to the silent or silenced screams of children and youth (Ben-Ari 2000; Ebersole 2000:1048).

Later works in the genre include Kitayama (1999), Yamada (2002), and Kido (2004). Yamada (2002), once a key figure in the futōkō movement and one of the three board members of the FS, the movement’s newspaper, now maintains that futōkō became entangled in the ‘politics of representation’ in which the original meaning of futōkō was warped and eventually obliterated. He makes an analogy between the debate on Orientalism by Edward Said and futōkō. Said defines the ‘Orient’ as a creation of western scholars producing their image of the East. Yamada (2002) maintains that, in a similar manner, futōkō as a problem has become as much a creation of academic and public discourse as Orientalism. He expresses strong skepticism concerning the objectivity of intrusive survey-based research on futōkō by some sociologists. He also implies that the citizens’ discourse may be representing only a one-sided view of
futōkō, in emphatically highlighting futōkō as a positive experience. Speaking of children who he has met personally, Yamada (2000) points out that:

*Futōkō* children obstinately refuse to represent themselves and be represented by parents and others.

(p.235)

‘Representation’ can be affected by various factors including situations and opportunities, and thus can easily overpower the original intention of *tōjisha*.10

(p.237)

Yamada’s points have been further elaborated by Kitayama (1999) and Kido (2004). As ex- *futōkō* students, both Kitayama and Kido are critical of the citizens’ discourse as an authentic representation of the voices and experience of *futōkō* children. Kitayama (1999) draws on theories of the organization of experience, which include framing theory developed by Goffman (1974), Laing (1967), Pollner (1975), Miller (1990) and others, to examine the nature of the narratives of the *futōkō* experience. She is critical of the framing of *futōkō* experiences by *futōkō* citizens, implying that deploying the sanctity (*seiikika*) of *tōjisha* of *futōkō* (meaning the authentic experience or voice of the person/people directly concerned) has made the citizens’ discourse resistant to critical analysis. She contends that:

Students who are concerned about education and children also adopt the approach of ‘understanding the problem of “tōkōkyohi” from *tōjisha*’, and said that ‘it is necessary to understand’ *tōjisha* …. Here, to ‘understand’ or ‘accept’ the existence of *tōjisha* has become the standard perspective to comprehend *tōkōkyohi*….?

Everyone is trying to create narratives that are similar to this kind of *tōjisha* narrative. They advocate the acceptance of *tōkōkyohi*, believe in not reproaching children, and responding to the requests of *tōjisha*. Hence, the narratives of *tōkōkyohi* are not only competitive, but have also become circular, overlapping, and adopted by various parties. The narratives of *tōjisha* are constructed by schools, experts and society (Yamamoto 1991). This enriches the *futōkō*

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10 The notion of *tōjisha*, meaning the person/people (directly) concerned, and its use in the *futōkō* discourse, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.
discourse. However, at the same time, this kind of narrative stops potential critique of tōjisha and the narrative itself is being ‘sanctified’.

(Kitayama 1999:128)

In short, she claims that the citizens’ discourse does not truly represent the voice of children themselves. On top of this, she criticizes the phenomenon of treating tōkōkyohi children as mere subjects of research (p.129).

Similarly, Kido (2004) also questions the futōkō citizens’ representation and framing of futōkō as a choice and a right of the individual child. She contends that citizens and parents who are associated with free schools tend to justify (seitōka) futōkō through notions like ‘jiyū’ (freedom) and ‘kosei’ (individuality) without addressing the reality of the problem. Her criticism is directed in particular against Tōkyō Shūre, of which she had been a member when she was a futōkō student. Her tōjisha, or ex-tōjisha, point of view regarding futōkō activists is controversial and has prompted a strong reaction from Tōkyō Shūre. Tōkyō Shūre challenges Kido’s method in conducting her study, the way Kido handled information, the content of her study and the procedure through which she published her work (Tōkyō Shūre 2005). For instance, Tōkyō Shūre criticizes Kido for allegedly betraying the trust of her interviewees by publishing the content of their conversation without their prior knowledge and consent. She is also criticized for twisting the meaning of their words in order to justify her own point of view. Tōkyō Shūre justifies its criticism with stories from some of Kido’s interviewees. One of them wrote:

I doubt if the things written in this book is what I have said. The book published things that I have no idea I had ever mentioned. In some places, my words have been taken out of context and edited into what Kido wants to say. Also, even if my own words remain, the meaning is far from what I really wanted to say. I believe that those who know me may find a large gap between what they have known about me and what the article has written. If so, I will be very disappointed. In fact, there are quite a few people who have misunderstood me and confronted me about things said in the article.

(Tōkyō Shūre 2005)

The discourse on the framing of futōkō is a significant avenue of research in its own right. Nevertheless, the latest controversy surrounding the citizens’ discourse indicates that the
reframing of futōkō by this citizens’ group has had a significant impact on researchers and futōkō students. The most powerful manifestation of such an impact is found in the development of futōkō activism.

1.5 Collective actions in support of futōkō

The development of futōkō activism is indicated in Table 1.3. As the table shows, developments from 1984 to 2004 suggest that the movement had become more organized and established. For instance, it began in 1984 with the Kangaerukai made up of a small group of mothers, but by 1995 it had opened three branches of free schools. In 1998, the movement launched its own newspaper, the FS. In 1999, it opened an alternative ‘university’, providing an alternative option of continuing education for its free school graduates. In the same year, Tōkyō Shūre, a key futōkō SMO, was attested by the Tokyo Metropolitan government as a non-profit organization (NPO). The attestation of NPO status means that Tōkyō Shūre is formally recognized in law, which confers advantages in terms of access to philanthropic funding and working with government agencies. In 2004, the movement opened its fourth free school branch.

Given their expanding networks and activities, and increasing recognition by other social actors, and in particular the government, the framing of futōkō by this citizens’ group over time should warrant more thorough investigation than it has been given. For instance, the free school Tōkyō Shūre, which is one of the key movement organizations, is reported as one of the NPOs which has been changing the civil society landscape of Japan (Okada et al. 2005), and recognized as one of the alternative learning facilities catering for the needs of futōkō children (Needle 2000). The newspaper published by futōkō citizens, the FS, also set a milestone for futōkō activism by being the first news agency attested as having NPO status in 1999. All these factors indicate that futōkō citizens’ framing of futōkō has generated significant social and cultural impacts that remain unexplored.

As Table 1.3 shows, this societal force has expanded, becoming better organized and adopting a more sophisticated organizational structure. Participants and supporters of this citizens’ group came from a diverse social and vocational background,
including parents, medical experts, professional people, teachers, academicians, etc. Futōkō activism is, therefore, a cross-sectional and inter-class movement that bound together people from all walks of life. Futōkō citizens advocate a new paradigm of education that is child-oriented and emphasizes the free will, sovereignty, and personal development of children. To promote their alternative frame, they also publish books containing children’s own accounts of futōkō (e.g. Kodomotachi 1991, 1995), conduct surveys and related studies on the phenomenon (e.g. Kodomotachi 1991; Ishikawa et al. 1993:995-1028), and release newsletters and produce videos (Okuchi 1992). In doing so, they reframe the issue of futōkō, and by extension, the meaning of education, and the relationship between the institution and social individuals. In short, they function as a social force for change, or a social movement, by working on the issue of futōkō.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major Event</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1983 | 1. Publication of *Tōkōkyohi – Life is Possible Without School* by the *Kibō no kai* [The Association of Hope].  
   2. Resolution made in the autumn meeting of the *Kibō no kai* [Association of Hope] to set up *Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai* [The Association to Think About *Tōkōkyohi*] (the *Kangaerukai*).  
   3. First *Monbushō* [Education Ministry] booklet to address the issue of *tōkōkyohi* was published in December. |
| 1984 | 1. The *Kangaerukai* was set up in January.  
   2. The *Kangaerukai* submitted a letter of appeal against the claims made in the *Monbushō* booklet in October. |
| 1985 | *Tōkyō Shūre*, first free school of its kind in Japan, was set up in June. |
| 1988 | 1. Publication of Inamura Hiroshi’s article in *AS* on 16th September.  
   2. Emergency Meeting to Think about *Tōkōkyohi* held in November protesting Inamura’s claims. National campaign to reframe *futōkō* started. |
| 1989 | Publication of booklet on details of the Emergency Meeting. |
| 1990 | *Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai Zengoku Nettowāku* [The National Network to Think About *Tōkōkyohi*] (The *Kangaerukai* Network) was set up. |
| 1991 | Relocation of *Tōkyō Shūre* from a small unit to the present building in *Ouji*. |
| 1993 | 1. Home *Shūre* activities launched.  
   2. Government agree to issue commuting passes to primary and junior high school children going to free schools – a victory claimed by *futōkō* activists. |
   2. *Tōkyō Shūre* sponsored the holding of the ‘International Symposium to Think About Home Schooling, Home Education, and *Futōkō*’.  
   3. Home *Shūre* supported more than 100 families. |
| 1995 | Opening of *Tōkyō Shūre Shinjuku* branch. |
| 1996 | Completion of a log house in the prefecture of Nagano. |
| 1997 | Cyber *Shūre* set up to provide on-line support to *futōkō* children. |

¹¹ Adapted from *Tōkyō Shūre* web site: [http://www.shure.or.jp/npo/02ayumi.htm](http://www.shure.or.jp/npo/02ayumi.htm), accessed on 29/8/2002.

¹² NHK is the acronym for *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*, or the Japan Broadcasting Corporation, which is Japan’s public broadcaster. The NHK is a popular and influential medium, and the books it publishes certainly impact on the society of Japan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1998 | 1. First issue of the *Futōkō Shimbun* (FS) published.  
2. Child Line service – a telephone help line for children, started in March. |
| 1999 | 1. Opening of *Shūre* University.  
2. *Tōkyō Shūre* attested NPO status, thus becoming a legitimate organization which allows it access to philanthropic funding and collaborations with government agencies.  
3. Setting up of the Child Line Support Centre.  
4. Minister of Education visited the Child Line Support Centre.  
5. *FS* attested NPO status, which allows it access to funding and collaborations with government agencies and other established social actors. |
| 2000 | *Tōkyō Shūre* hosted the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC). |
| 2001 | Free School National Network was set up and attested NPO status. |
| 2002 | 1. Relocation of *Tōkyō Shūre Shinjuku* branch and Home *Shūre* to a better venue in Shinjuku ward.  
2. Child Line Support Centre gained financial support from prominent enterprises like NTT, Tokyo Electric, Tokyo Gas etc., thus enabling the Centre to offer free dial-up services to the community.\(^\text{13}\) |
| 2003 | 1. Opening of *Tōkyō Shūre Nagareyama* branch, the fourth branch of *Tōkyō Shūre*, in the prefecture of Chiba in October.  
2. *Tōkyō Shūre* was awarded the prestigious *Asahi Nobinobi* Education Award by the *Asahi Shimbun*, and the Bell Mark Education Support Foundation award in recognition of its contribution to the community. It also received the *Yoshikawa Eiji* Cultural Award. |
| 2004 | 1. 20th anniversary of the *Kangaerukai*.  
2. *FS* changed its name to *Fonte* from June, formally signifying the expansion of the *futōkō* movement to cover wider social concerns, and reiterating the movement as a constructive force of social change. |

### 1.6 The social movement perspective

In view of the social movement aspect of collective support for *futōkō*, and the successful development of their action frame, this thesis examines *futōkō* citizens’ collective actions by using the theories and concepts of social movement research. *Futōkō* activism exhibits two of the essential elements of social movements as identified in Freeman and Johnson (1999). These are *spontaneity* and *structure*. Spontaneity and structure are identified as the most important elements that recur in

\(^\text{13}\) NTT is the acronym for Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation, which dominates the telecommunications market in Japan.
case studies and theoretical analyses of social movements (p.1). According to Freeman & Johnson (1991), all the various forms of social actions can be arranged along a continuum, where:

[a]t one end are those forms marked by their contagious spontaneity and lack of structure, such as fads, trends, and crowds. At the other end are interest groups whose primary characteristic is a well-developed and stable organization often impervious to spontaneous demands from their members. In the middle are social movements that, however diverse they may be, exhibit noticeable spontaneity and a describable structure, even if a formal organization is lacking. (p.1)

Freeman and Johnson (1999) maintain that spontaneous action may not yet constitute a movement, but such action has certainly drawn upon the common consciousness in ways that could later be forged into a movement. Futōkō activism appears to start somewhere near the spontaneous end, and eventually develops into a movement over time.

Furthermore, futōkō activism matches the description of social movements as discussed by established theorists like Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989), in that it highlights changes in values in society. According to Touraine (1981) and Melucci (1989), social movements are coordinated efforts to publicize individual needs and experience, and to create public spaces that aim at democratization of everyday life and the building of an alternative social and world order. They are the reflection of anonymous and impersonal power relations among social actors, and they represent resistance to the dominant culture formulated by institutions which produce and circulate information and symbolic codes. In this way, futōkō activism resists the hegemonic definition on futōkō, and seeks social changes by promoting an interpretive frame.

The challenge presented by futōkō activism to the decades-old faith in schooling suggests that the Japanese population has shifted its focus to the quality of individual happiness (Kawanishi 2004:31). Futōkō activism reflects a wider shift from the quest for materialism and competition to the concern for individual well-being. So far, there is but one study that has adopted a theory of social movements to examine
citizens’ activism on futōkō. Hirose Mari (2001) analyzes the nature and aim of the activities of a number of Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai), which are parents’ groups for helping futōkō students. She also examines the possible impacts of their activities on MoE measures regarding futōkō (Hirose 2001:91-110). Hirose identifies two kinds of Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai) and suggests that their activities are similar to those of contemporary social movements described by Melucci (1989).

Although Hirose (2001) presents Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai) as a social movement group, she does not address the emergence of the social movement, its development, and how movement activists mobilize the public to participate in the movement. In other words, the processes of movement framing remain unexplored. Hirose (2001) does not explain how consciousness was aroused and later forged into a nationwide movement. The existing literature has not studied the key social actors who make up the futōkō support movement, how they interact with each other and the government, what their strategies are and how effective these have been.

The framing of futōkō by futōkō support activists, and how this frame changed over time, is the contribution of this thesis. While there is extensive literature on the futōkō issue in Japanese language literature, there is comparatively little published research on futōkō support activities, and no systematic research on the futōkō movement. Literature in the English language on the topic is scarce and there is no comprehensive study on futōkō from a social movement perspective. As such, the study of citizen activism on futōkō constitutes a rich avenue of research.

1.7 The framing perspective

In analyzing the emergence and development of social movements, scholars invariably emphasize three broad sets of factors. They are:

1) political opportunities;
2) mobilizing structures; and
3) framing processes.
The thesis engages these fundamental concepts, with particular reference to the framing perspective, to examine the emergence, development, participation and outcomes of the futōkō movement. These four issues are central to the study of social movements. The concept of frame is important in the study of futōkō because it attends to the core claim of the movement – that futōkō should not be interpreted as an illness. The original concept of frame and its application in the study of social movements is derived primarily from the work of Goffman (1974), who denotes frames as ‘schemata of interpretation’ that enable individuals ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences within their life space and the world at large’ (p.21). In other words, ‘collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimize the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)’ (Snow & Benford 1988:198). The processes through which frames are produced are called framing processes.

Framing processes refer to ‘the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action’ (McAdam et al. 1996:2). They rely ‘upon social psychological theories to explain the proclivity of new social movement activists to engage in collective forms of behaviour’ (Appleton 1999:57). They are a factor of emerging significance in the study of social movements, and are crucial in explaining the rise and development of collective actions over time.

The above definition of framing shows that the three sets of factors explaining social movement theories, that is, political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes, are interrelated and thus complement rather than contradict each other. In relation to the activities supporting futōkō children, the way in which a changing definition of futōkō impacts on changes in other movement activities is central to the understanding of the interaction between structure (school/education) and agency (the futōkō movement group).

While political opportunities and mobilizing structures are also important factors in examining the futōkō movement, this thesis will focus on the aspect of meaning construction of the movement. Accordingly, the framing perspective will be given more emphasis to argue that futōkō activists have strategically framed their activism
to produce a shared meaning of \textit{futōkō} that is originally at odds with the official
definition, and is therefore used to make alternative claims concerning what action
should be taken collectively and institutionally in response to \textit{futōkō}.

1.8 Scope and structure of the thesis

The primary research consists of a content analysis of the editorial column of the
newspaper published by \textit{futōkō} activists --- the \textit{FS}. This newspaper is the voice of
the \textit{futōkō} movement. The paper was founded by the three board members at the
time: Okuchi Keiko, Tada Hajime, and Yamada Jun. Voices represented and topics
discussed in the newspaper are diverse. Editorialists are from various backgrounds
and professions. However, the newspaper publishes only those who share a common
concern for the ‘best interests’ of \textit{futōkō} children. There is a high degree of
interaction between readers and the newspaper. The paper also has a panel of
editorial advisors from a wide range of professions, including writers, solicitors, and
religionists, as well as a government official, a poet, a mathematician, a musician, a
singer, a computer expert, a multi-media producer, a psychologist, a university
lecturer, a school social worker, a counsellor, a journalist and a paediatrician.\textsuperscript{14}

The \textit{FS} is the only newspaper in Japan that focuses primarily on the topic of \textit{futōkō}.
As the major opinion piece in the newspaper, the editorial of the \textit{FS} reflects the
framing of \textit{futōkō} in its most concentrated form. It is one of the most informative
sources through which one can trace the framing of core issues in relation to \textit{futōkō}
activism. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, \textit{FS} editorialists adopt a variety of
perspectives and themes to frame and re-frame the issues of \textit{futōkō} and the \textit{futōkō}
movement over time. In short, the \textit{FS} has a high degree of interactive dynamics
reflecting the ‘\textit{conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared
understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective
action}’ (McAdam et al. 1996:6, original italics).

The period covered in this research is from 1 May 1998, when the first issue of the
\textit{FS} came out, until 1 June 2004 (issue 247, or \textit{FS} 247), which is the last issue before

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{http://www.futoko.org/top/naritachi.htm}, accessed on 8 March 2002.
the newspaper changed its name to *Fonte*, and changed its direction. A short discussion of this changed direction can be found at Chapter 5.

In order to capture the overall scope of the movement, the thesis will set the changing discourse identified in the *FS* editorials within the context of the emergence and development of the *futōkō* movement by using the key framing concepts of diagnostic, prognostic and strategic processes. It will examine how *futōkō* citizens successfully grasped political opportunities, established viable and functioning mobilizing structures, launched a new interpretive frame for *futōkō*, and challenged the dominant representation of *futōkō* in the hegemonic discourse and the media. This analysis will be based primarily on materials accessed from the websites of *futōkō* movement organizations including *Tōkyō Shure* and the *FS*, as well as literature produced by key activists and scholars. The analysis will focus on revealing the nature of *futōkō* activism in terms of: the origin of collective action; the development of organized efforts; who participants/activists are and the structure of organized effort; their goals, strategies, and tactics in reframing *futōkō* and related issues; the diverse constituencies and their internal tensions (e.g. how supporters of *futōkō* children view and handle the existence of divisions); and the outcomes of framing as reflected in, for example, changing government policies on *futōkō* and the creation of alternative education paradigms for *futōkō* children.

The framing of the *futōkō* movement and its outcomes will be explicated in Chapters 3 to 6. Chapter 3 examines how *futōkō* citizens grasped political opportunities, diagnosed the problem, successfully challenged the existing frame, and launched a new frame. Chapters 4 and 5 examine how *futōkō* activists developed and maintained their interpretive frame strategically and discursively. Chapter 4 investigates how *futōkō* activists established a network of SMOs and external linkages that could mobilize and sustain participation. It argues that in order to appeal to potential participants, *futōkō* activists have strategically highlighted the promise of self-realization through participation in the movement. Chapter 4 also explores the role of the key movement leader and major frame articulators, and how

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15 *FS* editorial team member Yamashita Kōhei points out that the change in name officially signifies a change in the direction of the movement (email to the author, 28/10/2004).

the movement made use of various media to disseminate the futōkō movement frame. The discursive aspect of the movement is examined through a content analysis of the editorials of FS in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 evaluates the outcomes of the movement by examining its impact on government policies and the wider social perception of futōkō. It also investigates the impact of the movement on its organizational development and on participants themselves. The analysis of the futōkō movement from Chapter 3 to 6 is based on the discussion of social movement concepts in Chapter 2, a select literature review of social movement theory.

As this thesis is not an evaluation of social movement theory per se but an application of social movement theory, primarily the framing perspective, to an analysis of the support for futōkō children, Chapter 2 will focus the literature review on texts which discuss framing in social movements. Similarly, this thesis is not about the history of social movements in Japan. As the futōkō movement emerged in the 1980s when locally-based citizen movements had already flourished in Japan for two decades, the review of contemporary social movements in Japan will focus on those social movements that developed since the 1960s to engage with and expand the idea of civil society in Japan. It is hoped that, through examining the emergence and development of an alternative social force for change which has reframed futōkō and futōkō-related concepts, this thesis will assist in enhancing the understanding of the complexity and impact of futōkō on the changing ways of life in Japan. Also, it is believed that analysis of the successful framing of futōkō may shed light on the factors contributing to the sustainable development of a social movement in Japanese society.
Chapter Two
A Frame Analysis Approach

2.1 Introduction

The study of social movements has been recognized as an established part of mainstream social sciences and has been regarded as of ‘prime significance in stimulating the sociological imagination’ (Giddens 1987:48). It is not the intention of this thesis to be an overarching study of all the issues and frameworks included in the study of social movements, or to contend with the conceptual and methodological disputes which surround their sociological investigation. Rather, it seeks to address a selected number of key concepts and theories that lie behind the discussion of futōkō as a social movement in this thesis. In this chapter, the definition of ‘new’ social movements that focuses on the role of social actors in generating meanings and definitions for themselves and their activities (see Section 2.2 below) will be applied to the case of futōkō activism, which will then be set in the context of expanding civil society and citizen engagement in Japan in the last 30 years. Following this, analysis of political opportunities, mobilizing structures and the framing processes with particular reference to futōkō activism will be undertaken.

2.2 Futōkō and new social movements

In futōkō activism, meaning construction has been the central focus of activists, and hence the analysis of futōkō activism draws on the theory of new social movements (NSM) which focuses on the activities and processes of meaning generation self-definition and redefinition by social actors of their actions. NSMs are

17 Another term that shares similar meanings to Touraine’s NSM is contemporary social movements, which refer to movements formed after 1965 (Pichardo 1997).
consciousness-based instead of class-based and ‘concentrate more and more on questions concerning individual identity, democracy and the relationship between society and its natural environment’ (Melucci 1989:5).

Touraine (1981) has shifted the primary focus in the study of the post-industrial society to social actors, and their relation to the structure of a particular society. As a result, institutional factors such as governmental policies and regulations are being pushed to the background. Such a shift in emphasis is based on the argument that participation in NSMs is based on the seeking of recognition for new identities and lifestyles rather than on class location.

NSMs are said to represent a shift to postmaterial values which primarily stresses the cultural and identity-building elements of social movements, including politicized identities. In short, NSMs are characterized by an emphasis on individual needs and experiences and reveal a more heterogeneous kind of power relations. They are self-productive in nature and develop predominantly in those areas ‘where there is greatest pressure on citizens to conform to institutions which produce and circulate information and symbolic codes’. Their growth is stimulated by increasing control by the authority over areas which were previously untouched by social conflicts (Melucci 1989:4). In sum, NSMs have the following characteristics.

- A central focus on the quality of life rather than redistributive issues (Touraine 1971) and a concern primarily with the issues of information generation and meaning communication (Melucci 1989:5).

- Movement agencies which “operate as a ‘sign’ or ‘message’ for the rest of society”, and activists who “self-consciously practice in the present the future social changes they seek”. Also, ‘their goals are temporary and replaceable, and their organizational means are valued as ends in themselves” (Melucci 1989:5-6).

- Networks of small groups ‘submerged’ in the everyday. These are the ‘laboratories’ through which activists challenge the dominant codes of everyday life by putting into practice their alternative frame of lifestyle
that is constituted of ‘alternative experiences of time, space and interpersonal relations’ (Melucci 1989:6).

The emphasis on the role of individuals as social actors continues to be the focus in the theorization of social movements. For instance, Tarrow (1994) infers that the coordinating effort of actors is a crucial factor for the formation and sustainability of social movements. He maintains that:

(c)ollective action occurs all the time, movements do have a collective action problem, but it is social: coordinating unorganized, autonomous and dispersed populations into common and sustained action, by mobilizing people within social networks and through shared cultural understandings.

(Tarrow 1994:9)

Likewise, Melucci maintains that: 18

(c)ollective action is always ‘built’ by social actors, and thus what needs to be explained in concrete terms is how movements form, that is, how they manage to mobilize individuals and groups within the framework of possibilities and constraints presented to them by the institutions of our complex societies. Collective action must be understood in terms of the processes through which individuals communicate, negotiate, produce meanings and make decisions within a particular social field or environment.

(Melucci 1989:4)

Melucci explains that the unity of position in the social movement is ‘the result of exchange, negotiation, decision and conflict; unity is something that actors continually bring about but which is never given’ (Melucci 1992:243). Social movements are not static in nature, but rather capable of generating new meanings and definition for themselves. Also, actors are central to the formation and maintenance of social movements.

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18 The intellectual formation of Melucci is significantly influenced by Touraine with whom he did his doctorate in the 1970s. Melucci points out that Touraine’s approach ‘escaped the shortcomings of both economism of the Marxist tradition and the ideology of functionalism. It emphasized the importance and autonomy of social action, and this has had a lasting impact upon my work’ (Melucci 1989:182-3).
In addition, futōkō activism is characterized as a social movement because in general it seeks to institute social change by working outside the formal and institutional structures. Whether national social movements developed in the eighteenth-century West (Tarrow 1994:6), or the ‘class-based’ movements of the nineteenth century industrial period as proposed by Marx and others, or social movements of the so-called post-industrial era which seek to explain movements centred around quality of life rather than redistributive issues (Touraine 1981), social movements are broadly perceived as ‘collective entities, made up of individuals who have chosen to pursue interests with others, and which they perceive as being in common’ (Drakeford 1997:2), operating outside the institutional arena (Santoro & McGuire 1997). They are collective actions of individuals who wish to express their collective will (Touraine 1981:25-29). Some claim that understanding social movements is ‘the key to understanding other kinds of structures in social life’ in contemporary society (Touraine 1981:x). In short, social movements could be understood as collectives of individuals seeking social change who operate outside of formal or institutional structures.

In the case of futōkō activism, it challenges the institutional framing of the futōkō phenomena and events which impact on personal and social lives. Futōkō activists are most concerned with the interpretation, or framing of the meaning, of futōkō. In futōkō activism, networks of Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai), free schools, free spaces, and other places set up by citizens function as ‘laboratories’ of their preferred mode of life. This kind of movement in Japan is defined as ‘new civic movements’. While Melucci places emphasis on the global level and is thinking more of environmental movements, the new civic movements in Japan focus largely on what Steiner et al. (1980) and McKean (1981) define as objectives relating to daily concerns at the local level, and centre around what Touraine (1971) observes as the ‘quality of life’. According to Bouissou (2000:336-7), new civic movements very often draw on symbolic cultural foundations to frame or organize their movements, while at the same time espousing a global alternative view of democracy and social life. New civic movements exhibit the functional quality of providing what Drakeford (1997:12) called ‘a version of Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) social construction of reality’.
The concept of ‘work locally and think globally’ can be found in futōkō activism. It takes on a global aspect in using the human rights discourse, while working primarily at local levels with parents, some teachers and other like-minded educators and individuals. It reflects the nature of work that characterizes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which, according to Gottfried (2005), is part of the discourse on the topic of civil society in recent decades.

2.3 The notion of civil society in Japan

Over the post Second World War (WWII) period, the notion of civil society (shimin shakai) has generated considerable debate and even confusion in Japan as well as around the world. To define the term, and even to decide if it is applicable to the Japanese context, it is necessary to look at the growth and development of citizen actions in the post World War II period. As futōkō activism emerged in the 1980s, this chapter will focus on the discussion of civil society since the 1960s when locally-based citizen movements which centred on specific issues began to flourish.

During the post World War II period, Japanese bureaucrats have exhibited an amazing determination to reconstruct Japan economically. Through partnership with the corporate sector, the Japanese government succeeded between 1955 and 1973 in achieving its goal of growth in the economy. By the early 1970s, however, the negative effects of the policy to pursue economic growth started to show, in particular in the form of environmental pollution. Under the government’s economic policy of high economic growth, little attention was given to the need of individuals.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the oil crises, corporations were found hoarding for speculative purposes and cheating on customers by forming illegal price cartels. These downsides of economic growth, together with the growing awareness of the need to take initiatives to solve social problems rather than leaving things to the government, led to the first post-war boom of locally-based citizens’ movements (Deguchi 1999). Civil activism during the period from the 1960s to the 1970s is often referred to as *shimin undō* (citizens movements) and *jūmin undō* (residents movements) respectively.

Both *shimin undō* and *jūmin undō* are issue-oriented and non-partisan in nature but have taken on political action, and are directed at the prevention and solution of problems occurring in society (Kuroda 1972:949-50). The difference between the two is that *shimin undō* are politically linked to struggles against issues like nuclear weapons, the Security Treaty with the US and the Vietnam War, while *jūmin undō*, like Green Corp and the Life Club, refuse all links to traditional politics and focused on daily concerns at a community or regional level (Bouissou 2000: 336-7). One factor contributing to the outbreak of locally-based citizens’ movement is the slow response by government and industry to complaints of citizens (Schreurs 2002: 58). The emergence of these movements signified ‘a new form of political participation hitherto unknown in Japanese political history, at least in the sense that never before have so many citizens been involved in political movements on their own volition’ (Kuroda 1972:949); this signaled a new kind of democracy, a political culture that is ‘more pluralistic and questioning of authority’ and less hierarchical and deferential than was traditionally the case (Schreurs 2002:58, see also Krauss & Simcock 1980).

From the 1980s onwards, citizen movements assumed a dimension different from *shimin undō* and *jūmin undō* and are called ‘new civic movements’. New civic movements are different from *shimin undō* and *jūmin undō* in that ‘their ultimate aim was to establish a new society’ (Bouissou 2000:337). This type of social movement gained attention from the 1990s when there was a general sense in society that Japanese democracy and the traditional systems and values of governing Japanese were in crisis. They were typically organized as self-managed ‘alternative’ groups that promoted ‘alternative’ ideologies aiming at changing the form of social life from that dominated by traditional politics.
During the time of the ‘bubble economy’ from the mid-1980s to early 1990s, the form of civic involvement began to take on another new attribute, specifically in the form of non-profit organizations (NPOs). A large number of NPOs dedicated to a variety of social causes, including education, the environment, culture, and the arts, emerged during this period of time. The large number of voluntary organizations that responded to the aftermath of the 1995 Kobe earthquake further made Japanese people realize that ordinary citizens could involve themselves in the public domain, which had long been seen as off-limits to citizens. The contributions of these NPOs to society were socially recognized. This, coupled with the increasing evidence of the inability of the government to bring about changes, revitalized an ‘imagination’ or conceptualization of a civil society as a possible alternative force to bring about needed changes (Bestor 1999).

Although the notion of civil society was in vogue globally in the late 20th century, things in Japan were considerably different from in the USA and Europe. Simply put, in the USA the focus was on ‘moral responsibility and societal characteristics contrary to uncivil’ practices and ‘at the risk of possibly having to sacrifice a measure of individual rights, a value so deeply ingrained in American society’ (Bestor 1999). By contrast, the focus in Japan in the post Second World War period was on ‘a call for more individual political and social rights, not less’ (Imata 1999). It was regarded as providing ‘a very sensitive measure of how much Japan is changing’ (Channin 1998).

Having experienced a period of steady economic growth until the late 1980s, Japanese people began to look for spiritual and humanistic satisfaction rather than materialistic satisfaction. According to the result of the ‘National Opinion Poll on People’s Life’ by the Cabinet Office released in June 2002, 60.7% of the subjects indicated that they valued spiritual satisfaction while only 27.4% indicated that material satisfaction was important to them (Fig. 2.1). This change in value has been observed by others studying contemporary Japanese social movements as well as activists engaging in NPO activities (Bouissou 2000).
Citizens’ movements from the 1960s to the NPO activities today shows that civic movements in Japan are commonly characterized by a moral aspect in that they campaign for the creation of a social system that is more responsible to the general public. Together with the NPO society, a discursive space is created for social individuals and private entities outside the institutional framework to involve themselves in bringing about needed changes. This understanding of civil society Japan as ‘setting bounds to the state and freeing space for plurality’ has been among the key issues in scholarly debates (Schwartz 2002:197). Hence, civil society in Japan could be defined as:

(i)the space, real and imagined, between government and business – nation-state and corporate–domain – in which individual and private agency plays an important role in organizing consciousness, bringing change, providing services, and working for the common good – is being mobilized as the vehicle through

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which Japanese society affects meaningful internal change in place of the stagnant business and government sector that seem incapable of reform.[sic]

(Bestor 1999)

The ‘individual and private agency’ is generally understood by Japanese commentators as civic and advocacy groups, private foundations and philanthropies, and research institutions. The manifestation of the notion of civil society in Japan is found in *Shimin undō*. *Shimin undō* are associated with lifestyle choice (Kuroda 1972) and the notion of citizen empowerment (Bouissou 2000:362). Imata (1999) points out that civil activism exemplifies the realization by citizens themselves of their powerlessness to ‘exert meaningful influence on the political process’, which drives them ‘consciously to strive to act for what is good for the public’. *Shimin Undō* is the positive force of civil society which pursues the common good. In this regard, *futōkō* activism is one of the many issues that civil society in Japan is being mobilized to address.

Drawing upon the framework for understanding social movements in ‘complex societies’, and the characteristics of ‘new civic movements’ in Japan, this thesis defines social movements as *coordinated efforts in publicizing individual needs and experience, and creating public spaces that aim at the building of an alternative social and world order*. They are *the reflection of anonymous and impersonal power relations among social actors, and are primarily symbolic in nature as they represent resistance to the dominant culture formulated by institutions which produce and circulate information and symbolic codes*.

Social movements as defined above are characterized by the conscious endeavour by actors to reframe what have been thought as personal troubles into a public issue. In the process of reframing, social movements have to draw upon resources to coordinate and sustain collective action. These major resources can be understood as

1) political opportunities,

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21 For a comprehensive discussion on the definitional debates on civil society in general and civil society in Japan, see Schwartz and Pharr (2003).
2) social networks that activate and sustain participation of individuals in movements, which are summarized as mobilizing structures, and 3) cultural and ideological symbols, or frames (Tarrow 1994: 17).

The following section is an overview of these three main sets of factors.

2.4 Factors in explaining social movements

2.4.1 Political opportunities

Political opportunities are ‘properties of the external environment’ (della Porta 2006:16) that are related to movement emergence (McAdam et al. 1996:10). They are essential factors that activate deep-seated collective claims when successfully ‘seized and expanded by social movements, tuned into collective action and sustained by mobilizing structures and cultural frames’ (Tarrow 1994:7). Tilly (1978), McAdam (1982), Tarrow (1983), and Gamson (1975) were among the first to theorize about the link between institutionalized politics and social movements. They explain that the emergence of a particular social movement is based on ‘changes in the institutional structure or informal power relations of a given national political system’ (McAdam et al. 1996:3). It is a factor that ‘stresses the institutional incentives and/or constraints upon social movement action’, and ‘focuses upon political institutions and institutional structures in the search to determine the roots of social movement behaviour’ (Appleton 1999:57).

Variables of political opportunities singled out in empirical research include

- the degree of openness or closure of a political system (Eisinger 1973)
- electoral instability (Piven & Cloward 1977)
- the availability of influential allies (Gamson 1990 [1975]) and tolerance for protest among the elite (Jenkins & Perrow 1977)
- the degree of stability or instability of political alignments
- the availability and strategic posture of potential allies (Tarrow 1983:28), and political conflicts between and within elites (Tarrow 1989:35)
• institutional conditions which regulate agenda-setting and decision-making processes
• the characteristics of the functional division of power, and
• geographical decentralization (della Porta & Diani 2006:16-7).

The underlying conviction shared by scholars who seek ‘to assert the importance of the broader political system in structuring the opportunities for collective action’ is that ‘social movements and revolutions are shaped by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they are embedded’ (McAdam et al. 1996:2,3). However, proponents of this theory are criticized for ignoring the fact that ‘many, perhaps most, sets of people who share a grievance or interest fail to act on it and lacking a plausible theory of the conditions or process under which people who share an interest organize and act on it’ (McAdam et al. 2001:15).

In the case of futōkō activism, political opportunities not only help to explain movement emergence, but also its development. They appeared in a number of stages and help account for:

1) the setting up of the fundamental movement structures – the Kangaerukai in 1984 and Tōkyō Shūre in 1985
2) the launching of the first national protest against the hegemonic framing of futōkō in 1988, in which activists took the opportunity to publicize their alternative interpretation of futōkō, and secured the attention of the mainstream media to cover their side of the story
3) the launching of a home education service in 1994 for stay-at-home futōkō children, thus extending the coverage of their movement; and
4) the attestation of two of the futōkō SMOs as NPO in 1999.

5) The political opportunities identified that could be linked to the four aspects of development mentioned above include, first, MoE guidelines published in 1983 regarding futōkō; second, the AS front page article in 1988, which was considered a reinforcement of the hegemonic, child-blaming discourse of futōkō; third, the rise of a new kind of pressure from MoE and society in general on futōkō children to attend alternative facilities in early the 1990s; and fourth, the enactment of the NPO Law in 1998.
Futōkō activists have framed these incidences as a reflection of the continual inability or reluctance of MoE to reform the educational system and to provide effective solutions to school-related problems including futōkō, and as a challenge to the deep-rooted beliefs in school education that reinforce unquestioned acceptance of hegemonic interpretation of issues related to futōkō. Details of how activists have grasped opportunities to launch their actions will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.4.2 Mobilizing structures

Mobilizing structure refers to the forms of organization, both formal and informal, ‘through which people mobilize and engage in collective action’ (McAdam et al. 1996:3). The most important perspective on this set of factors is the resource mobilization theory proposed by McCarthy and Zald (1973, 1977). McCarthy and Zald maintain that the SMOs that spawn from social movements are a source of social change. Resource mobilization theory places emphasis on the economic conditions required to turn social movements from “potential” to “actual” (Drakeford 1997:7) at the macro-level. At the intermediate level, resource mobilization theory focuses on the study of pre-existing organizations as the seedbeds of social movements. It suggests, firstly, the importance of the role of crucial individuals in mobilizing available contextual opportunities; and secondly, that small groups and social networks with particular features can stimulate the necessary energy to produce a social movement (Tarrow 1994:22; see also Klandermans 1988:73-96). The theory highlights the relationship between leaders and the led, and among participants themselves, and accounts for ‘continued participation through a process of conscious calculation’ (Tarrow 1994:8-9). In this sense, resources mobilization theory supplements political opportunities theory in explaining how collective action is diffused, coordinated and sustained once opportunities appear and have been seized upon.

In futōkō activism, mobilizing structures exist in two forms. First there is an internal network of SMOs that is formed primarily from Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai), free spaces, and free schools around the country. The informal and loose
structure of the futōkō students and their parents’ internal network facilitates the formation of a broad social base of support for the movement. They are ‘seed-beds’ in which experiences are shared among parents of futōkō children, and collective understanding of the issue developed.

Second, there is an external network which forms and links the movement to established social actors, including government organizations, NPOs, industrial and business corporations, and to intellectual and cultural institutions. Through strategic partnership and linkage with external organizations, the movement enhances its ability to mobilize key resources for continual development. This, in turn, helps to sustain participation as potential and existing participants see the opportunity of self-realization and affirmation through participation. In this sense, the framing of mobilizing structures is pertinent to the development of the futōkō movement. It allows the movement to continue to mobilize available contextual opportunities and sustain participation.

The mobilizing structures of the futōkō SMO network and external linkages have created an environment in which on-going framing and consolidation of identity occurs, both at a movement and at an individual level. At the same time, the significance of building effective movement structures implicates the role of ‘crucial individuals’ in maintaining a functioning movement network. These ‘crucial individuals’ are the frame articulators of the movement. The relationship between movement networks and participation will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The theory of mobilization structure, however, is criticized for its overemphasis on the role of activists or supporters, for treating social movements as if they are business enterprises (Eder 1993:4), and for assuming that the goals of SMOs are instrumental while not giving due regard to solidarity goals which includes expressive dimensions like the social and psychological satisfaction of participation. In short, the theory is criticized for its inadequacy in addressing the cultural, expressive and identity-building dimensions that are believed to be central to many SMOs (Halcli 1999:136). As Tarrow observes (1994):

coordination depends not only on structural features of society like social networks and institutions, but on the trust and cooperation that are generated
among participants by shared understandings; or, to use a broader category, on the collective action frames that justify, dignify and animate collective action.

(p.22)

This is to say that social movements involve processes of purposive ‘framing work’ which shape grievances into broader claims. Like social networks, the proffered frames function to ‘lower the costs of bringing people together in collective action, creating a broader and more widely diffused dynamic of movement’ (Tarrow 1994:23). As such, movement organizers assume a pivotal role in ‘enunciat[ing] demands in terms of frames of meaning that are comprehensible to a wider society’ (p.25). This happened in the Emergency Meeting held by futōkō activists in 1989. As will be illustrated in the following chapter, activists came up with a diagnostic and prognostic frame for futōkō that centred on the individual needs and autonomy of children. The shared frame of understanding towards futōkō has garnered nationwide support and drawn mass media attention. As this thesis proposes, futōkō activists deployed this shared alternative frame of futōkō to frame their activism and diffuse their alternative interpretation of futoko, one that was originally at odds with the official definition, in order to make alternative claims concerning what action should be taken collectively and institutionally in response to futōkō. In this respect, the role of frame articulators was without doubt central to the movement’s success, and the framing perspective is instrumental in the analysis of futōkō activism in this thesis.

2.4.3 Framing processes

2.4.3.1 The concept of frames

The origin of the concept of frame and its application in the study of social movements is derived primarily from the work of Goffman (1974). Although today Goffman is cited largely for symbolic reasons, his seminal work Frame Analysis (1974) has, nevertheless, enthused scholars to produce a stream of frame analysis literature. For this reason, it is still useful to begin by examining Goffman’s concept of frames. Fisher (1997) has performed a critical review of Goffman’s idea of framing, which serves as a useful reference in grasping the gist of the genre of ‘Goffmanesque’ upon which the following discussion is based.
Goffman defines frames as ‘schemata of interpretation’ which enable individuals ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ occurrences within their life space and the world at large (1974:21). Goffman argues that there are two types of primary frameworks: natural frameworks and social frameworks (p.21). Natural frameworks develop from ‘purely physical’ experiences, while social frameworks render ‘what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful’ (p.21), and arise from the wilful exertions of ‘an intelligence, live agency, the chief one being the human being’ (p.22). Gamson paraphrases this concept of primary frameworks as one which is centred on ‘whether the event is a natural one or a man-made occurrence’, and through which ‘an actor [renders] situations meaningful for himself’ (Gamson 1975:604). Goffman maintains that both frameworks develop along a continuum of systematization, with a framework at the one end lacking any ‘apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding’, and at the other end those defined by highly organized sets of rules. Furthermore, he holds that all primary frameworks enable users to organize their experiences regardless of their level of systemization (p.21).

While Goffman’s conceptualizations of frame analysis are recognized as an excellent beginning in analyzing how people organize their experience to make sense of the world around them, his underdeveloped concepts are also criticized for raising ‘irresolvable problems for the study of frames’ (Fisher 1997: n2.9). One of the first reviewers, Gamson (1975), points out that the work by Goffman is a ‘vastly incomplete conceptual apparatus’ (p.607). Davis (1975) holds that Frame Analysis is ‘a virtual thesaurus of stylistic gaffes and gaucheries’ (p.602). Swanson (1975) criticizes Goffman for making exaggerated claims concerning the implications of ‘underdeveloped and unsystematized examples’, and for his failure in offering a convincing distinction between natural and social frameworks (1975:218). Fisher also contends that Goffman, while suggesting that cultures produce social frameworks, ‘shifts between holding cultural and individual frames users accountable for the entailments of the way they frame reality, and absolving frame users of such responsibility by asserting that we are “likely to be unaware of such organized features as the framework has and [that we are] unable to describe the framework with any completeness if asked” (Goffman 1974:21)” (Fisher 1997:n2.5).
It is also pointed out that Goffman gives ‘little consideration to how frames develop in the first place’ (Fisher 1997:n2.9).

Having said that, Goffman’s contribution should not be ignored. As mentioned before, it laid an important conceptual foundation for later explorations of systems of representations of the world in different cultural contexts. The concept of frames is further explored and developed by scholars in various fields of academic study. In the field of communications, based on the definition of frames produced by Goffman, Thomas König reinterprets frames ‘as basic cognitive structures which guide the perception and representation of reality’. Meanwhile, he also points out that, in the process of communication, frames are often adopted unconsciously. Maher (2001) argues that it is because of this nature of frames that they consist of ‘tacit rather than overt conjectures’ (p.84). This creates difficulties in empirically identifying and measuring frames. König attributes the difficulty of measuring latent frames as one of the reasons for the shift in theoretical focus towards ‘a conceptualization of frames as being more actively adopted and manufactured’. This theoretical shift in emphasizing the active selection of frames has become the dominant perspective, in particular in media studies. The definition of frames developed by Entman (1993) is a representative manifestation of this conception of frames as a deliberate choice: in other words,

to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.

(p.52)

In a similar vein, works by scholars like D’Angelo (2002:873), Tankard (2001:97) and Reese (2001:7) all suggest that frames are ‘powerful discursive cues’ that are actively and consciously adopted. The power of frames in triggering meaning has been identified in numerous literatures across the academic disciplines of the social,

behavioural and cognitive sciences. Frames are considered to have latent power in shaping and reshaping public perceptions, and thus the terms of public discourse. Political psychologist Iyengar refers to frames as ‘subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgment and choice problems’ (Iyengar 1991:21). Sociologist Ball-Rokeach observes that frames are ‘the linguistic window through which we see or interpret’ (Ball-Rokeach & Loges 1996:279). Neuman et al. (1992) claim that ‘frames are conceptual tools which media and individuals rely on to convey, interpret, and evaluate information’ (p.149). Van Dijk, Donati, and Triandafyllidou argue that there are two types of frames that people make use of:

1) discursive structural frames by which people organize topics of discussion; and

2) a higher level of frames which people use to make sense of the information they encounter.

Having examined a range of framing literature from the writings of scholars like Erving Goffman, Tuen van Dijk, Serge Moscovici, George Lakoff, Alan Johnson, William Gamson, David Snow, Robert Benford and Paolo Donati, Fisher (1997: abstract) concludes that frames are ‘semi-structured elements of discourse which people use to make sense of information they encounter’.

To summarize the discussion on frames, as Gilliam and Bales (2001) puts it, ‘frames tell us how to interpret a message, and even what counts as part of the message and what can be ignored, by evoking particular cognitive models and not others’ (p.4). Such interests in the conceptual development and empirical application of frame analysis has led to a meteoric increase in the number of framing literatures across various disciplines – anthropology, psychology, political science, linguistics, and in

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23 Thomas König has provided a useful review on the concept of frames. See his article ‘Frame analysis: a primer’, <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/mmse/archive/primers/frames_primer.html>, viewed 1/03/2004.

24 Ball-Rokeach (2001) also presents a thorough discussion on the role of framing in shaping public perceptions of events. See bibliography for details.

25 Teun van Dijk and Paolo Donati understand frames in a different way from some other experts like David Sow, Robert Benford, and William Gamson in that the former locate frames at deeper cognitive levels ‘over which individuals, social movements and institutions hold little, if any, direct control’, and thus ‘would not directly facilitate the assessment of social movement strategies, public opinion, or organizational behaviour’ (Fisher 1997:n1.4). Despite the claim that they are not or are rarely under the direct control of individuals, organizations or groups, studies of social movements shows that people still employ these cultural tools, or frames to interpret social issues.
particular, sociology. It is recognized as a core concept in understanding the way an
issue is composed, and has been applied most extensively in the study of social
movements and collective actions, and in the study of framing processes in relation
to the emergence and development of social movements over time. Snow and
Benford (1988) elaborate on the ‘core framing tasks’ which they believe are critical
in determining the success of movement mobilization. The active selection of frames
(framing) is considered to carry strategic importance in communication and media
studies. This is because framing ‘not only deconstructs the dominant frames that
drive reasoning on public issues, but also identifies those models most likely to
stimulate public reconsideration and enumerates their elements (reframing)’
Frameworks Institute 2001). This holds equally true in the study of social
movements, although researchers here focus on how activists might respond to a
particular social problem rather than on how people think about a range of issues at
any given time. As a consequence, social movement researchers ‘do not locate
frames within the discourse patterns which people learn as members of a culture’.
Instead they contend that individuals possess the ability to frame movements through
studying processes that contribute to or inhibit the deployment of frames to mobilize
potential adherents and constituents (Fisher 1997:n3.4). They build on the work of
Goffman and develop the theory and method of frame analysis to analyze the
discourses developed by social movements and their ability to mobilize people. The
relevance of framing processes to the understanding of collective action is succinctly
highlighted by McAdam et al. (1996):

If the combination of political opportunities and mobilization structures affords
groups a certain structural potential for action, they remain, in the absence of one
other factor, insufficient to account for collective action. Mediating between
opportunity, organization, and action are the shared meanings and definitions that
people bring to their situation. At a minimum level, people need to feel both
aggrieved about some aspects of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively,
they can redress the problem. Lacking either one or both of these perceptions, it
is highly unlikely that people will mobilize even when afforded the opportunity to
do so. Conditioning the presence or absence of these perceptions is that complex
of social psychological dynamics – collective attribution, social construction – that
David Snow and various of his colleagues (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford
1988) have referred to as framing processes [original emphasis].
In short, framing is about defining an issue:

1) that is collectively shared
2) that can be/should be acted on
3) which the actors involved decide to act upon, and
4) in which a changing definition (framing) impacts on changes in other activities by the social movement.

The framing perspective, in this sense, is highly relevant to the understanding of the mobilization potency of collective actions and social movements. In the words of Benford and Snow (2000:611), framing is a ‘central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements’, and in Fisher’s (1997: n1.3) words, it is a strategic method to ‘explore the processes by which social movements come to understand problems and to sell their perspectives to a wider audience’.

2.4.3.2 Systemization of frame analysis technique – frame generation, development and elaboration

Benford and Snow account for the escalating use of and reference to the framing perspective for its function in linking meaning and action for social movement members (Snow & Benford 2000). In the literature on frame analysis in the study of social movements, a number of articles are often referred to for their significance in establishing the core conceptual arguments of frame analysis. These include works by Snow and Benford (1988), William Gamson (1975), and Hank Johnston (1995). Snow et al. (1986) remains the most quoted article for its contribution to the systematization of the technique. Gamson is also cited frequently for his insight into the role of framing in media discourse (Gamson 1995). Johnston (1995) builds on the groundwork laid by Gamson and proposes a ‘micro-analysis strategy’ emphasizing analysis of texts produced by individuals in a social movement.

Snow et al. identify three ‘fundamental shortcomings with respect to the participation issue’ in most analyses of social movements: negligence of the process of grievance interpretation, suggestion of a static view of participation, and tendency
to over-generalize participation-related processes (1986:465-7). These analyses argue that ‘what is at issue… is not merely the presence or absence of grievances, but the manner in which grievances are interpreted and the generation and diffusion of those interpretations’ (p.466). They contend that social movements ‘not only act upon the world… but they also frame the world in which they are acting’ (p.466). They further argue that the way an issue is interpreted contributes significantly to a thorough understanding of movement participation, and thus the propensity of a specific movement to achieve its outcomes (p.466). It is with these considerations in mind that Snow et al. develop the concept of frame alignment and its various processes.

Snow et al. suggest that frames function as ‘conceptual scaffolding’ that are developed by social movements to construct new ideologies or to modify existing ones (Snow & Benford 1988:213). These erected frames thus perform the ‘signifying work’ for social movements, constructing identities that are critical in successfully mobilizing ‘potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists’ (Snow & Benford 1988:198; see also Benford 1993; Gamson 1988; Snow et al. 1986; Tarrow 1998). The construction of frames, a process which is called framing, is defined as the process by which ‘ordinary people make sense of public issues’ (Benford 1994:1103). According to Snow et al. (1986), there are two types of frames: domain-specific interpretative frames and global interpretative frames (pp.474-5). Domain-specific frames shape the way people view various domains of their life situations as well as themselves. Snow et al. use ‘domain’ in a broad sense to refer to ‘an almost infinite variety of aspects of life, such as dietary habits, consumption patterns, leisure activities, social relationships, social statuses, and self-perception’ (p.474). They explain that participation in ‘movements that seek dramatic changes in the status, treatment, or activity of a category of people’ is necessarily pre-conditioned by transformations in domain-specific frames. The global interpretative frames rearrange domain-specific frames in new ways such that they become a kind of master frame that assigns new meaning to events and experiences (p.475).

Transformation of these two types of frames is thus pertinent to the sustainability of movement participation. Futōkō activists have been initiating changes in the social
perception and treatment of futōkō. They invoke, in particular, themes of human rights and individual autonomy to frame the issue. In doing so, they shift futōkō from the domain of education/schooling to the global frame of human rights. This allows the movement to justify its claims that futōkō is not a personal problem in learning and socializing, but a structural problem that arises from a school system that suppresses individuality. Also, with the master frame of human rights and individual freedom they have evoked, activists redefine futōkō as a right and a choice of the individual child that is to be protected. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, activists have elicited a different framework for futōkō, schooling, and relationships between society and the individual. In doing so, they have carved out a niche for their activism.

Social movement theorists maintain that successful framing can be analysed by studying constraints faced by activists in the process of framing in a given social and political context, and the capacity of SMOs to ‘skilfully effect and then sustain a particular type of [frame] alignment’ for successful mobilization (Snow et al. 1986: 477). The tasks and processes of framing thus highlight the deliberative role of frame articulators, who are crucial in the systemization of processes associated with the development, generation, and elaboration of frames (Benford & Snow 2000). Three sets of framing processes, which are described as overlapping and dynamic, are identified:

1) discursive processes of frame articulation and frame amplification;
2) strategic processes of frame bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation;
3) contested processes of counterframing, internal contests (intramovement disputes), and dialectic tensions between collective action frames and collective events.

These processes, together with the three ‘core framing tasks’ of diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing, form the fundamental framework of frame analysis (Snow & Benford 1988:199-202). To put it simply, framing processes are about ‘how frames get made’ (Hart 1996:95), while framing tasks are about what kinds of frames are selected and proffered (Snow & Benford 1988). The two sets of distinctions – the framing processes and the core framing tasks – will be
applied and elaborated in the analysis of futōkō discourse and futōkō movement-related activities in this thesis.

The systemization of activities carried out by social movement actors helps to illuminate the processes of ‘how frames get made’, explains why people participate, and why a certain movement succeeded, failed, or was enlarged, diminished, sustained or modified, as illustrated by empirical studies that benefit from engaging the frame analysis technique. For instance, many empirical studies find that the diagnostic ‘injustice frames’, conceptualized by Gamson et al. (1982), is a useful mode of interpretation of movements generated by those who come to frame victimization of particular groups as being due to the unjust actions of an authority (e.g. Benford & Hunt 1992; Jasper & Poulsen 1995; Jenness 1995; White 1999). Other literature suggests that the three sets of overlapping framing processes are used by activists to develop, generate, and elaborate their collective action frames (e.g. Johnston & Snow 1998; Kubal 1998; Neuman 1998; White 1999). For instance, McCallion & Manes (1999) found that the liturgical movement initiated by the Vatican in the late 19th century relied heavily on frame bridging to link the Catholic academic world to that of lay professionals. Also, Gerhards and Rucht (1992) found that West German activists in 1988 successfully bridged their frames with those of peace, ecology, neighbourhood, labour and women’s movement groups in their movement against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Futōkō activism, as declared by activists themselves, aimed at changing social perceptions in relation to futōkō from a negative one that victimized and disadvantaged futōkō children into a positive one that brings about supportive actions for futōkō children. Activists draw on social values and beliefs pertinent to Japanese society in arguing for their case. As such, this thesis focuses on the framing of the problem and its solution by futōkō activists. Because the framing model focuses on analysing the meaning construction aspect of social movements, it is useful in enhancing the understanding of:

1) how the movement started, that is, frame generation;
2) the quintessence of their arguments, that is, frame articulation/elaboration; and
3) how it developed, that is, frame development.
Other key factors affecting the development, success or failure, scope and influence of framing efforts include:

1) frame resonance, which depends on the credibility (frame consistency, empirical credibility and credibility of frame articulator) and salience (centrality, narrative fidelity and experiential commensurability) of frames;

2) frame vulnerability (Snow et al. 1986:477-8; Snow and Benford 1988:190-9);

3) frame flexibility/rigidity, inclusivity/exclusivity; and

4) interpretive scope. Those with sufficiently broad interpretative scope can have the potential to evolve into master frames like the rights frames, choice frames, injustice frames, environmental justice frames, hegemonic frames, etc. (Alinsky 1971; Babb 1996; Benford and Snow 2000; Erwin 1993; Fisher 1984; Heitlinger 1996; Jasper & Poulsen 1995; Noonan 1995; Sherkat & Ellison 1997; Snow & Benford 1988; Swart 1995; Zuo & Benford 1995).

These elements will be applied to analyze the futōkō discourse in Chapter 5, and to explain in Chapters 3 and 4 how and why futōkō activism has been able to be sustained for over two decades.

2.4.3.3 Issues of framing

While the framing perspective highlights the role of social movement actors in shaping their movement, it raises a number of issues. First, there is the question of the extent to which frames are the product of conscious manipulation by movement actors, and produce unchallenged understandings about society (Snow & Benford 1992:135-36). Presumably, the development and redevelopment of frames are some mixture of unquestioned assumptions and attempts to reframe some aspects of society. Several social movement studies lend support to the interactive and recursive relationship between extant beliefs and frames (Berbrier 1998; d’Anjou & Van Male 1998; Kubal 1998; Nepstad 1997; Platt & Fraser 1998; Taylor 1999). In futōkō activism, futōkō activists for instance do not refute the notion of wa (harmony) or consensus. They tap into the notion of wa and emphasize the symbiosis of all diversity within people’s lives. At the same time they reframe this traditional notion
in a way that highlights respect for individual differences, and its importance to the maintenance of a sustainable and harmonious society. In this way, futōkō is framed as a manifestation of a symbiotic society. Issues such as these will be elaborated in Chapter 5.

Another question to deal with in the frame analysis concerns the role of frames in recommending actions to be taken by the movement. Frame theorists claim that frames function to link meaning and action for social movements (Snow and Benford 2000). In futōkō activism, activists have been reframing futōkō as an alternative learning process that is as legitimate as that offered by mainstream schools. As such, they bargained with MoE for travel concessions for futōkō children who attend free schools. They claimed success for their efforts when in 1992 MoE announced that a commuting pass for these children would be granted in April 1993 (FS 95). This is one of the successful attempts by the movement to create a more tolerant and supportive social environment for futōkō children. Moreover, based on their reframing of education as an individual learning experience, and as a right of children and the responsibility of adults, activists have also negotiated and communicated with the government in matters relating to grants for free schools, recognition of free school status, etc. Their effort continues today. They appeal to the public, for instance, to sign petitions and sent representatives and letters to government ministers to pursue their cause. These examples show the role of frames in recommending actions to be taken by the movement.

Also, it is generally agreed among researchers that intra-movement disagreements regarding framing is common. Members of a movement dispute over the diagnosis and prognosis of reality. These kinds of dispute are known as ‘frame disputes’. They can also dispute how reality should be represented in order to maximize mobilization. These are known as ‘frame resonance disputes’ (Benford 1993a:691). Benford found that intra-movement disputes can be both detrimental and facilitative to a movement, and can affect movement structure, inter-organizational relations and collective identity construction (1993a). His findings were supported by others such as Clemens (1996), Haines (1996), and White (1999). In the futōkō movement, disputes over the framing of futōkō are believed to have led to the dropping out of a core activist (see Chapter 7).
Last but not the least, there is the question of distinguishing frames and ideology. Proponents of framing are criticized for blurring the boundaries between ideologies and frames, thus giving rise to methodological confusion in the practical application of frame analysis (Donati 1994:15-6). The relationship between frames and ideology is of particular relevance to the analysis of futōkō activism because futōkō activism focuses fundamentally on changing social perceptions by drawing on core values and beliefs that are pertinent to the framing of futōkō. Benford and Snow maintain that ideology is generally referred to as a fairly pervasive and integrated set of beliefs and values that have considerable staying power. By contrast, collective action frames function as innovative amplifications and extensions of, or antidotes to, existing ideologies or components of them. Accordingly, ideology functions as both a constraint and resource in relation to framing processes and collective action frames (Benford and Snow 2000:633).

Take the notion of ‘self’ as an example. Literature in Japanese society generally points out that the notion of ‘self’ in Japanese society is defined through its interaction with others, and not merely through individual personality. By contrast, the value of individuality, or the notion of ‘self’, in US culture emphasizes the cultivation of uniqueness in a social individual. The identity of ‘self’ in US culture depends on ‘discovering and pursuing its own personal wants and inner impulses’ (Bellah et al. 1985:77), and on ‘drawing its purposes, goals, and life-plans out of itself… is largely based on ignoring our embedding in webs of interlocution’ (Taylor 1989:39). In Japan there has been more emphasis on cultivating a ‘self’ that is able to show empathy in the company of others. Also, in Japan, the Western notion of ‘individualism’ is often blamed for problems like futōkō, which is often regarded as resulting from selfish behaviour (waga mama), or being spoiled (amaete), or avoidance of academic or social failure. The framing of the ‘self’ is guided by beliefs and values that are generally believed to be cherished in Japan, among which are wa (harmony) within a group, giri (personal obligation, or obligation to those to whom one is indebted), and seishin (the mind, or selfless spiritual strength) manifested through firm inner self-control for the benefit of the group. These beliefs and values are generally thought to have guided the public and private spheres of
Japanese society for centuries and to still do so now. They highlight the necessity of social interaction, the interdependence of social individuals, and the control and submission of the ‘self’ to the common good of the group.\textsuperscript{26}

In futōkō activism, activists have tapped into these extant beliefs and values to frame their arguments. For instance, they have used the word kyōsei (symbiosis) as a manifestation of wa. The idea of kyōsei points to peaceful co-existence, of acceptance of diversity in individuality, and respect of freedom in the expression of individuality. These are qualities different from the traditional notion of wa which demands firm inner self-control and self-sacrifice for the group. Futōkō activists have also put much emphasis on the uniqueness of individuals (ko), which is closer to the western idea of individuality; this view emphasizes that the provision of education for children is the responsibility of the government, but that it is the human right (jinken) of children to decide whether they go to school or not. This is the opposite of the hegemonic framing of the idea and notion of schooling and government responsibility. Activists have also adapted the notion of human rights, which is originally a western idea, in their discourse. The above examples, which will be detailed in Chapter 5, indicate that ideologies and frames, as Snow and Benford (2000) contend, are different conceptual entities, but that both are of analytical utility in understanding social movements. Put simply, frames give perception; and ideology can be framed for specific purposes.\textsuperscript{27}

2.5 Social movement outcomes

The study of a social movement is conducted in the belief that the movement produces significant consequences in terms of social change (Cress & Snow

\textsuperscript{26} For a discussion of Japanese values, see also works by e.g. Reischauer (1977), Nakane (1971), McVeigh (1998).

\textsuperscript{27} For an elaborated discussion of framing and ideology, see Oliver and Johnston (2000), Snow and Benford (2000), and Snow (2000). There are other criticisms against the framing perspective (Fisher 1997:3.6). For instance, Snow and Benford are criticized for not addressing the question of how frames are identified. Also, while they stress the need for social movements to develop ‘empirically credible’ frames that can be tested by activists (Snow & Benford 1988:208), they are challenged for not adducing how reliability and validity of frames can be tested by scholars studying social movements. In addition, they have, like Goffman, raised the prospect that some frames are ‘truthful’ while others are ‘misframings’ (Goffman 1974:301-38; Snow \textit{et al.} 1986:475), but have neglected the question of how researchers can distinguish between ‘truthful’ frames and ‘misframings’.
As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the study of the futōkō movement is based on the premise that it has been a successfully framed social movement. The question then follows: has this movement succeeded in bringing about the changes it sought? However, as Gamson (1975) rightly points out, ‘success is an elusive idea’. He explains:

What of the group whose leaders are honored or rewarded while their supposed beneficiaries linger in the same cheerless state as before? ... Is a group a failure if it collapses with no legacy save inspiration to a generation that will soon take up the same cause with more tangible results? And what do we conclude about a group that accomplishes exactly what it set out to achieve and then finds its victory empty of real meaning for its presumed beneficiaries?

(Gamson 1975:28)

The typologies of outcomes that scholars have been relying on are mainly concerned with policy changes on which the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of a movement depends. Giugni (1998) points out that it is insufficient and dangerous to focus on the notion of ‘success’ in terms of government policy change to describe the effects of movements (pp. 383, 385-7). As Tilly (1998) observes, the effects of social movements are often indirect and unintended, ‘far surpass[ing] the explicit demands made by activists in the course of social movements, and sometimes negat[ing] them’. Therefore ‘success’ or ‘failure’ can ‘hardly describe most of the effects’ of policy changes. This is particularly the case in contemporary movements which are identity-based aiming at changing public perceptions of a given matter (Giugni 1998:385). In this regard, the futōkō movement is a case in point. Nevertheless, the analysis of movement outcomes in existing typologies is still framed, explicitly or implicitly, in terms of success. As a matter of fact they are more easily measured than cultural changes. Policy changes are widely recognized as a crucial aspect of social movements and they are the most frequently used measurement to gauge the impact of movements (McAdam et al. 1996; Tarrow 1994; Tilly 1984). Hence, despite the causal problem of movements and outcomes, policy changes in relation to futōkō will be examined because they are also actively sought after by the futōkō movement itself. In view of the conceptual difficulties in defining movement success, Gamson (2003) suggests using the notion of ‘outcomes’ to evaluate movement consequence.
2.5.1 Defining movement ‘success’ – framing processes as a crucial determinant of outcomes

The conceptualization of outcomes, or changes, brought about by movements has been far from systematic due to a number of inherent difficulties in the study of this topic. Researchers have classified social movement outcomes into two general categories: direct and indirect outcomes. Direct outcomes refer to the securing of constituent benefits and the winning of new advantages from targets of influence. They are ‘typically articulated as movement goals and are a reflection of a movement’s primary ideological rationale’ (Cress & Snow 2000:1065). On the other hand, indirect outcomes refer to impacts of a movement that are not enunciated as movement goals such as, for instance, changes in public perception, the generation of counter-movements, and biographical changes such as the creation of career activists (Gusfield 1981; McAdam 1988; Zald & Useem 1987).

Research on movement outcomes so far has focused on direct outcomes, which Giugni (1998) identifies as intended effects. In this regard, Gamson’s analysis of 53 American collective action groups active between 1800 and 1945 is recognized as the most systematic and comprehensive one. Gamson (1990) categorizes direct outcomes into two types:

1) organizational outcomes, that is the acceptance of a challenging group by its targets/antagonists as validly representing a legitimate set of interests; and

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28 Giugni (1994, 1998) points out that although this lacuna in outcomes has been identified by many (e.g. Berkowitz 1974, Gurr 1980, McAdam et al 1998, Tarrow 1993) (quoted in Giugni 1998:373), there has been little systematic research on this topic (Giugni 1998:371). For an exhaustive overview of the large body of literature on movement consequences, see Giugni 1994. Giugni (1998) also provided sources of a previous review by Amenta et al. (1992), Burstein et al. (1995), Gurr (1980), Jenkins (1981), McAdam et al. (1988), Mirowsky and Ross (1981), and Schumaker (1978) that reflects the same state of affairs.

29 A challenging group refers to a group that seeks to mobilize an unmobilized constituency whenever it decides to attempt to change society. A constituency refers to ‘individuals or groups whose resources and energy the group seeks in carrying out its effort at change’ (Gamson 1975:15). It is defined also as the target of mobilization. In this relation, a newly-formed group that is rich in resources from the start and thus has no need to mobilize a constituency is not qualified as a challenging group. Also, a challenging group’s antagonist must lie outside its constituency. In other words, a challenging group seeks to influence ‘beyond what their constituency has the power to implement on its own’ (Gamson 1975:14-17).
2) beneficiary outcomes, that is ‘new advantages’ which are gained by the group’s beneficiaries as a result of movement action and demands.

They are articulated as the two measures of ‘success’ of a movement. The typology expounded by Gamson is an important development in the theorization of movement outcomes. It has also been challenged, adapted and refined (Cress and Snow 2000: 1065-6; Giugni 1998: 382-3; McVeigh et al. 2003: 847). These conceptual discussions provide a reference point for evaluating the efficacy and salience of futōkō activism in terms of changes in discourse, public perceptions, as well as government policy.

So far, three main perspectives have been developed by researchers in the quest for factors facilitating or constraining movement mobilization and outcomes. These are:

1) organizational effectiveness
2) the effectiveness of disruptive tactics, and
3) environmental factors in terms of the role of public opinion and the political context in which a movement occurs.

They are considered the intervening factors mediating the outcomes of a movement (Giugni 1998: 374-382). Giugni (1998) has offered a comprehensive review and discussion of the problems of each of these major perspectives. Cress and Snow (2000) also critique issues related to these major theoretical perspectives. These perspectives offer a valuable basis for discussing movement outcomes, and they echo the point made by Tilly (1999) and Giugni (1998) that emphasis should be given to the analysis of movement dynamics and interactions in the study of outcomes; they also contend that these dominant perspectives ‘simplify the dynamics of outcome attainment’ (p.1070). In particular, they point to the absence of cultural factors in the study of movement outcomes. This observation directs them to consider the significance of one such set of cultural factors – the framing processes – and the interaction of it with the other three sets of variables, namely, organizational effectiveness, effectiveness of disruptive tactics, and environmental factors in generating various outcomes.
The study by Cress and Snow (2000) is so far the only systematic study that applies the framing perspective to the study of social movement outcomes (Benford & Snow 2000; McVeigh et al. 2003). Cress and Snow (2000) adopt the same point of view as that of Snow and Benford (1988) who argue that the success of a movement in terms of attainment of desired outcomes through movement activities is contingent upon the extent to which a movement attends to the core framing tasks. They highlight the importance of diagnostic and prognostic framing in the process of achieving movement goals (Cress & Snow 2000:1071). Indeed, the rhetorical quality of diagnostic and prognostic frames helps to cast light onto the broader cultural and institutional changes that movements can bring about. These two aspects are identified as crucial by many, but have been largely neglected in the study of movement consequences (Amenta et al. 1992; Burstein et al. 1995; Giugni 1998; Gurr 1980; Jenkins 1981; McAdam et al. 1988; Mirowsky & Ross 1981; Schumaker 1978). As Cress and Snow (2000) put it:

Diagnostic framing is important because it problematizes and focuses attention on an issue, helps shape how the issue is perceived, and identifies who or what is culpable, thereby identifying the targets or sources of the outcomes sought; prognostic framing is important because it stipulates specific remedies or goals for the SMO (social movement organizations) to work toward and the means or tactics for achieving these objectives.

(p.1071)

The effort of Cress and Snow (2000) to bring in the framing perspective is followed by McVeigh et al. (2003) who add to the understanding of the importance of framing processes in determining the consequences of movements. In their study of hate crime reporting in United States counties, McVeigh et al. (2003) highlight the importance of the framing process in affecting the decision of local authorities to ‘take positive action on legislation that endorses the validity of claims and demands asserted by various civil rights organizations’ (p.847). They call to attention the interplay and interdependence of three sets of factors in affecting outcomes: organizational strength, political context, and framing processes, and point out that objective conditions, which vary across the local context, affect the credibility of movement claims, which in turn can affect public perceptions. Their studies lend a new theoretical insight to the study of how framing can affect movement outcomes:
that even ‘coherent and well-articulated frames can fail in some circumstances, while incoherent and poorly articulated frames may succeed in other circumstances’ (p.863). The theoretical approach employed by McVeigh et al. (2003) is one step forward in the application of the framing perspective in movement outcome study in that it enhances the study of both intended and unintended consequences of social movements.

In fact there is evidence of active framing during the emergence and development of the futōkō movement. Futōkō activists focused on the creation of a support network that provides space and offers activities of various kinds to help build up a positive personal identity for futōkō children. They have also articulated a vigorous alternative discourse with the help of credible frame articulators to de-stigmatize futōkō. As a result, changes and shifts in public perception regarding futōkō have occurred. Perception changes suggest that framing has played a significant role in bringing about positive outcomes for the movement. The cultural and ideational nature of the futōkō movement means that cultural or ideational outcomes can be considered and assessed as direct outcomes of movement framing. In most cases, these types of changes are achieved incrementally, and thus require ongoing redefinition of movement goals. From this perspective, as some theorists argue, survival of movement organizations should be regarded as an indicator of their success, if not goal attainment (Minkoff 1993; Zald & Ash 1996). In this sense, the sustainability of the futōkō movement over time bespeaks the efficacy and thus ‘success’ of movement framing.

Meanwhile, as futōkō activists focus on building their movement frames, the diagnostic, prognostic, and discursive frames, their major ‘antagonist’ – MoE – also formulates new strategies that can contain the spread of the movement, such as assigning counsellors and setting up special facilities for futōkō students in order to keep students in school. In social movement terms, efforts by MoE are called counter-framing. Counter-framing refers to an opponents’ attempts to repudiate the interpretive frames of a movement (Benford 1987:75). Counter-framing often in turn sets off reframing activity by the movement in order to contain or reverse damage to the movement’s course of action (Benford & Hunt 1994). Such competition in the process of reality construction between movement actors and their detractors are also
referred to as ‘framing contests’ (Ryan 1991). Studies show that movement actors often take this factor into account, and that framings and counter-framings by institutional elites often affect framing activity and the degree of resonance of a movement (McAdam 1996). Benford and Snow (2000) find that the relationship between movement and media framing is the most thoroughly studied topic in relation to counter-framing. Media framing has gained extensive attention and stimulated the production of a substantial volume of literature.\footnote{For example on media framing and how it contests movement framing activity, see Gamson et al. 1992; Gitlin 1997, 1980; McCarthy et al. 1996; Scheufele 1999.} Indeed, futōkō activism has taken the effect of media into account by creating their own media to disseminate their movement frame on the one hand, and to dispute counter-framing by their opponent published in the mainstream media on the other hand. The media aspect of framing will be discussed in Chapter 4. Meanwhile, in view of the continual development of the futōkō movement, this thesis maintains that framing has played a crucial role in bringing about desirable outcomes for the sustainable growth of the movement. The outcomes, in turn, reflect the effect of framing as one of the crucial factors for movement development. The question that follows is how to measure the outcomes of the futōkō movement.

### 2.5.2 Conceptualization of futōkō movement outcomes

To measure outcomes of the futōkō movement, this thesis will adapt the two measures of ‘success’ articulated by Gamson (1990), namely ‘acceptance’ and ‘new advantages’. However, there are complex issues involved in defining ‘acceptance’ and ‘new advantages’ that need to be addressed. First, there is the issue of determining the ‘end point’ of futōkō challenge. This is another conceptual issue for this thesis as the futōkō movement group still exists and is active. The term ‘end point’ is used by Gamson (1975) to refer to ‘the state of the group at the end of its challenge’ (p.30). However, as Gamson (1975) maintains, it is difficult to mark the end of a challenge with groups that continue to exist and to be active. For such groups, their challenge periods are considered over when ‘the challenging group’s major antagonists accept the group as a valid spokesman for its constituency and deal with it as such’ (p.31). However, this then brings out the second issue: how to define acceptance.
According to Gamson (1975), acceptance ‘involves a change from hostility or indifference to a more positive relationship’ (p.31). He identifies four indicators of this more positive relationship. They are consultation, negotiation, formal recognition, and inclusion (p.32). Consultation must be initiated by movement antagonists and in such a way that treats the challenge group as a ‘legitimate spokesman for a constituency’. Negotiations should be on a continuing basis and imply that the antagonist is ‘dealing with the challenging group’s negotiators as representatives of a constituency’. Formal recognition ‘is characterized by the antagonist making explicit, typically in writing, that it recognizes the challenging group as a legitimate spokesman for a designated constituency’. Finally, inclusion refers to ‘inclusion of challenging group leaders or members in positions of status or authority in the antagonist’s organizational structure’ while challenging group members maintain their status as members of the movement (p.32). With movements that aim at changing values, however, the antagonist is not just an authority, but could be the general public (p.33). The futōkō movement has two ‘antagonists’. The most immediate one is MoE, and the other is the public with its negative perceptions of futōkō.

Taking into consideration all these complex issues, Gamson (1975) proposed the use of a model of ‘existence of a minimal acceptance with any antagonists’. Gamson explains that ‘such a relationship exists if there is a positive code on any of the measures of acceptance (consultation, negotiation, formal recognition, or inclusion) with any of the antagonists’ (p.33-34). In the futōkō movement, instances of ‘acceptance’ in various forms and by various parties include the administration (e.g. attestation as NPO of Tōkyō Shūre and FS), and the media (e.g. shift in futōkō representation).

The second measure of movement outcome articulated by Gamson (1975) is ‘new advantages’ gained for the potential beneficiaries of the movement. The difficulty here is: what is perceived as a gain from the activists’ perspective may not be so for the alleged beneficiaries; and achievements considered to be a gain from the activists’ perspective may turn out to be less meaningful and even useless for the movement group. In view of these problems, Gamson (1975) refines the definition
of ‘new advantages’ as desired results gained by the movement during and immediately after the period of challenge, for whatever reason (pp.34-36).

Another issue that needs to be clarified is the targets of influence the futōkō movement sought to change. These are the institutions that represent the hegemonic discourse, and the perceptions held by the general public. Movement leader Okuchi stated that the goal of their activism is to change the ‘wrong perceptions and ways of responding to tōkōkyohi’ which have impacted negatively on the life of futōkō children (FS 103, 01/08/2002; see Chapter 3 for details), and particular reference was given to the framing of ‘futōkō is an illness’ in the hegemonic discourse. At the same time, the movement has articulated their own solution, that is their prognosis, to the problem to substantiate their own diagnosis of futōkō. The aim and goals of the movement have been declared on a number of occasions. For instance, in a regular monthly meeting that followed the publication of the first MoE handbook on futōkō published in 1983, they criticized the handbook on the one hand and articulated their position on the other as follows:

This [the Kangaerukai] is not to prevent children from going to school. It’s a place where we probe into the background of tōkōkyohi, learn to understand children’s feelings, and explore ways to help them to grow in character. During such a period of time, they may continue to go to school, or just live without going to school. At least, we don’t lay the blame on and name children themselves and parents as the cause of tōkōkyohi [as the handbook does].

Such blame-laying abounds in the tōkōkyohi handbook published by Monbusho at this time. This is very dangerous. We must by all means protest against this.

(FS 103, 01/08/2002)11

Also, in Kangaerukai’s organizational statement stresses:

We place strong emphasis on respecting children as individual human beings, and learning from children. We also aim at changing society (emphasis added) in a way that people have a better understanding of futōkō, support each other,

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11 This excerpt of the minutes of the 1983 meeting is taken from the column called ‘Futōkō no rekishi’, which means ‘The History of Futōkō’, published in the FS. The column is written by the founder of the movement, Ōkuchi Keiko, and provides a detail account of the course and events leading to the futōkō movement.
exchange experiences, put away prejudices and clarify misunderstandings, and thus create a society in which people can maintain different ways of upbringing and lifestyles.\footnote{Organizational statement of the Kangaerukai Network is extracted from the homepage of the organizations, \url{http://www.futoko-net.org/menus/gaiyou.htm}, accessed on 17/03/2005.}

To borrow Giugni’s (1998) words, futōkō activists have focused on ‘seek[ing] public support and try[ing] to sensitize the population to their cause’ (p.379). Change in public opinion will in return impact on local and national governments. As Giugni (1998) argues, change in public opinion can make the authorities more responsive to movement demands, and thus help the movement to achieve its goals.\footnote{Giugni (1998) has highlighted the role of public opinion, allies, and state structures in the political context of social movements for movement outcomes (pp.379-380). The influence of public opinion is manifested most clearly in the platforms of politicians during parliamentary election times, when various political parties have to rally for support of their countrymen. On the other hand, activists have also made use of the pre-election period to raise public awareness of the futōkō issue. For instance, the FS has conducted questionnaire surveys among political parties regarding their views on futōkō and education issues, and publicized the results to enhance their futōkō frame (e.g. FS 53, 133).} In the case of futōkō, the process of influence is a slow and long-term one (see Chapter 6). As subsequent chapters will discuss, the development of futōkō SMOs and their external links indicates that activists have focused on attending to their diagnostic and prognostic frames – to create a social environment for futōkō students outside the present system. The success and contribution of the movement’s free school called Tōkyō Shūre, for instance, is a major achievement of the movement. The recognition Tōkyō Shūre gained from government administrations and the media is also a ‘new advantage’ that the movement has gained for its beneficiaries – futōkō children. Other indicators of ‘success’ include changes in MoE measures of futōkō, and the shift in the dominant discourse to incorporate the alternative definition of futōkō. Although changes in futōkō measures still fall short of what movement activists would like, such changes have reflected a deliberate choice made by MoE and local authorities to, as McVeigh \textit{et al.} (2003) put it in their study, ‘take positive action on legislation that endorses the validity of claims and demands asserted by (futōkō activists)’.

With reference to the above theoretical discussions, two sets of movement outcomes will be discussed in Chapter 6. The first set is the organizational outcomes that reflect ‘acceptance’ of the movement group and/or their perspectives by the ‘relevant
institutions’. This type of outcome is articulated in terms of changes in the attitude and measures of MoE towards the movement group, as well as towards futōkō and futōkō students. The second set of outcomes is cultural and ideational, and could be perceived through changes in public perception. This includes any ‘new advantages’ gained by the movement group for their beneficiaries – futōkō children and their families. Four aspects will be discussed, including:

1) the creation of a futōkō culture through the development of futōkō SMO organizations;
2) changes in media representation of futōkō;
3) changes in the focus of the futōkō discourse, which tells of the shift in dominant perspectives held by the wider society on the issue; and
4) biographical changes of activists which explain the creation of career activists from individual participants with different backgrounds.

Another outcome-related issue is counter-framing by MoE. Even policy change that seemingly benefits futōkō students may turn out to be a less meaningful achievement than activists had expected. As mentioned, policy change is not an absolute measure of ‘success’. In fact, institutional response is a double-edged sword for the futōkō movement. On the one hand, futōkō is officially recognized and services are provided for futōkō students (see Chapter 6). On the other hand, through school-provided services and MoE endorsed facilities, futōkō students are in fact being ‘integrated’ into the mainstream, and this signifies attempts to institutionalize futōkō without fundamentally changing Japanese schooling, that is, to incorporate futōkō and thus silence the criticism. Some fear that this would make the problems associated with futōkō appear to be less problematic and harder to detect. Nevertheless, whatever the outcomes are in the eyes of social actors, as della Porta and Diani (2006) point out, ‘all movements tend to make demands on the political system’ (p.229). In this regard, any change in futōkō measures is nonetheless an indication to futōkō citizens that their activism has come to the attention of the government and has forced it to respond. In this sense, any reaction by MoE could be regarded as a kind of movement outcome.
Chapter Three
Framing Political Opportunities

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, key concepts and theories underlying the examination of futōkō as a social movement were discussed. These include political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes. These concepts help explain why futōkō activism has been successful as a social movement. By drawing on concepts and theories discussed in Chapter 2, this Chapter focuses on political opportunities. More specifically, it examines how futōkō citizens grasped the political opportunities, diagnosed the problem, successfully challenged the existing frame of futōkō, and launched a new frame. The other keys to success are examined in the following chapters: Chapter 4 will examine mobilizing structures and Chapter 5, framing processes.

3.2 Seizing political opportunities and articulating diagnostic and prognostic frames

As discussed in Chapter 2, social movement theorists like Tarrow (1994), Melucci (1989), Diani and Eyerman (1992) have all focused on the central role of social actors in explaining how contemporary social movements are formed. Their analyses reaffirm that that in order for a protest to emerge, ‘activists must believe that an opportunity exists, that they have the power to bring about change; and

34 The meaning of ‘actor’ is defined in Chapter 1 (p.2) as the carrier of a challenge to the political system. Along the same lines, ‘social actors’ are carriers of such a challenge who come from outside the political or institutional system.
they must blame the system for the problem’ [emphasis added] (della Porta & Diani 2006:18).

The understanding and interpretation of opportunities for social movements, in other words, depend largely on how activists perceive potential opportunities. The emergence of the futōkō movement testifies to the importance of the role of citizens in mobilizing individuals and groups within the framework of possibilities and constraints presented to them by the institutions of our complex societies’ (Melucci 1989:4). Futōkō activism emerged the mid-1980s when the rapid industrial development and economic growth in the preceding three decades had prompted Japanese people to begin to look for the sense of well-being rather than materialistic satisfaction (as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3). The pursuit of new identities and lifestyles became the central concern for many. In other words, Japanese society was transforming to become a ‘post-materialistic society’ (Imada 2001:159). It was in this social background that the number of futōkō students increased (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 1), and the futōkō movement emerged. There are four distinct stages in the development of the futōkō movement. At each stage, futōkō activists effectively made use of the opportunities available to them.

3.2.1 Political Opportunity 1: Life is possible without school -- emergence of collective action on behalf of futōkō students

The first significant framing of opportunities occurred in 1983 and 1984. 1984 marked the first open protest by the citizens’ group headed by Okuchi Keiko against the hegemonic framing of futōkō issues, which eventually led to the setting up of two of the most fundamental futōkō SMOs: the Kangaerukai, the first semi-formal movement structure (1984), and Tōkyō Shūre, the first free school of its kind in Japan in 1985 (see more details later in this Chapter).

What triggered the formation of these two movement structures was the publication of a government handbook in December 1983. The handbook addressed the diagnosis and prognosis of futōkō against a backdrop of rapid increase in the instances of futōkō (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 1). Concurrently, there were also
reports of forced hospitalisation, and the imposition of medical treatment on futōkō students. Some children even attempted to take their own lives when forced to go to school. Okuchi and parents in the Kibō no kai (Association of Hope), the forerunner to citizens’ activism on futōkō, discussed these issues, and they developed a sense of urgency to share their views with other troubled parents (Okuchi 1992: 41-2). The Kibō no kai was started in 1973 by Watanabe Takashi, a prominent psychiatrist and the then head of the psychiatric department in the National Kōnodai Hospital. It was a self-help support group for parents to share their struggles, experiences, and useful information. Watanabe has extensive experience working with futōkō children since 1954 (Watanabe 1992:52). He is one of the first proponents of citizen discourse on the futōkō movement (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4), and is the key person in the transformation of Okuchi from a troubled mother and mainstream school teacher into a social movement leader.

Okuchi and members of the Kibō no kai started to feel an urgency to act on futōkō. Okuchi defines 1983 as of particular importance to futōkō. She relates:

The year 1983 was a very interesting year in the history of futōkō. Before [1983], tōkōkyohi was regarded as a kind of problematic behaviour, and was addressed in one of the sections in the handbook of student guidance. Now, for the first time, a complete booklet was published [in December 1983] to address the issue. It mentioned about the causes of, and gave instructions to teachers all over the country on how to handle tōkōkyohi. The publication of this booklet made the front page headlines in the newspapers.

(FS 106, 15/09/2002)

The publication of the booklet was regarded by members of the Kibō no kai as a significant change in attitude on the part of the government. It was the first time that MoE acknowledged the existence and severity of the problem and acted on it. Nevertheless, the Kibō no kai perceived this change as a reinforcement of the child-blaming perspective that they had strongly opposed. Futōkō activists took hold of this ‘opportunity’ to protest in public against the hegemonic view and proclaim their shared understanding of the issue. Okuchi asserts:
It may be strange to say that it was high time to act, yet at least it was a time when wrong perceptions and ways of responding [to たおきょう] surfaced.

(FS 103, 01/08/2002)

In claiming it was ‘high time to act’, たおこ市民 perceived the publication of the handbook as a threat to them. From another angle, the handbook was ‘an opportunity’ for them to act – it provided a clear target for the きぼの会 to act on. Also, the publication of the government handbook coincided with a publication by the たおこ市民. In the same year (1983), the きぼの会 published a book called ‘たおきょう – Life is Possible Without School’. It was a compilation of the views of mothers who had attended gatherings of the きぼの会. The book was edited by Watanabe. The publication of the book marked the tenth anniversary of the きぼの会 and created a great sensation among readers. After reading the book, many expressed their desire to join the association (Asakura 1995:64, Okuchi 1992: 42). The expressions of interest indicated that the network and idea of self-help groups had currency among parents – an indication of what Benford and Snow (2000) called ‘experiential credibility’ – that contributed to the greater salience of a collective action frame, and greater probability of mobilization. At that time, many parents found that the shared understanding articulated by the きぼの会 resonated with their personal experiences. Okuchi relates their success as follows:

We are thinking of having a parents’ meeting outside the hospital, a meeting that welcomes all. Experts and institutional guidance too often cannot be counted on. What really matters is that parents learn from each other, make friends with and support each other. We think these things are necessary.

(Okuchi 1992:10)

As a result, in one of the きぼの会 meetings in autumn 1983, which attracted 400 participants from all over the country, たおこ市民 arrived at a decision to set up the かんがえりかい. Established in early 1984, the かんがえりかい was an expanded version of the きぼの会, and eventually became the fundamental SMO of the たおこ movement. In October 1984, the かんがえりかい launched a protest by sending the government an open letter to appeal against the framing of たおこ in the 1983 handbook. It also called upon other citizens’ groups concerned about education to join in its protest. Okuchi reported this event as follows:
We called upon other citizens’ groups that are concerned about educational matters. Subsequently, in the meeting on the 21 October 1984, we adopted an ‘Opinion Letter regarding Tōkōkyohi’ and submitted it to Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro and the Minister of Education, Mori Yoshirō. We have gathered signatures from 2,600 supporters. 

(\textit{FS} 106, 15/09/2002)

In the letter they protested against MoE’s ascription of futōkō to the personality of futōkō children and their families without questioning the role of the school. At the same time, they demanded reform of the education system. The letter reads:

at the same time, we strongly demand educational reform be carried out as soon as possible in order that a freer and more pleasant educational environment be created, one that is suitable for children of diverse personalities.

(\textit{FS} 106, 15/09/2002)

Meanwhile futōkō activists in an earlier meeting in July 1984 had resolved to take things into their own hands. In the July 1984 meeting, Okuchi declared:

If we are not going to rely on schools for the well-being of our children, then we have to face the question of creating a space in which children can fully develop themselves.

(\textit{FS} 133, 01/11/2003)

The Kangaerukai successfully attracted citizens from different parts of Japan and grew quickly in size. Within four years, its membership reached more than 1,000. From a social movement perspective, the Kangaerukai is a product of the intervening processes between structural opportunities and collective action. On the one hand was the growing understanding by citizens that the MoE framing of futōkō in the 1983 handbook was a reinforcement of a child-blaming mentality. On the other hand, the decision of futōkō citizens to act outside the institutional structure reflects what theorists have maintained concerning the role of social actors in translating structural opportunities into collective action (Gamson & Meyer 1996; Diani 1996). Soon after its setting up, the Kangaerukai inspired the formation of numerous local versions of oya no kai all over Japan when parents brought the idea of Kangaerukai
back to their hometowns (Okuchi 1992:42-3). Meanwhile, some core activists like Okuchi identified the need to provide a place that ‘belongs to children’, or a ‘place-to-be’ (*kodomo no ibasho*, commonly referred to as *ibasho*). It is a place for *futōkō* children to meet people or to do whatever they like (p.44). Hence, they set up *Tōkyō Shūre* in 1985. Again, similar places were soon set up all over Japan. In all these, *futōkō* citizens saw themselves as being ‘mobilized’ to take and act on the opportunities they came across. Okuchi says:

> The trend mentioned above is one that is prevalent in Japan: parents and citizens no longer rely on unhelpful experts, but learn to find their own ways to support children, and by grassroots efforts, they create their own place for children to grow…. Citizens mobilize on a voluntary basis to protect the rights of children to learn in their own ways…. In Japan, this is the first time since the school system was created, that parents all over Japan are creating places of learning for children, places that exist alongside conventional schools…. (1992:47)

> It is interesting to note that this sort of unprecedented positive action is coming out of *futōkō* – something that society regarded as negative, that has been rejected, and covered up as a family shame. It is an action to transform the negative into positive. It raised the curtain on the *free school movement* (italics added) in Japan. (p.48)

Subsequently, free schools based on the model of *Tōkyō Shūre*, and the various local versions of *Kangaerukai*, which are often referred to as Associations of Parents (*oya no kai*), formed a dense informal network. This network later provided fundamental and immediate support to the second round of action in 1988, which pushed *futōkō* activism to the national level. The emergence of this network lends support to previous studies which found that informal networks of highly devoted individuals would be more effective in taking hold of political opportunities as they could act more flexibly than formal organizations (della Porta & Diani 2006:21)
The second political opportunity appeared in 1988. The potential opportunity was brought about by the headline news in the evening edition of AS published on 16 September 1988 (Figure 3.1). It reported a claim by Inamura Hiroshi regarding futōkō. Inamura, a professor of psychiatry in the Tsukuba University, and a well-recognized expert on futōkō in Japan, made his claim based on his study that was conducted on 5,000 subjects. As discussed earlier, he is representative of the psychiatric discourse in which tōkōkyohi is framed as a mental illness (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4).

![Fig. 3.1 Inamura’s article published in the AS on 16 September 1988.](image-url)
Inamura’s report met with fierce criticism from the people who sympathized with futōkō children. Futōkō activists maintained that the report would cause confusion, panic, and put pressure on families and children who were already struggling with futōkō (Kangaerukai 1989:18-20). The article in question was challenged for misrepresenting the issue and the experience of futōkō children.

Among those who first spoke up was Yamashita Ėzaburō, a school social worker and one of the FS editorialists. He wrote an article that was subsequently published, on 24 October 1988, in a journal owned by the Asahi Shinbun (AS) called the Rondan (The Literary World). He rebutted the view of Inamura that futōkō is an illness, and argued that children could develop in many different ways in different environments (Asakura 1995:69). Another individual protester was Endō Toyokichi, a teacher-turned education commentator. Nevertheless, the most organized and large scale protest came from the Kangaerukai, their protest marking the official inception of the futōkō movement (Asakura 1995:70).

Okuchi explains the inception of this coordinated effort in support of futōkō as follows:

This article has an extremely significant bearing [on children], and cannot be left just as it is. For this reason, counsellors, the Kangaerukai, parents from various associations, and concerned parties in the field of education gathered together to exchange opinions with each other, and two decisions were made: 1) to send a letter to the editor of the Asahi Shinbun and ask to meet with representatives from the newspaper; 2) to hold an Emergency Meeting which was open to everyone. For these purposes, an executive committee was set up.

(Kangaerukai 1989:7)

The way Okuchi and her group perceived the impact of the AS article, namely that it ‘has an extremely significant bearing on children, and cannot be left just as it is’, indicates the use of what Benford (1993) call a vocabulary of severity. It refers to vocabularies that function to provide a ‘call to arms’ for engaging in ameliorative collective action (Benford & Snow 2000:616). However, as social movement theorists point out, social movements do not occur automatically when actors address
‘collective problems, [produce] public goods, or [express] support for some moral values or principles’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:21). In order for social movement action to take place, actors need to involve themselves in ‘confictual relations with clearly identified opponents’ (p.20). In this case, futōkō citizens have identified the AS as their opponent. To futōkō citizens the AS, in publishing claims by Inamura which they considered unfounded, helped to reinforce the psychiatric discourse. In social movement terms, AS then became ‘representative of a distinct coalition of interest’ (p.21), with which futōkō activists entered into a conflictual relationship.

Futōkō citizens also seized this opportunity to articulate what Benford and Snow (2000) call a plan of attack, in an attempt to remedy the situation. The articulation of the plan of attack is also referred to as prognostic framing, that is, to come up with what is to be done, a process that is useful for facilitating consensus mobilization and action mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000:615-6). The plan of attack involves the two decisions quoted above. In the Emergency Meeting, futōkō citizens furthered the two processes of what Klandermans (1984) referred to as ‘consensus mobilization’ and ‘action mobilization’ to facilitate agreement and action.

Besides voicing their concerns, futōkō citizens have also successfully taken hold of the opportunity to engage the mainstream media to publicize their activism. The AS responded to the request by futōkō citizens and sent reporters to cover the Emergency Meeting; Okuchi claimed this as a success of futōkō citizens’ activism (Kangaerukai 1989:7). The AS is one of the most analytical and influential of the major newspapers in Japan, and therefore the reports it published could significantly affect the framing of futōkō, and the social perception on the issue. The conflictual relationship with the AS in this sense was turned into a strategic opportunity to push futōkō activism for futōkō to a national level.

In terms of the development of the movement frame, the opportunity that came in 1988 forced futōkō activists, in the words of Benford and Snow (2000:617), to ‘develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might have been the case’. As it had been four years since 1984 when futōkō citizens first confronted MoE with regard to the issue of futōkō, the plan articulated in 1988 was another milestone in futōkō activism.
In fact, the hegemonic view of futōkō had already been prevalent for a long period of time, and the question needs to be asked why the futōkō citizens’ protest occurred in 1989. A key factor is the series of cumulative events that involved the mainstream media, the AS. After the 16 September article, another article with similar content was published on 20 September, 1988, in the section of the newspaper for readers of primary school age. Futōkō citizens protested against the credibility of these articles in diagnosing futōkō as an illness with a ‘specific pathology’, and the prognosis of putting children back into schools. Publishing similar reports within a very short period of time implied that the AS endorsed and supported the view of Inamura. To futōkō citizens, this was a detrimental and irresponsible act (Asakura 1995:71; Okuchi 1989:9). The widespread sensation that the mainstream media reports could create, and the potential threat they could have on the lives of futōkō children and their families, prompted futōkō citizens to take ameliorative collective action.

Demanding justification for publishing the newspaper articles, futōkō citizens asked to meet with the AS reporter who wrote the two articles. However, futōkō citizens were disappointed as the AS reporter did not show up, but was represented by his seniors (Asakura 1995:71). Although the AS admitted that the claims in the report were not well-substantiated, it dismissed the futōkō citizens’ concerns by saying that the claims were just ‘a matter of expression’ (hyōgen ni mondai ga aru). As a result, futōkō citizens were more determined to ‘change the way tōkōkyōhi is reported by the media’ (Asakura 1995:72). They proceeded to hold the Emergency Meeting. It was in the Meeting that the framework of the futōkō movement was set up.

The Emergency Meeting, which took place on 12 November 1989, was hosted by the executive committee of the Kangaerukai and co-organized by 16 Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai) from various parts of Japan (Kangaerukai 1989). By then membership of the Kangaerukai had increased to 900 (Asakura 1995:66). The dense informal network constituted a pool of ready adherents and activists when collective action was called for. In fact, the Emergency Meeting attracted more than 800 participants from all over Japan, and brought together players from a wide spectrum of social sectors. These included futōkō children and their parents who came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, health care professionals who sympathized
with futōkō children, and participants from other occupational and professional backgrounds. The diverse background of participants and adherents facilitated rather than hampered the articulation of a collective action frame. This is because activists had aligned events and experiences that were of concern to participants in what Benford and Snow (2000) called a unified and compelling fashion, as discussed in the next paragraph. In social movement terms, this is known as frame articulation. It is an important process that ‘renders the resultant collective action frame its novelty’, providing its audience with a ‘new angle of vision, vantage point, and/or interpretation’ (p.623).

The way the Emergency Meeting was conducted demonstrated sophistication concerning strategic considerations by futōkō citizens in enhancing the salience of their alternative futōkō frame, both in terms of the arrangement of the sessions and speakers in each session. It was divided into four sessions. The first session was a symposium in response to the AS article. Five speakers who were associated with futōkō children were invited to speak. These included paediatrician Wakabayashi Minoru, counsellor Uchida Ryōko, part-time high school teacher Sasagi Ken, solicitor Ishii Sayoko, and the then emerging futōkō movement leader Okuchi Keiko. They spoke from their own experience and contested the dominant tōkōkyohi discourse (Kangaerukai 1989:12). Getting professionals involved indicated that activists were able to enlist the support and help of credible frame articulators in creating a distinct interpretive frame. The consensus reached among speakers was as follows:

- The AS article carried and disseminated misconceptions about tōkōkyohi/futōkō.
- Tōkōkyohi is not an ‘illness’ (byōki) and thus tōkōkyohi children should not be ‘treated’ (chiryō) as if it was.
- School, instead of children, should be blamed for tōkōkyohi.
- Children are not legally obliged to go to school (a matter of human rights).

(Asakura 1995:71)

The consensus listed above reflects what theorists defined as a refutation of the logic articulated by the opponents, in this case, the AS, and Inamura and his research group,
that tōkōkyohi is an ‘illness’. It also rebutted the efficacy of the solutions their opponents proposed – that students have to be ‘treated’ medically and hospitalised. These points address what theorists call diagnostic framing of a collective action frame.

The second and third sessions of the Meeting attended to the other two core framing tasks of prognostic framing and motivational framing. The second session was primarily built on what is now known as the tōjisha perspective. The notion of tōjisha was adapted from the legal field to mean a person who ‘speaks directly from a position of first-hand knowledge and experience’ (McLelland 2005:106). It represents a speaking position adopted by minority groups, and is ‘closely inscribed in a discourse of rights, citizenship and belonging’ (p.107). The tōjisha perspective has assumed primacy since the 1990s ‘as an important authenticating device for stories about personal trauma, victimization, marginalization or disability’ (p.106).

In the 1989 Emergency Meeting, the tōjisha perspective contested that of impersonal, third party ‘experts’ and facilitated the articulation of a ‘rationale for its own remedies’. The organizer arranged to have five tōjisha to speak. These included a futōkō student and daughter of Okuchi Keiko, an adult working on the front line helping futōkō students, a teacher in a mainstream day school, a member of a local Kangaerukai, and a parent of futōkō children.

### 3.2.2.1 Rationales and remedies

**Tōjisha 1: tōkōkyohi student**

Okuchi Yūko, tōkōkyohi student and daughter of Okuchi Keiko, compared her experience in a free school in England with that in a Japanese school, and criticized the core value of academic credentialism in Japanese society. She stressed, above all, that children should fight for their rights and freedom to make decisions for themselves in terms of schooling (*Kangaerukai* 1989:40-42). She said:

35 Free schools have their origin in the anarchist Modern Schools in Spain at the turn of the 19th century. Nowadays, free schools refer to non-institutional and non-authoritarian structures set up and run by the grassroots, in which skills, information, and knowledge are shared. Free schools encourage self-reliance, critical consciousness, and personal development. The ‘free’ in free schools refers to emphasis on free speech and open learning. The most famous free school in the UK is Summerhill, the school that was founded in 1921 by A.S. Neill. See Miller (2002) for illustration of the free school moment after the 1960s.
In short, school is one of the options. Whether going to school or not, children should decide for themselves, for they have to live for themselves.

(p.42)

She also criticized Japanese society as a male-dominated society in which women and children are perceived as ‘objects of subjugation’. According to Okuchi Yūko, women and children themselves often unconsciously hold such a perception about themselves. She said:

In the past, not only men thought that woman going to work was against common practice, but women themselves also thought so. Nowadays, I think history repeats itself in the case of children. Indeed, children do not have the right to vote. They cannot work to make a living for themselves. They are disadvantaged in adult society. They have no power, thus they have no say. Their existence is being abused. I believe that [we] should revolutionize the society in order to exercise [our] freedom to live.

(p.43)

This was a critique of the extant values and beliefs in Japanese society, of the social system itself, and it represented an appeal to empower children.

*Tōjisha 2: teacher activist*

Komazaki Ryōta echoed points made by Okuchi Yūko. He was a school teacher but started the ‘Kōgai Tel Tel movement’ in the 1980s. This was a movement formed by students and teachers who were critical of formal schooling. It was formed in response to the increase in perceived violence committed by school teachers in the second half of the 1970s (*Kangaerukai* 1989:44). The movement encouraged people to ring and report any cases of student abuse. It also offered support to futōkō students by providing them with a weekly meeting place.

Having been disillusioned by conditions in mainstream schools, Komazaki turned to distance learning. His departure from mainstream education allowed him to see education and school from a different angle, and he came to the realization that it was a vain hope that schools would change. He said:
I changed my job to work in the field of correspondence education. This has allowed me to take another look at schools and education again. In fact, I saw many things. The Kōgai movement aims at changing schools. However, I don’t think that schools will change in any way.

(Kangaerukai 1989:45)

He also conducted a survey and found that students were in search of freedom to learn, to acquire a meaning and direction in life and a personal identity, and that they did not want to be ‘fed’ by teachers. The following is what he heard from children:

It’s like a physical illness, my health recovers after I stop going to school. I also remember once more that I can live freely. Now I feel like I am able to stretch myself and develop my potential.

When going to day school I always slept in classes. I attended school only because I felt I needed to. But I found life more meaningful during the year I pursued distance learning.

I am able to learn in my own time and at my own pace. I am no longer forced to study as I was in day school.

(Kangaerukai 1989:45)

Komazaki further noted that:

(о)nly when one is left to learn by oneself could one realize and correct the perception that learning is equivalent to schools (gakushū = gakkō).

(Kangaerukai 1989:46)

Although the Kōgai Tel Tel movement and the futōkō movement are two structurally unrelated activisms, the rationale and ideology behind the two are similar in many ways. The support from social actors like Komazaki enhanced the credibility of futōkō citizens’ framing of futōkō.
While Komazaki Ryōta represented voices from the non-mainstream learning sector, Arai Kiyoshi, who was a teacher in a day school, also pointed out problems with schools and, in particular, with teachers themselves. Arai was a teacher-turned counsellor. He saw the same problem with the school counselling system, that ‘counselling aiming at returning students to school is of no use’ (Kangaerukai 1989:46). He contended that what children needed was someone who could understand and listen to them, sympathize with them (kyōkan suru), people from whom they could gain peace of mind (antei shite morau), and who could offer them assurance (kōtei) of who they are. However, most of the teachers failed to offer students what they needed. He maintained that it was the arrogance (gōmansa) of teachers that underlined their ignorance and misunderstanding of futōkō. Like the previous two speakers, he believed that futōkō is the right of an individual child to determine his or her own path of life (p.48).

Watanabe Jun is a social actor in his own right. He pointed out that children refuse schools because schools have failed to function as a place where children can learn to share life together (Kangaerukai 1989:49-51). Watanabe has worked in the National Paediatric Hospital used to conduct intelligence tests for children, and was once a believer in ‘school absolutism’. However, he changed his ‘faith’ in school after seeing that many children actually regained their vitality when they were freed from the burden of going to conventional schools. Through this he also came to realize that many medical practitioners have been delivering messages that aroused anxiety and fear among futōkō children and parents rather than supporting them. He decided to deliver the ‘correct’ message to support futōkō children and became active in one of the citizens’ groups called Gakkō no kai (literally, the School Club) for futōkō students.

In the dominant futōkō discourse, parents, in particular mothers, were said to be to blame for futōkō. Uno Saemi, mother of a futōkō child and member of Kangaerukai
in Northern Hokkaido, observed the urgent need to help mothers to ‘remove the scales from their eyes’ (*me no uroko o otosu*), especially when many ‘experts’ seemed to have failed to look at the problem from the point of view of children (*Kangaerukai* 1989:51). At the time of the meeting, Uno had been involved in the *Kangaerukai* and had worked with Okuchi for four years. She had been working with troubled mothers who were driven to the point of suicide by what experts (*senmonka*) told them. She said:

In the view of paediatricians, *tōkōkyohi* occurs because parents did not bring up their children properly when children were in their infancy to three years old. Hence, among those mothers who were extremely troubled by what they were told and came to our *kai*, eight to nine out of 10 told us that they wanted to commit suicide. Those who came for the first time were really devastated…. I also have the chance to meet children. Yūko has just told us her touching story. I wish there were more children like her in Sapporo [capital of Hokkaido]. What I want to say is: isn’t it terrible that experts have cornered troubled mothers to the point of death? It’s not just Inamura, but there are many like him all over the country. The way to [handle *tōkōkyohi*] is to read into the minds of children and put ourselves into their shoes. That’s all it’s about.

(p.52)

Her narrative described the severity of the problem and the urgency to rectify the situation, and provides compelling accounts for engaging in collective action to help not only *futōkō* children, but also the mothers of those children. In other words, *futōkō* is not just a problem of children, but of mothers as well. As at that time, there were more than tens of thousands of *futōkō* students in Japan, and many were still suffering in psychiatric hospitals as a result of what ‘experts’ said; there were as many mothers as children who were suffering. By coming forward and speaking out, mothers like Ueno could not only speak for their children, but also for themselves.

Narratives by *tōjisha* mothers have provided the building blocks necessary for the construction of the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames of *futōkō* activism. The shared understanding by mothers is never to compromise the life of children with things like academic success (*Kangaerukai* 1989:54). A compelling account by another mother, Obi Yoshie, whose child nearly died from an overdose
illustrates this. The child was warned by a teacher who home-visited him that if he did not go to school the next day, he would not be promoted the next year. That night, the child took a nearly lethal overdose of sedatives. Looking back at what had happened, the mother said:

At that moment, for the first time, I realized that what really counts is the life of a child. School doesn’t matter anymore. At that moment, my husband said, ‘it’s a matter of life and death (inochi ga hadaka ni natta)’. Academic qualifications, social status, fame, future success in career and the life are all superfluous. Since then, we determined to protect the very life of our child. We have been such stupid parents.

(Kangaerukai 1989: 54)

The realization of the importance of life motivated Obi into activism. She continued:

As [we] looked around, we noticed that the number of children in this situation is increasing rapidly. Therefore, we started to run an oya no kai in our area.

(Kangaerukai 1989:54)

Her child, who was already a grown-up, went to study in the United States after giving up going to school and eventually became a successful photographer. This provided a case in point to refute the claim by psychiatrists like Inamura that futōkō children are apathetic (mukiryoku). Instead, they are full of vitality (hijōni iki iki shiteiru). Obi continued:

As I wanted to share my experience with troubled fathers and mothers, I started the kai in January 1986. It has been three years now. At first there were 10 people, but now, every time, 30 to 40 people turn up [to our meetings]. There are 210 households on our mailing list now.

(Kangaerukai 1989:54-55)

The experience of futōkō children has informed parents that school deprived children of their individuality (jibun ga jibun de nakunacchau), and that futōkō has proved to be a way through which children can be themselves again. Obi puts it thus:
I think the period when one can regain one’s self (jibun) is the tōkōkyohi period. Only when one is at the time of tōkōkyohi can one maintain one’s individuality (kosei).

(Kangaerukai 1989:55)

In all, parents who have been supporting the Kangaerukai and its activities agreed that futōkō is not a ‘medical problem’, and therefore ‘not something psychiatrists can do’ (Kangaerukai 1989:57). They believed in taking things into their own hands. One of the parents appealed to participants saying:

I think the most important thing is that parents should learn about futōkō themselves and make their own judgements. My last word is, what parents can do for their children is to protect them in their time of danger. Other than this, there is nothing parents can do. To send them to places where they are separated [from parents] at the time when they are most frustrated is virtually a crime.

(p.57-8)

3.2.2.2 Production of a unified and elaborated movement frame

The Emergency Meeting concluded with a speech by Ishikawa Norihiko, a psychiatrist from the Psychiatric Unit of Tokyo University (Kangaerukai 1989:75-88). He was also a school doctor in the free school called ‘jiyū no mori gakuen’ (Free Forest Institute). Messages from medical experts like Ishikawa in the futōkō activism camp opposing the counter-framing by medical experts in the antagonists’ camp are important. As discussed above, activists had already presented their counter-frame of futōkō to the establishment in 1983. The Inamura study, published in 1989, could be perceived as a move to contain the citizens’ discourse. Nevertheless, activists used this opportunity to realign their own framing. Borrowing the words of Benford and Hunt (1994), the Meeting sought to ‘ward off, contain, limit, or reverse potential damage to the movement’s previous claims or attributes’. This process of ‘square-offs between movements and their detractors’ is referred to as ‘framing contests’ by Ryan (1991). The Meeting concluded with the production of a more unified and elaborated movement frame. The resultant diagnoses and prognoses are as follows (Kangaerukai 1989):
• regarding futōko, it:
  o is an expression of individuality (kosei ga dekiru/ jinkaku ga dekiru) (p.75, 85)
  o is the right of a child (p.73)
  o is to take control of one’s life (p.48)
  o is not an illness (p.77, 90); not ‘mukiryoku shō’ (apathy) (p.63)
  o cannot be ‘treated’ (p.77)
  o is a problem of school and society (p.72, 93).
  o is not a ‘weakness’ of character (p.74).

• regarding schooling, it:
  o kills individuality (kosei o korosu/mushi) (p.63)
  o does not equate to learning (gakushū ≠ gakkō) (p.46)
  o threatens the rights of children (p.63, 73)
  o threatens the life/existence of children (p.50, 64)
  o threatens identity (p.63)
  o is a lifeless place (mukiryokusho ni naru) (p.61).

• regarding third party experts and academics, they:
  o pay no attention to the individuality of children (p.47)
  o mistreat children (e.g. p.50, 58, 59)
  o abuse the human rights of children (p.94, 100).

• regarding the existing Japanese society, it:
  o reinforces the absolute authority of schools (p.63)
  o believes that school is the only way to personal growth and a future (p.81).
  o over-emphasizes competitiveness and efficiency (p.44)

• regarding futōkō children, they:
  o are not mentally ill (75-6)
  o should not be ‘treated’ (p.111)
  o are unique individuals (p.74, 86)
  o should be able to develop individuality (p.55, 74).

The resultant counter-diagnosis concludes that it is necessary to:

• uphold the freedom (jiyū) of learning (p.73)
• take control of one’s life (express autonomy) (p.42, 43)
• be critical of expert opinions (p. 50, 59)
• challenge the notion of learning = school (gakushu=gakko); school=good life (p.46)
• respect individuality, individual lifestyle choices, and resist conformity (p.49)
• maintain respect for life (p.88).

These are the themes that consistently underlie the whole futōkō movement. Based on the counter-diagnoses articulated, futōkō citizens decided to take further action. The first was collectively to denounce the idea of setting up the Youth Health Centre run by Inamura and his group for ‘treating’ futōko children (Kangaerukai 1989:102-3). A letter addressing their grievances was sent to the preparation committee for the setting up of the Youth Health Centre detailing the opinions and consensus of the Emergency Meeting (p.101-4). The second was to take collective action to change social perceptions that underlie the framing of futōkō. Futōkō citizens concluded their Meeting as follows:

\[ \text{tōkōkyohi is not a target of treatment (tōkōkyohi o chiryō no taisho to shinai).} \]
\[ (Kangaerukai 1989:111) \]

and determined

\[ \text{to respond to the action of children [i.e. tōkōkyohi] by thinking about a way to give them necessary support (kodomo no kōdō o uketome, hitsuyō na enjō o kangaeru).} \]
\[ (p.111) \]

Education commentator Saitō Jirō claimed that futōkō, at its deepest level, is a critique of the overall principles and values dominating society and the lives of individuals. He maintained that:

\[ \text{(w)e want to actively evaluate tōkōkyohi, as it has not only revealed that the value of school education is relative, but also overturned the overriding importance of the principle of competition and efficiency in society. In futōkō, there lies the possibility of self-liberation.} \]
The Emergency Meeting was the highlight of futōkō activism, and confrontation between the hegemonic and citizens’ discourse, in 1988. It illustrated the relationship between diagnostic and prognostic framing – how the former is affected by the latter (see Benford 1997; Gerhards & Rucht 1992; Nepstad 1997). Benford and Snow (2000) encapsulated the relationship between diagnostic and prognostic framing when they stated that ‘the identification of specific problems and causes tends to constrain the range of possible “reasonable” solutions and strategies advocated’. They also observed that ‘prognostic framing activity typically includes refutations of the logic or efficacy of solutions advocated by opponents as well as a rationale for its own remedies’ (p.615).

In all, futōkō citizens at the Emergency Meeting succeeded in arriving at a consensus concerning their diagnoses of futōkō by drawing on themes salient to targets of mobilization. They achieved this through presenting the perspectives of various parties of tōjisha, whose narratives lend credibility to their claims about futōkō, and are commensurable with the experience of many futōkō children, their parents, school teachers, and those who work for and have daily contact with futōkō children. The Meeting also has provided a pool of potential adherents to the futōko movement. In addition, the credibility of ‘expert’ frame articulators (including medical experts, counsellors and school teachers) strengthened claims by futōkō citizens, including tōjisha. All these elements enhance the probability of mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000:620-1).

3.2.3 Political Opportunity 3: ‘I want to try doing it at home!’ – launching the Home Education Movement

The third opportunity exemplifies a strategic approach by activists by broadening the geographical scope of the movement. As the number of ibasho like Tōkyō Shūre increased, society became more tolerant of futōkō, and the pressure from futōkō families and the government to push children back to school seemed to have declined to some extent. This was especially so when in 1992, MoE acknowledged that
‘futōkō can occur to anyone and that attendance at places outside of school, including those set up by citizens, was officially recognized. School principals could exercise their discretion’. Subsequently, the government began to set up alternative facilities like the tekiōkyōshitsu (education support centres) to accommodate futōkō children. However, these facilities are part of the ‘return to school’ (gakkō fukki) measures aiming at placing children back in school. While accepting children not going to school, parents, teachers and local boards of education demanded that children instead attend ibasho and other alternative facilities. Children who failed to do so faced a new kind of pressure – pressure to attend alternative schooling facilities (Asakura 1995:208).

Against this backdrop, Tōkyō Shūre initiated a home education movement by launching Home Shūre in 1993. Tōkyō Shūre first supported stay-at-home futōkō children through mail and telephone. In September 1994, a symposium called ‘International Symposium to Think About Home Schooling, Home Education, and Futōkō’ (the Home Education Symposium) was held. The symposium marked the beginning of the Home Education Movement (HEM) and the so-called fourth phase of the tōkōkyohi issue (Asakura 1995:210-7, 246). In order to include this group of children into their network, Tōkyō Shūre elaborated their futōkō frame to include the idea that, not only is it fine not to attend school, but it is also fine not to attend ibasho (p.209). By December 1994, Home Shūre was supporting around 100 families.

In the eyes of educators and sociologists like Asakura (1995), the Home Education Movement (HEM) was a critique of the ‘cramming’ approach of school education which aimed to equip students with the basic power to learn (kiso gakuryoku) and the ability to socialize (shakaisei) (pp.209-210). The nature of HEM in Japan is very different from that in the US or England. In the case of the latter, home education is one of the schooling options and families very often have thought about this kind of schooling for their children before children reach school age. However, in Japan, HEM, like the free school movement, emerged primarily as a citizens’ response to futōkō. It bore the label of ‘anti-school’ (hangakkō) more often than its counterpart in England and America, which futōkō activists distanced themselves from. Hence, from the very beginning, home education families in Japan emphasized that they ‘are

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not denouncing the value of schools’ (p.213). In the Home Education Symposium held in 1994, activists positioned themselves as follows:

Home Education is not a familiar term [to Japanese people]. This is a term used in America and England to refer to children who do not go to school but study at home. There are children who do not fit into schools and thus grow up staying at home. In Japan, a movement putting this kind of ‘life style’ in a positive light has started. On 25 September, an international symposium titled ‘I want to try doing it at home!’ was held. It was sponsored by Tōkyō Shūre, which has been supporting children not going to schools for some time. More than 800 people attended the symposium, to think about the meaning of home education, and [other] topics concerning Japan.  

The focus of the movement was to proffer the idea that:

(f)amily, ibasho, schools are of equal importance to children in the sense that they are all places where children grow.

(Asakura 1995:214)

From a strategic framing perspective, the HEM is an example of adaptation of the Western idea of home education. Futōkō citizens amplified the adapted idea in order to get rid of the negative perception towards stay-at-home futōkō students. Frame amplification refers to the ‘idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs’, and is one of the key factors affecting frame resonance (Benford & Snow 2000:624). It is of particular relevance to movements ‘that have been stigmatized because their beliefs and/or values contradict the dominant culture’s core values’ (Berbrier 1998). Although the futōkō movement by that time was expanding, futōkō children and activists still found that they were facing social discrimination, and the society in general was still sceptical about the movement. The deployment of the ideas of ‘family’, ‘ibasho’, and ‘life style’ is, therefore, an attempt to resist the anti-school label that stigmatizes the movement. Subsequent development of the movement suggests that a non-anti-school approach paved the

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way for the attestation of Tōkyō Shūre as an NPO in 1999, and its recognition by the wider society as a positive force of social change.

3.2.4 Political Opportunity 4: Enhancement of the futōkō movement frame through NPO attestation

The futōkō movement was further enhanced when activists successfully seized the opportunity provided by the NPO Law introduced in 1999, and applied for attestation for two of its major SMOs – the free school Tōkyō Shūre and the movement newspaper, the FS. The NPO Law, which was formally known as the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities, was enacted in 1998. The establishment of the Law was pushed by Diet members from all parties to support NPO activities following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in January 1995. As discussed in Chapter 2, (Section 2.3), the response by citizen volunteers in the aftermath of the earthquake made Japanese people realize that ordinary citizens could involve themselves in public domains. The contributions of these NPOs to society are now widely recognized. The NPO Law is designed to simplify the incorporation process for voluntary organizations falling under any of the 17 designated fields of activity that ‘contribute to the advancement of the interests of many people’. There are a number of criteria for attestation. For instance, organizations applying for attestation should not be religiously or politically oriented; should not be used by any political parties to promote their activities; should not be profit-making; should be set up for a specific purpose; but should not be aiming at supporting the activities of any one particular individual or corporation, etc. According to Yamaoka Yoshinori, founder and vice-president of the Japan NPO Centre, before the NPO Law the criteria for certification as a corporate aggregate or a foundation was too rigid and difficult for many small voluntary organizations. The lack of legal status has prevented these citizens groups from formally registering as an NPO and from entering into legal contracts, thus imposing limits on the scope of their activities. The simplification of the incorporation process ‘makes it easier for one organization to operate under multiple objectives and for local organizations to carry out activities on a national scale’ (Okada et al. 2005:19). Tōkyō Shūre has taken the opportunity to extend its

interests beyond futōkō and develop collaborative projects on a national and even an international scale.

Following its attestation in 1999, Tōkyō Shūre restructured its organization to facilitate its operations and expand the scope of its activities. Before the attestation, Tōkyō Shūre did not receive funding of any kind because of its lack of legal status. The cost of running the free school came solely from the membership fees it received from the three branches of free schools and Home Shūre. After the attestation, Tōkyō Shūre was able to receive funding and support from organizations and foundations. The attestation has also enabled Tōkyō Shūre to accept NPO membership and work in partnership with governmental as well as non-governmental sectors (more details are provided in Chapter 4). As a result, Tōkyō Shūre can start running programmes in collaboration with various external organizations.\(^{39}\)

The expanded scope of activities raised the profile of the whole movement. Through linking with and seeking support from prominent foundations, corporations, and government agencies, Tōkyō Shūre has bridged the futōkō frame with those of other social actors. For instance, Tōkyō Shūre has formed links with the International Exchange Foundation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Toyota Foundation, Mitsui & Co., Ltd., and government affiliates like 国土緑化推進機構(農水省) (the Organization for the Promotion of a Green Country). It has included in its network volunteer groups like 東京ボランティア・市民活動センター (the Tokyo Volunteer/Citizens Activities Centre), 農林水産省 (the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), cultural exchange organizations like 財団法人日韓文化交流基金 (the Japan-Korea Cultural Exchange Foundation), and youth development agencies like the 青少年育成支援フォーラム (Japan Initiative for Youth Development).

Frame bridging is identified by social movement theorists as one of the most prevalent framing strategies (Benford & Snow 2000:624). It refers to ‘the linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem’, and ‘can occur between a movement and individuals,

through the linkage of a movement organization with an unmobilized sentiment pool or public opinion cluster, or across social movements’ (p.624). These linkages enable the movement to develop a more flexible and inclusive frame, and thus potentially enhances its mobilizing potency. It is believed that ‘the more inclusive and flexible collective action frames are, the more likely they are to function as or evolve into “master frames”’ (Benford & Snow 2000:618). Master frames are particularly capable of delivering a broad interpretation of reality, and are ‘culturally resonant to their historical milieu’ (Swart 1995:466) and of reflecting ‘the dominant vision of the world in that period’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:80). Partnership with other social actors, and funding and support received after gaining the NPO status suggests that it is likely that the futōkō movement frame may evolve into a master frame. This, in turn, also enhances the ability of the movement to secure more funding and resources of various kinds for the future development of the movement.

Through NPO attestation, Tōkyō Shūre has strategically linked its ‘interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers’ (Benford & Snow 2000:624).

The other futōkō SMO that took immediate opportunity to apply for NPO attestation was the movement’s newspaper agency, the Zenkoku Futōkō Shim bun Sha (the National School Non-Attendance Newspaper Agency) (the FSS), which publishes the FS. The FSS applied for attestation in February 1999 and was subsequently attested NPO status in June that same year. This made FSS the first NPO news agency in Japan (FS 28, 15/06/1999). Like Tōkyō Shūre, this new status enables FS to form linkages with other organizations, citizens groups, NPOs and NGOs which have different foci. Examples include environmental groups like the Peaceboat and Green Peace; the Yokohama International Human Rights Centre; information and research centres with a focus on children; printing houses; and the media. Altogether, 18 ‘free spaces’ and ‘free schools’, 22 associations of parents and various support groups for youth, 10 publishers and media organizations, and 11 NPOs and NGOs are linked to FSS. Table 3.1 shows some selected linkages included in the ‘Link’ page of the FSS homepage.40

40 As from June 2004, Futōkō Shim bun has changed its name to Fonte (as explained in Chapter 1, Section 1.8). Thus, strictly speaking, it is the homepage of Fonte.
Table 3.1 Examples of the external links of *Futōkō Shim bun*.

**Oya no Kai, research groups, youth-oriented organizations and media:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Counsellors’ Association of Japan (日本スクールソーシャルワーク協会)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Charter School Promotion Centre (日本型チャータースクール推進センター)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Information and Research Centre (子ども情報研究センター)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kodomotoyaku</em> (a child-oriented monthly mini comic book) (子どもとゆく)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kirara Shobō</em> (a publisher) (雲母書房)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Weekly Friday</em> (a weekly magazine) (週刊金曜日)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We – Linking Life and Education</em> (a bi-monthly magazine) (We – くらしと教育をつなぐ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Female and male</em> (a quarterly magazine on gender related issues) (女も男も)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Femine</em> (a magazine for female) (ふえみん)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Home Schools, NPO, NGO, and others:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ZERO-net</strong> (citizens organization for futōkō children)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Shūre</strong> (home education support network)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korean Volunteer Association</strong> (ユリアボランティア協会)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yokohama International Human Rights Centre (横浜国際人権センター)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Komachi On-line</strong> (an on-line second-hand bookstore) (インターネット古書店 通光知)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Village Network (a NPO for environmental issues) (ネットワーク『地球村』)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Children’s Report ‘Praca’ (for the promotion of the rights of children) (世界子ども通信「プラッサ」)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Peace</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan Pacific Research Network (JPRN) (a NPO for the promotion of civil rights, corporate social responsibility, and community empowerment in the context of US-Japan relations.) (日本太平洋資料ネットワーク)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Network for the Support of Disabled Children to go to Mainstream Schools (障害児を普通学校へ・全国連絡会)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peace Boat</strong> (for the promotion of peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment)</td>
<td><strong>Tokyo Voluntary Action Centre</strong> (東京ボランティア・市民活動センター)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shiiizu</strong> (a NPO for the creation of a system to support citizen activities) (シーズ－市民運動を支える制度をつくる会)</td>
<td><strong>Education Support Association</strong> (教育サポート企業組合) (providing education support for futōkō children)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Explanations of the nature of organizations are provided in parentheses that follow the organizational names when the name itself is not self-explicable. This is followed by the original Japanese names of the organizations, except for organizations that adopt romanized names, e.g. ZERO-net, and *Home Shūre*. Name of publications are rendered in italics.

3.3 Conclusion

The four examples regarding political opportunities in Chapter 3 have lent support to the proposition of Gamson and Meyer (1996), and Koopmans and Duyvendak (1995), that movement actors can frame political opportunities in a way that facilitate their movement. Gamson and Meyer (1996) point out that if

movement activists interpret political space in ways that emphasize opportunity rather than constraint, they may stimulate actions that change opportunity, making their opportunity frame a self-fulfilling prophecy.

(p.287)

_Futōkō_ activists have demonstrated their ability to ‘interpret political space in ways that emphasize opportunity rather than constraints’ and ‘stimulate actions that change opportunity’: firstly, by launching a public protest against the hegemonic view of _futōkō_ and setting up the _Kangaerukai_ and _Tōkyō Shūre_ in 1984 and 1985 to assert their voice; secondly, by reacting to the _Asahi Shimbun_ article and thus attracting mainstream media attention to their activism in 1989; thirdly, by responding to MoE change in _futōkō_ policies and counter-framing endeavours by launching the Home Education Movement; and fourthly, by making use of the NPO Law to apply for attestation for _Tōkyō Shūre_ and the _Futōkō Shimbun_ as NPOs. With these opportunities and actions, _futōkō_ activists continue to expand their scope of activities and build their networks and linkages, which allow them to attract more prospective participants when individual social members see the potential for self-empowerment and self-strengthening through participating in movement activities. Researchers in social movements have found that ‘participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfilment and realization of the self’ (Gamson 1992:56). In other words, when the SMOs of a social movement can offer opportunities for participants to stretch their abilities, enhance their knowledge, and develop their skills, the movement will be able to attract more potential participants. Chapter 4 will examine the _futōkō_ SMOs that mediate this relationship between movement participation and identity.
Chapter Four
Creation of a *Futōkō* Community

4.1 Mechanisms of mobilization

The last chapter analysed how *futōkō* citizens seized political opportunities and framed them in ways that facilitated their course of action. It discussed how they started the *futōkō* movement with the support of a dense informal network of *Oya no Kai*, and how they established three key movement organizations - the *Kangaerukai*, *Tōkyō Shūre*, and the *Futōkō Shimbun Sha (FSS)* - and had the latter two attested as NPOs. By adopting the concept of mobilizing structures, which is the second set of key factors in explaining social movements, this chapter will elaborate on the role of these three SMOs in developing group solidarity and individual identity and thus strengthening their activism in order to challenge the media’s framing of *futōkō*.

The three *futōkō* SMOs each play a distinct yet equally important role in the formation of a group identity and a culture for *futōkō* children: the *Kangaerukai* is a virtual society in the sense that, while it does not have a designated office, it functions as a think-tank which generates ideas and constitutes the core of the social network of the *futōkō* movement; *Tōkyō Shūre* is a ‘school’ with infrastructure that provides services to children and parents; and the *FSS* is a medium which acts as the voice of the movement. The strength of the *futōkō* movement lies in this combination of ideation and culture, network, services, and the media, which are elaborated in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. The successful creation of this combination, in turn, has to be attributed to the effective leadership and frame articulators of the movement, which are explained in Sections 4.4 and 4.5.
4.2 The network of futōkō SMOs, the creation of futōkō culture, and the fostering of group solidarity

It is believed that, as a strategic process to enlarge their movement, activists have tried to show the general public that participation in futōkō activism could enhance their personal identity through developing a strong network of SMOs. In the development of futōkō SMOs, personal connections are fundamental in engaging individuals in collective actions. The denser the network, the more they help to counter stigmatisation, challenge any negative stereotyping of futōkō individuals, and create opportunities that facilitate the development of a strong autonomous identity and enhance the scope of their activities. In addition to these dense networks, the futōkō movement also bridges with other established social actors. As a result, the overall structure of the movement is modified – from a domain-specific action frame to one with a more global perspective. Generally, researchers find that individual activists operate as bridges between different organizational milieus, linking, for example, social movement organizations to established political actors or institutions, or organizations mobilized for different causes. By doing so, they affect the overall structure of social movement “industries” (McCarthy & Zald 1987) or “families” (della Porta & Rucht 1995).

(della Porta & Diani 2006:134)

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.1.4), frame bridging is believed to be one of the most prevalent framing strategies. The effect of frame bridging on the overall structure of the futōkō movement is the creation of a more inclusive and flexible movement structure which is evident from the networks and linkages illustrated in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. This process has in turn facilitated the creation of a shared identity among movement participants and adherents.

Gamson points out that movement participation can enhance personal identity (1992:56). It is also true the other way. It is generally believed among collective action scholars that identity is a crucial mechanism underlying individual decisions to participate in movements. Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) point out that identity constructions are inherent in all social movement activities (p.185). Melucci stresses
that identity is an interactional accomplishment, and that ‘collective identity is an interactive and shared definition’ (1989:34). It is

an achieved definition of a situation, constructed and negotiated through the constitution of social networks which then connect the members of a group or movement.

(Melucci 1992:244)

In other words, collective identity is partly a result of strategic action by movement actors (della Porta & Diani 2006:103). And as Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) have rightly argued:

(i)f collective identity is conceptualized in terms of the range of salient characteristics an SMO avows and imputes to other sets of actors, then the construction and affirmation of identities clearly can be linked to framing processes.

(p.190)

The issue faced by social movement actors is then one of the construction and affirmation of a movement identity ‘to include as many people as possible in a movement’s potential constituency, while continuing to provide strong incentives to the movement’s core supporters’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:102). At the same time, and as important as being sufficiently unique to stand out from the rest of the world, successful mobilization also depends on recognition of the movement frame by other social actors (p.105). This calls for a kind of movement identity that is, on the one hand, inclusive and flexible enough to facilitate the mobilization of organizational and financial resources, and on the other hand, exclusive enough to motivate individual participants and create a unique sense of belonging for participants.

In the construction of movement identities, one of the major obstacles faced by social movements is ‘stigmatization from the outside’, as della Porta and Diani (2006) have pointed out.

Social movements challenging forms of domination deeply embedded in cultural practices, lifestyles, mental habits, and inbred stereotypes offer a particularly
fitting illustration of these dynamics. Stigmatization from the outside often ends up blocking the development of a strong autonomous identity and limiting the possibilities for collective action.

(p.107)

Challenging negative stereotyping by major opponents of a movement is, therefore, a crucial task for movement actors. In this respect, futōkō citizens have developed a network of effective SMOs, which are linked with other NPOs, NGOs, and corporation organizations, as well as governmental organizations. Networks, and often very informal networks, play an important role in the development of social movements. In Polletta’s (1999) words, they provide ‘free spaces’, that is, areas of social interaction for like-minded individuals to experiment with alternative lifestyles and consolidate movement unity. Networks also play a central role in the mobilization of human resources because individuals often become involved in collective action through their personal connections to people already involved. Those connections help them to overcome the innumerable obstacles and dilemmas that people usually face when considering whether to become active on a certain cause. Not only that: the amount and type of individual networks also affect the chances of people remaining active for a long time, or instead reducing their commitment, or cutting it altogether, after brief spells.

(della Porta & Diani 2006:134)

By adopting a loose form of informal network, futōkō activism has been successful in building up group solidarity and shared values. These two elements are believed to be of more importance than material incentives in affecting the decision to participate (e.g. Marwell & Ames 1979; Oliver 1984, 1989; Passy 2003; Walsh & Warland 1983). Melucci (1989) and others like Taylor and Whittier (1995), Jasper and Poulsen (1995), Jasper (1997) and Goodwin et al. (2001) point to the importance of non-rational elements such as emotions, affections and feelings in explaining individual decisions to participate. In other words, it is justifiable to say that relationships between actors, and their expectations of such relationships, play a large part in conditioning their decision to participate. Identity is, therefore, a product of a social movement, or social process of transformation, that develops in the course of action and interaction rather than a
pre-existing property of social actors (della Porta & Diani 2006:104). The formation of personal identity could be understood in the same way. As Johnston, Laraña and Gusfield (1994) point out,

(p)ersonal identity emerges through the mirror of social interaction, that is, by playing different roles and by interpreting how others see us.

(p.13)

This highlights the indispensable role of social context in the formation of identity, both personal and collective. They assert that

(r)egardless of research strategy, the global point is that collective actors define themselves in a social context.\(^{41}\)

(p.17)

Their claims could find support from Melucci (1992), who maintains that

(col)lective identity is a product of conscious action and the outcome of self-reflection more than a set of given or ‘structural’ characteristics. It tends to coincide with conscious processes of ‘organization’ and it is experienced not so much as a situation as an action.

(\(\text{pp.10-11}\))

As such, it becomes pertinent for social movements to create an environment and design activities that can help foster a sense of solidarity and mutual recognition among actors. As della Porta and Diani (2006) claim,

(i)f identity is a social process rather than a property of social actors, then feelings of belongingness and solidarity in relation to a certain group, the recognition of elements of continuity and discontinuity in the history of individuals, and the identification of one’s own adversaries, may all be subject to recurring

\[^{41}\] Based on Gamson’s definition of actor (1975), which is defined in Chapter 1 (p.2), and of ‘challenging group’, which is defined in Section 2.5.1 of Chapter 2, collective actors here refer to members of a challenging group who seek to influence the group’s antagonist. In futōkō activism, the antagonists of the challenging group, which is the futōkō movement group, are MoE and the set of dominant social perceptions that futōkō activists believed have disadvantaged and marginalized futōkō children.
Reelaboration. Identity emerges from the processes of self-identification and external recognition.

(p.105)

Further,

(m)ovements do indeed struggle for the recognition of their identity. It is only in the context of mutual recognition among actors that conflict and, more generally, social relationships can exist (Simmel 1955, Touraine 1981). Without this, self-affirmed identity on the part of a group will inevitably lead to its marginalization and its reduction to a deviant phenomenon.

(p.106)

In futōkō activism, issues of group solidarity, mutual recognition and marginalization are tackled through the building up of a network of actively functioning SMOs. Some of these have been mentioned briefly in previous chapters. However, discussions of futōkō SMOs in this chapter focus on their role in maintaining group solidarity, movement and individual identity, and working against stigmatization from outside. As listed in Table 4.1, major futōkō SMOs include:

1) the Kangaerukai and the National Network of Kangaerukai (or the Kangaerukai Network);
2) Tōkyō Shūre, its various branches, and the National Free School Network; and
3) the FSS.

These SMOs are closely linked to each other, and are under the leadership of Okuchi. Her strong leadership style is believed to be a key factor in the consistency of movement framing and the development of coordinated activities (to be discussed in more detail later). The futōkō SMOs have played a key role in the creation of a futōkō culture that helps to maintain the appeal of the movement to potential adherents.
Table 4.1 Major futōkō SMOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major futōkō SMOs</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
<th>NPO attestation</th>
<th>Representative(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai (The Meeting to Think About Tōkōkyohi)</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Okuchi Keiko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai Zengoku Nettowāke (The national Network to Think About Tōkōkyohi)</td>
<td>• 1990</td>
<td></td>
<td>Okuchi Keiko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free School Tōkyō Shūre</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Okuchi Keiko</td>
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<td>• Free School National Network</td>
<td>• 2001</td>
<td>• 2001</td>
<td>Okuchi Keiko Masuda Yoshie</td>
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4.2.1 Creation of a futōkō culture – the Kangaerukai and the National Network of Kangaerukai

In the previous Chapter (Section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2), the events leading up to the formation of the Kangaerukai, and its role in the official launching of the futōkō movement in 1988, was discussed. This section addresses the question of ideational work in generating ideas and identity-building of the Kangaerukai for the movement. As mentioned in Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, the Kangaerukai is the mother organization (botai) of Tōkyō Shūre. The latter has triggered an unprecedented free school trend in Japan, providing an alternative place where children can learn and grow. With the formation of these two groups of organizations, the Kangaerukai and its Network, and the Tōkyō Shūre, the core structures of the futōkō movement were in place:

With the setting up of the Kangaerukai, which was organized by families with tōkōkyohi children in 1984; and the first ‘place for children outside schools’,
which grew out of the ‘Meeting to Think About Tōkōkyohi’ in 1985, the main bodies of support for tōkōkyohi were basically in place.

(Asakura 1995:65)

The Kangaerukai was instrumental in contesting the framing of ‘futōkō is an illness’, which Asakura (1995) categorized as the third stage in the development of the interpretative frame of futōkō. Asakura maintains that

(i)t was under such circumstances that the third phase [of categorization of tōkōkyohi] unfolded and developed from 1984, in which various resources were mobilized to challenge the categorization of tōkōkyohi as an illness.

(p.65)

The Kangaerukai not only unfolded the third phase of the futōkō discourse, but also inspired the setting up of numerous Associations of Parents (Oya no Kai), or local versions of Kangaerukai throughout the nation, which later came together to form the National Network of Kangaerukai in 1990. When the Network first started, there were already about 30 member organizations. By 1998, membership increased to 68, and by 2002, it reached 74. Member organizations included Oya no Kai, free spaces or ibasho, free schools and other futōkō-focused citizen groups. The network had strategically adopted a loose form of structure to include as many grassroots groups as possible. This is reflected in the organizational statement of the Kangaerukai Network, which reads:

This network is made up of organizations like parents associations, ibasho, and also citizens’ groups that are focused on learning more about futōkō. These groups vary in terms of the scale of their organization, history, ways of operation and thinking. In order to show respect for these differences, it is important to adopt a loose form of network structure. There is no headquarters. There is also no compulsory obligation to do anything in order to become a member.

Having said that, we place strong emphasis on respecting children as individual human beings, and on learning from children. We also aim to change society

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42 For discussions on the different phases of the futōkō discourse by Asakura (1995) and others, see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.
43 Tōkyō Shūre belongs to this network and is the pioneer of Japanese free schools. More details in full about Tōkyō Shūre in Section 4.2.2 of this Chapter.
so that people have a better understanding of futōkō, support each other, exchange experiences, put away prejudices and clarify misunderstandings, and thus create a society in which people can maintain different ways of upbringing and lifestyles.\textsuperscript{44}

A loose network structure likely assisted the spread of the movement beyond its immediate social and geographical boundary in Tokyo. The Kangaerukai Network has about 70 member associations in all 47 prefectures throughout Japan, providing a broad social base that assists in the mobilization of resources needed for movement activities.\textsuperscript{45} Regular activities held by the Kangaerukai Network include seminars, national camps, symposiums, talks, and discussions. It also publishes books, newsletters, and movement-related information for member organizations. The meetings, seminars, discussion forums and most of its activities are open to members and non-members. The openness of the Kangaerukai accounts for the speedy diffusion of the movement to areas outside Tokyo and throughout the nation.

Also, from a strategic perspective, a loose network structure facilitates the creation of an inclusive and flexible movement identity. Studies in movement participation and identity show that ‘an inclusive and flexible identity will make for easy communication among movement activists and the outside world, as well as their different capacity to speak to different cultural and political contexts’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:102). They point out that an inclusive identity is more useful in mobilizing organizational and financial resources. In the case of futōkō, such a relationship between identity and resource mobilization is reflected in the external linkages the movement developed, which will be discussed later in the chapter. In addition, the non-hierarchical structure of the Kangaerukai Network facilitates the sharing of information that is of interest to parents and futōkō children.\textsuperscript{46} Not only is the nature of movement structure a flexible one, but so is the form of the gatherings of Oya no Kai and issues that are discussed among participants. Okuchi points out that

\begin{quote}
actually, in every meeting there was a lot of fun. Children also came to our meetings. They trust us with their future. You may think that this is only a club
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{44} Translated from the organizational statement of the Kangaerukai Network from the homepage of the organizations, \url{http://www.futoko-net.org/menus/gaiyou.htm}, accessed on 17/03/2005).

\textsuperscript{45} From webpage of the Kangaerukai Network, \url{http://www.futoko-net.org/gaiyou.htm}, accessed on 17/03/2005.

\textsuperscript{46} From the Kangaerukai Network website, URL: \url{http://www.futoko-net.org/menus/giyou.htm}. Accessed on 17/03/2005.
for parents of tōkōkyōhi children and how it could not be depressing (‘nekura na’)? But once you come, you will find that we are actively working on other social problems as well. The atmosphere is lively and cheerful.

(Okuchi 1992:42)

As the ultimate aim of the movement is to effect social change through the specific issue of futōkō, working on issues other than futōkō is also important for goal attainment.

In addition to being flexible and inclusive, Okuchi describes the members as self-helper by nature and independent in spirit (jiritsu jijo). They trust their children and support them in learning and growing at their own pace and in their own ways. They claim to value diversity in the individuality of children. This is the essence of the ‘futōkō culture’ that has been highlighted by futōkō citizens – a spirit of ‘jiritsu’ (autonomy). In fact, the idea of ‘jiritsu’ has been considered a ‘central issue’ in citizen activism in Japan since the post-war period (Avenell 2006:89-113). Avenell (2006) shows how the ‘logic of self-help’ has been adapted by post-war activists to bring about institutional/bureaucratic/elite definition of the public good. In futōkō activism, the idea of ‘jiritsu’ was adopted to encourage futōkō children and their parents to redefine what is suitable for themselves. Okuchi declares:

Parents who had been [relying on] instructions by experts and school teachers have now started to learn to be independent. They have started learning from each other and gaining necessary support from each other. And by doing this, they become relieved, able to trust their children and show them patience. Through this [the Kangaerukai], more people came to question about their narrow view of education and school faith.

(Okuchi 1992:42-3)

At the same time, ‘futōkō culture’ reflects the kind of ‘specific universality’ (gutaiteki fuhensei) founded in social activism in the 1970s in Japan that seeks to ‘reform the universal via the specific’ (Avenell 2003). ‘Specific universality’ is a concept articulated by Japanese social movement activist Fujita Kazuyoshi. It refers to the necessity of bringing social changes about through working on the

‘small universe’ which can be ‘food’, ‘agriculture’, ‘medicine’, or ‘education’. Actors in different sectors like farmers, consumers, doctors, patients, schools teachers, and students can form themselves together to create alternative systems (Avenell 2003). These movements focus on ‘pragmatic concerns with issues of life, lifestyle, and nature’ (Avenell 2003). For these movements, a broad social base and a flexible approach in organizing the movement are pertinent to their success. *Futōkō* is an example of specific universality, an organization in a particular sector but sharing the goal of creating an alternative system.

As the *Kangaerukai* grew in size, the *futōkō* culture became more established. Okuchi commented that

> at first, participants came from within Tokyo, Chiba and the vicinity. However, more and more people from nearby prefectures came to join, and before long people came from faraway prefectures. Some even came by Shinkansen[^48] or on planes to join us.

(Okuchi 1992:42)

> In four years, membership of the *Kangaerukai* reached over 1,000 and it became difficult for us to manage the membership list manually.

(p.43)

The popularity of the *Kangaerukai* indicated that the idea of parents helping themselves with the problem of their children gained resonance among citizens. In fact, parents who attended the *Kangaerukai* meetings brought the idea back to their hometowns. Okuchi observed that

> some parents who came to Tokyo to share experiences and learn from each other started to set up *Oya no Kai* in their own regions and their own prefectures. Whenever there is an *Oya no Kai*, it would, almost without fail, gather people from nearby. When parents there have learnt to understand and respond to the problems of their children, their children would get well. *Oya no Kai* spread like wild fire throughout the country.

[^48]: *Shinkansen*, or ‘bullet train’ in English, is a network of high-speed railway lines that link most major cities on the islands of Honshu and Kyushu in Japan, and is operated by four Japan Railways Group companies.
The idea of Kangaerukai has spread among, in particular, Japanese mothers who form the backbone of the movement. Besides being a place for parents to share with each other, these Oya no Kai are also places for information exchange on child rearing. According to Okuchi, parent-child relationships in many families have improved as a result of interchanges among parents. She claimed that

*Oya no Kai* are organized by people who care and can spare the time. The very fact that more and more people adopt the attitude of forming their own group to solve their own problems is really fantastic. Learning from other parents who face the same problem is enlightening. In terms of information exchange, the amount of information they gained is much more than what they can get from a one-to-one counselling session. It was incomparable. In this way, [parents] are able to calm down, watch over their children, and build a good relationship with them. And children will be able to gain peace of mind.

The expansion and the spread of the idea of the Kangaerukai symbolizes the formation of a *new cultural identity* among participants when they came to share their experiences, discuss their problems, and gain support from each other. From a movement perspective, participation in movement gatherings creates opportunities for individuals to make connections with each other, and produces a kind of ‘subcultural or countercultural milieu that offers both opportunities for protest activities and for the maintenance and transformation of critical orientations even when protest is not vibrant’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:117). Also, movement gatherings offer opportunities for social networking, and this in turn opens up possibilities for the mobilization of resources and producing future collective actors (Tilly 1978). The subsequent establishment of Tōkyō Shūre, the Kangaerukai Network and other SMOs indicates that this kind of culture has been effective in attracting and sustaining participation, mobilizing resources and raising future leaders and collective actors. The most obvious examples are mothers who have turned from housewives into active participants. For instance, mothers in Kangaerukai provided a pool of human and financial resources when the Tōkyō Shūre and the FSS were set up. Some volunteered to distribute the *FS*. 

(p.43)
Activist parents who were involved in futōkō activism were quite different from the ‘education mothers’, or the ‘absent salaryman’ who never interacts with his children. A report found that active paternal childcare increases a sense of well-being in children. Children who have substantial interaction with their fathers set a high value on their fathers, while children with little interaction with their fathers placed little trust in their fathers (Kashiwagi 2003:258-9). While one study found that young fathers identify themselves as the father rather than the breadwinner, cross-cultural studies demonstrated that Japanese fathers’ participation in childcare was limited and consistently the lowest (Gender Equity bureau 2006:66; Kashiwagi 2003:255; Taga 2005:52). Futōkō activists, including FS editorialists, saw the problem of ‘education mothers’ (a topic that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5) and the estranged child-parent relationship as being caused by the work and lifestyle of Japanese parents. As Okuchi points out in the above quotations, getting involved in futōkō activism often helped parents to learn to re-organize their priorities so as to put the child-parent relationship first.

Also, as an example of rising leaders, some of the futōkō children later became devoted members of the futōkō movement. One of them is Ishii Shikō. He was 16 years old in 1998 when he served as chairman of the executive committee for the summer camp held each year by the Kangaerukai. Since April 2001, he has been a member of staff in the editorial team of the FS Tokyo branch (FS 89, 01/01/200).

The construction of a ‘futōkō culture’ proved to be a sustainable one. In the year 2004, which marked the 20th anniversary of the Kangaerukai, futōkō citizens declared that ‘futōkō is a culture’ (futōkō wa bunka da),49 claiming the occasion as evidence of a successful outcome of their activism. More importantly, the claim confirms the participants’ belief that they had successfully brought about change in society, and thus consolidated a unique sense of belonging among movement participants – a key factor for the continuous mobilization and sustainability of social movements.

4.2.2 Enlargement of movement community – Tōkyō Shūre and the National Free School Network

While the Kangaerukai started up primarily as a parent-centred group that forges solidarity among parents, Tōkyō Shūre focuses on identity construction and affirmation for futōkō children. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Tōkyō Shūre was the first free school of its kind in Japan that addresses specifically the increasing needs of futōkō children. It is ‘a place outside school where they can come and go freely, not ordered around and forced to be competitive, but can feel free and have their own ideas and feelings attended to. There should be a place that allows them to stretch and grow’ (Okuchi 1992:49, 51).

Tōkyō Shūre is derived from the German word ‘schule’ which means ‘school’. The word has a Greek origin, which means ‘to exercise one’s free will’. The free school claims that it is designed to be a place for children who ‘do not want to go to school, do not fit into the school system, but want to make friends, study, and experience different things’. Designated to accommodate the particular needs of futōkō children, Tōkyō Shūre highlights three founding principles: ‘freedom’, ‘autonomy’, and ‘respect for individual uniqueness’ (Okuchi 1992:135). This is reflected in the structure and daily activities in Tōkyō Shūre. For instance, Tōkyō Shūre adopts a staff-member system rather than a hierarchical teacher-student one, which means that students and teachers are equal. ‘Students’ are not called students but ‘members’, and ‘teachers’ are not called teachers but staff members. A non-hierarchical and democratic approach also extends to decision making processes in which children are involved in designing their activities and deciding what they want to learn. These structures and approaches reflect a focus on identity construction and affirmation for futōkō children.

Tōkyō Shūre is of historical significance in the development of the futōkō movement and free schools with Japanese characteristics. It introduced the concept that ‘free schools = places for futōkō children’. The setting up of Tōkyō Shūre quickly set off the so-called free school movement in Japan (Okuchi 1992:46). Similar facilities modelled on Tōkyō Shūre soon sprung up all over Japan. Free schools in Japan are

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significantly different from those in America and Europe in that those in Japan are specifically to deal with the issue of futōkō, while European and American style free schools are more ideologically based. One study pointed out that

European and American free schools aim at fully stretching the ability of children, and most of those who attend are children who do not like the school system. Hence, the rate of those returning to school is low, and from the very beginning there are few who will push themselves to go to school to the point of suicide…. their main idea is to ‘stretch’ the ability of children.\(^{51}\)

However, free schools in Japan are more pragmatic. Okuchi points out:

The free school movement in Japan, so to speak, is a movement that ‘carries the reality of tōkōkyohi’. In this country where the ideology of ‘school absolutism’ is so widely perceived, even if you talk about setting up free schools, it could just remain an idea and one that is difficult to realize. However, in the face of tōkōkyohi, for the first time, children who do not or cannot go to school walk out [of schools], and force the issue of free schools in such a way that cannot be denied. It is a realization of the right of citizens. In other words, I think the reality of tōkōkyohi provides the foundation upon which children initiate change. It breaks loose the confinement of the school system, and creates excellent opportunities for the formation of various forms of [learning] spaces.\(^{52}\)

(1992:46)

The reality of futōkō means that although Tōkyō Shūre and other Japanese free schools are modelled on American and European examples, they are distinctly focused on helping futōkō children to regain their own identity. As such, free schools in Japan means ‘places for futōkō children’.\(^{52}\) Nevertheless, in general, Tōkyō Shūre adopts models of free schools in the West. Tōkyō Shūre not only provides an alternative education space for futōkō children, but also represents a challenge to the formal education system. It is a critique of the belief in ‘school absolutism’ (gakkō zettaika).\(^{53}\) In this regard, it is similar to the anti-authoritarian free schools like the Free Skool Santa Cruz in California, which identifies itself as ‘more than just an opportunity to learn’, but also ‘as a direct challenge to dominant institutions and hierarchical

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\(^{53}\) See Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2 and 1.4.3.
relationships.’ It is seen as ‘(p)art of a new world in resistance to the old one, to the relentless commodification of everything, including learning and the way we relate to each other’. Like this free school, Tōkyō Shūre also features purely grassroots efforts, focuses on on-going skill sharing among adults and children, and consciously blur the boundaries between students, teachers, and organizers.

Tōkyō Shūre also has adopted the model of Summerhill School in the UK. Founded in 1921, Summerhill is the most famous free school and has been the model for many subsequent free schools in Europe and the US. The daughter of Okuchi also attended Summerhill during her futōkō years (as mentioned in Chapter Three). Like Summerhill, Tōkyō Shūre emphasizes the personal freedom of children. It is designed as a self-governing and democratic community, in which children can decide whether they want to attend lessons or not. In Tōkyō Shūre, students are also involved in decisions about their curriculum and extra-curricula activities. This is to show that children are given the freedom to make choices about their own lives. While Summerhill School is residential, Tōkyō Shūre is not. Free schools in Japan are not officially recognized as formal education institutions, and therefore free school qualifications are not recognized for entrance to college and universities. Like students in other free schools such as Summerhill, Tōkyō Shūre students also have to face adaptation to society after they leave the free school.

From a movement framing perspective, this adaptation carries cultural resonance, or empirical credibility, which is one of the factors that affects the resonance of a movement frame. It refers to ‘the apparent fit between the framings and events in the world’, and is about ‘whether the empirical referents lend themselves to being read as “real” indicators of the diagnostic claims’ (Benford & Snow 2000:620; Gamson 1992; Snow and Benford 1988). The resonance of adaptation is indicated by the expansion of the Tōkyō Shūre community, which also helps to maintain group solidarity. The community of Tōkyō Shūre and its major areas of activities are shown in Fig. 4.1.

55 See also footnote on free schools in Section 3.2.2.1, Chapter 3.
The four major areas of operation show that Tōkyō Shūre focuses on the intellectual as well as personal development of children. It is liberal in nature, providing lessons according to the interests of its members. As the above figure shows, the various branches of free schools and the Shūre University cater for the needs of a wide age range – from school age (with Free School Tōkyō Shūre) to university (with Shūre University). It also brings the attention of participants to social issues affecting, in particular, young people, such as for instance the issues of hikikomori (social seclusion). Shūre also offers counselling services for patrons. Tōkyō Shūre also

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57 The Shūre University is not a university in a conventional sense. It is not recognized by MoE and does not offer any diploma. The ‘university’ is fee-based and accepts anyone over 18. There is no entrance examination. Students of Shūre University decide what they want to learn and design their courses with their lecturers. It was set up in 1999 and has just occupied one floor in a residential/commercial building until April 2007, when it moved to a new venue that it now shares with the Shinjuku campus of Tōkyō Shūre. Classes often take place at various places decided by students and lecturers, and even at the home of lecturers. Shūre University has about 45 advisors who offer talks, seminars, lecturers, and activities. It now has approximately 40 students. For details, see http://shureuniv.org/guidance/advisor.html, viewed 24/7/2007.
58 Hikikomori (acute social withdrawal) refers to the sociological phenomenon of reclusive adolescents and young adults who have chosen to withdraw from social life. The Japanese Ministry
develops online learning services such as Home and Cyber Shure for those who do not or cannot commute to Tōkyō Shūre. All these services for futōkō children are a recognition of their special needs. In this regard, the movement renders an exclusive identity to its participants. Joining Tōkyō Shūre and its activities thus symbolizes the adoption of a unique identity.

Tōkyō Shūre also plays a central role in providing continuous education for parents on issues that include futōkō and child-rearing. On-going education is believed to be a key approach to align parents’ personal identity to that of the futōkō movement. According to Snow and Machalek (1984) and Snow and Anderson (1987), personal identity, regardless of its objective constitution, is an interactional accomplishment that is socially (re)constructed. Keeping parents involved in monthly meetings, seminars, group discussions, as well as providing counseling for parents in need, are ways through which Tōkyō Shūre keeps this interactive process of identity construction vibrant and effective.59

Tōkyō Shūre has also succeeded in working against the stigma that is often attached to social movements. As mentioned in Section 4.1, stigmatization from the outside is one of the major obstacles faced by social movements. It ‘often ends up blocking the development of a strong autonomous identity and limiting the possibilities for collective action’ (della Prota & Diani 2006:107). In this regard, Tōkyō Shūre has been very careful to avoid being tagged an anti-school movement. The caution displayed is reflected in its organizational statement which reads as follows:

Although Tōkyō Shūre is a place created outside school, it is not intended to be an anti-school establishment.

For children who go to schools, school provides a path for growth. In the same way, futōkō children should also have their path of growth. What is this path then?

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We have learnt that forcing children who do not want to go to school will bring about a very negative impact on the child. We have also learnt that during the time period when children are not going to school, if a place outside of school is provided for them, it can often bring them tremendous good. In fact, in Tōkyō Shūre children are relieved of their symptoms and thus can mingle with staff and other children of their age. Eventually, many of these children return to their own schools, or decide to enter a school of their own choice for further study….

We want to have futōkō children understand that ‘school is not the only place for children to grow’, and we want to change the negative way that futōkō children think they are no good.\(^{60}\)

When talking about the new Tōkyō Shūre school in Katsushika Ward (discussed in Section 4.3.3), Okuchi said,

I don’t deny the [value of the] current school system, but I’d like to make a school in which futōkō students can fulfil their potential in a good environment.

(Yomiuri Shinbun, 22/10/2005)

The above statements indicate that Tōkyō Shūre is carefully saying that it is not established in opposition to regular schooling, but as a mechanism for futōkō students to find a path back into regular schooling or into other educational institutions. Thus some Tōkyō Shūre ex-students go to university after leaving Tōkyō Shūre. Tōkyō Shūre designs activities that emphasize the development of children and their contribution to social change. It states that

(m)ost of the activities of Tōkyō Shūre focus on futōkō children. However, it is not just about futōkō. Futōkō is just one of the openings we act on. We also tackle issues like children’s rights, education for children in general, etc. In Article three of our Statutes, it is stated that:

At the centre of this corporate body is the running of a free school. Through a variety of activities, we provide support for children who do not go to school and to their parents. We also work at safeguarding and enlarging the rights of futōkō children and those who have experienced futōkō. We help them to grow in an environment outside of school where they can learn and interact with each other.

We aim at creating and developing an ideal approach to a child-centred education, and thus help to revolutionize the meritocratic society.\textsuperscript{61}

As the above statement suggests, Tōkyō Shūre may be interested in changing the regular school system while providing an alternative education space for futōkō children. This again reflects the concept of ‘specific universality’ that characterizes post-war citizen activism in Japan (as discussed in Section 4.2.1). Futōkō is ‘one of the openings’ that Tōkyō Shūre, and by extension the futōkō movement, acts on. Although it started out as a domain-specific frame, Tōkyō Shūre gradually ventured into a broader scope that assumed a more global perspective. One example is the opening of the Child Line Support Centre.

The Child Line is a telephone hotline for children aiming to help children to face their problems. It was a service first started in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, in March 1998.\textsuperscript{62} As of May 2006, the Child Line has 63 offices in 34 administrative divisions in Japan, including prefectures and metropolitan areas like Tokyo and Osaka. In the annually held seven-day Child Line Free Dial Campaign in 2005, the Child Line dealt with 17,108 calls.\textsuperscript{63} The Child Line was based on the model developed in 1986 in England, to assist children experiencing bullying. Since then, the concept of telephone support for children has been adapted internationally in Asia, Europe, the USA and Australia. The Child Line has drawn the attention of Diet members, and was visited by the then Minister of Education in 1999. In 2002, the Child Line gained financial support from big enterprises like NTT, Tokyo Electric, and Tokyo Gas. Support from corporate enterprises have enabled the Centre to offer its service free to the community (\textit{FS} 99, 01/06/2002). Also, this financial support indicates recognition of futōkō citizens’ activism by other social actors, so that movement activists are not tagged as anti-social, an important factor in the construction of a salient movement frame.

To further foster a positive movement identity, Tōkyō Shūre has created social settings for interactive exchange with other social actors. As researchers point out, ‘identities are often created and reproduced in specific social and/or communitarian

\textsuperscript{61} http://www.shure.or.jp/yokoso/q_page/01a1.html. Accessed on 29/03/2005.
settings’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:110). For instance, in 2000, together with the support of a network of free schools, Tōkyō Shūre hosted the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC), also known as the World Free School Conference. After the 2000 IDEC, this network of free schools joined together to establish the NPO Free School National Network in February 2001. This is yet one more futōkō SMO (see Table 4.1 for the full list and their date of formation). At the same time, this new addition is an example of the interactive dynamics between participation and the formation of social networks. It is generally agreed that ‘social networks affect participation in collective action, while in turn participation shapes networks, reinforcing pre-existing ones or creating new ones. Social networks may increase individual chances to become involved, and strengthen activists’ attempts to further the appeal of their causes’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:115). In short, social networks are both facilitators and products of collective action: ‘the relationship between individuals and the networks in which they are embedded is crucial not only for the involvement of people in collective action, but also for the sustenance of action over time’ (p.116). The sustainability of futōkō activism over time depends a great deal on the continual framing of futōkō. In this regard, the Futōkō Shimbun (The School Non-Attendance Newspaper) has played the central role as the media for the futōkō movement.

4.2.3 Articulation of the futōkō frame – the Zenkoku Futōkō Shimbun Sha (The National School Non-Attendance Newspaper Agency) (FSS) and other movement media

The Zenkoku Futōkō Shimbun Sha (The National School Non-Attendance Newspaper Agency) (FSS) was established in 1998 to provide an alternative news medium to the mainstream media which had hitherto reinforced the hegemonic discourse of futōkō stating that it is a personal problem of maladjustment to school of a ‘problem child’. It was founded by Okuchi Keiko, Tada Hajime, a retired judge who works as a lawyer, and Yamada Jun, a secondary school teacher who played a crucial role in the Kangaerukai and who subsequently became an executive board member of the Futōkō Shimbun (FS), the movement newspaper. The FS is the voice of the movement. Two of the chief board members wrote in its inaugural issue (1 May 1998) that
The *FSS* is a non-profit organization (NPO) working for the interests of *futōkō* children and their parents. We believe that we can develop *Futōkō Shimbun* into a national newspaper with the support of the *Oya no Kai* network. Moreover, as children themselves grow and construct their own lives, they can actually show people that ‘there is nothing scary about *futōkō*’…. 

(Okuchi Keiko, *FS* 1 01/05/1998)

This newspaper does not regard *futōkō* children as patients. It will not provide methods and information for the purpose of reducing the number of *futōkō* children. Instead, it is a medium created by *futōkō* citizens with the hope of encouraging people to look at *futōkō* – an issue created by the adult society – in a positive way.

(Tada Hajime, *FS* 1, 01/05/1998)

The *FSS* successfully engaged wider media attention to cover the story of the newspaper’s inauguration. A press conference was held on 7 April 1998, to announce its birth, and the occasion was reported in the NHK national broadcasting morning news the following day (*FS* 1, 01/05/1998).

Not only is the *FS* a print medium communicating the movement’s philosophy and activities of various *futōkō* SMOs, but the content of the newspaper also reflects the continual negotiation of a shared meaning and understanding of *futōkō* and other child-related issues. As Okuchi and Tada claim, they intend the newspaper to be an *agent of social change* (as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1). The diversity of issues discussed in the *FS* indicates that through reframing *futōkō*, *futōkō* citizens are tackling wider problems in society. On their website, *futōkō* citizens in fact claim that they are using *futōkō* as a ‘doorway’ to tackle issues concerning children, education, human rights, other citizen activisms, social phenomena, culture, etc. This is the ‘new culture’ (*atarashii bunka*) that they aim to create through reframing *futōkō*. The *FS* proclaims itself to be a trend-setter and an agent of social transformation. This ‘new culture’ approach echoes that of *Tōkyō Shūre*. Similarly, this approach leads to the construction of both an ‘exclusive identity’ for *futōkō* individuals in relation to those beyond the movement, which complements the

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‘inclusive and flexible identity’ of those engaged within the movement, both of which assist in broadening the social base of the movement.

An ‘exclusive identity’ is believed to be useful in motivating direct participation because it helps to define ‘the profile of a movement with some force...[and thus] will probably be able to provide more notable (selective) incentives for action, making the definition of both the actor and of its adversaries more precise in the process’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:102-3). Through a shared understanding of futōkō gained from participation in the FS related activities, a common identity is cultivated among those who are involved. Participants also believe that through their involvement in the FS, they can be trend setters who can make a difference in the way people see futōkō. Such ideas provide incentives of a nonmaterial type for sustained participation.

An example is the community of mother volunteers who help to distribute the FS. These mothers are from the Oya no Kai, whose children are or were futōkō students. They used to expect their children to go to school as ‘normal’ children do, but acquired a new perspective on futōkō through their involvement in the FSS, and therefore no longer force their children to commute to school. For instance, Yamaguchi of Saitama Prefecture said:

I wish that lots of people could read this newspaper. Not only parents, but also people in government organizations should subscribe to it. I want to help broaden the scope of this undertaking....
Before [the futōkō of my children], I was raising my children according to a parent’s expectation.

(FS 122, 15/05/2003)

Kawamura, whose three children were all futōkō, talked about how she acquired a new perspective through futōkō. She said:

I consider that every thing learnt from futōkō has become fundamental. The recent problem of the aged reveals the same issues.

(FS 122, 15/05/2003)
In other words, *futōkō* not only changed their perception of ‘going to school’, but offered them a world view, a perspective from which they could understand the social issues of the world around them. Their common background as mothers of *futōkō* children brought them together from different prefectures: Tokyo, Chiba, Saitama, Kanagawa etc. For them, working for the *FS* is more than a pastime and a socializing opportunity; they describe their participation as *futōkō* citizens’ activities (*futōkō shimin katsudō*) (*FS* 122, 15/05/2003), and clearly understand that their participation is support for the movement. The small FS office in which they work gives them a sense of belonging (*ibasho toshite*) (*FS* 122, 15/05/2003). Testimonies of mothers indicated that the alternative frame of *futōkō* – as a way of life and not an illness – has successfully changed their way of relating to their children and society. The *FS* community has fostered a sense of solidarity and mutual recognition among these mothers. Sustained participation is one of the key issues in the framing of social movements (Benford & Snow 2000).

To reinforce mutual recognition and group solidarity, the *FS* publishes stories about *futōkō* students living a fulfilling life. It also conducts surveys and organizes meetings and petitions to protest government measures that contest the movement frame of *futōkō*. For instance, on 23 February 2001, an emergency meeting was held by the *FS* in response to a statement by the Minister of Education, who ascribed the prevalence of *futōkō* to too much freedom and emphasis on individuality (*FS* 70, 15/03/2001). The *FS* organized a protest against the claim and many *futōkō* students came forward to express their views. Activities like these help to sustain the social process of identity construction for *futōkō* individuals and the movement. In doing so, the *FS* re-elaborates and reaffirms adherents and participants in their involvement. Another important factor that helps to attract adherents and sustain participation is that the *FS* has enlisted the support of a group of well-known figures to be the voice of the movement. The role of frame articulators will be presented in Section 4.5 of this chapter.

*Futōkō* activists have also demonstrated skills in making use of various media to promote and enhance their activism. The various media offer space for the spread of movement ideas, and function as ‘mobilizers of protests’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:220). As Gusfield (1994) points out,
in the process of constructing the reality of the society, mass media do more than monitor. They dramatize. They create vivid images, impute leadership, and heighten the sense of conflict between movements and the institutions of society (Gitlin 1980; Ericson, Baranek, & Chan 1987). They project a vocabulary with which to discuss the movement. Consider some of the social types that are conveyed by terms such as “women’s libber,” “peacenik,” “gay rights.” The framing process is deeply influenced by the ways in which vehicles of news and entertainment frame the movements and their objects.

(Gusfield 1994:71)

As movement organizations do not have control of what is reported of their activism by the media, movements resort to the development of their own media and ‘hone their communicative skills and pay careful attention to communication campaigns, press conferences, and especially, carefully written dossiers’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:181). Futōkō activists have demonstrated the ability to use print effectively, as well as visual and online media which effect the dissemination of their collective action frame to participants, which in turn strengthens collective solidarity among participants. The best known and most successful media is the FS, although the movement also publishes books under its various SMOs like Tōkyō Shūre, the FS, and the Kangaerukai. The Cyber Shūre, also known as Life Shūre, is the movement’s online media portal, responsible for delivering movement-related and educational materials. Also, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3, the movement is able to attract the mass media to cover reports of their activities. For instance, mainstream media AS was asked to cover the protest launched by activists against the psychiatric discourse on futōkō in 1988, and it did so. In 1998, activists held a press conference to announce the launch of the FS, and the event was reported by NHK (FS 1, 01/05/1998). Later, a media appearance by Okuchi was made into a television and a radio news program to promote the new secondary school, the Tōkyō Shūre Katsushika Secondary School which was scheduled to open in April 2007. In January 2005, Mediashūre was set up to co-ordinate efforts to promote the movement frame, indicating that futōkō activists perceive the importance of mass

65 Okuchi Keiko appeared on the evening news program of the Tokyo Metropolitan Television Broadcasting Corp. (Tokyo MX) at six o’clock on 12 December 2006 to promote the new Shure secondary school which is due to open in April 2007. On the 18th of the same month, a NHK (Nihon Hōsō Kyoku) news program introduced the newly set up Tōkyō Shūre Institute. See URL: http://shure-chugaku.sblo.jp. Accessed on 21/12/2006.
communication media in the development of the futōkō movement. Okuchi is articulate and skilful in using the print media and multimedia to promote movement-related activities and their alternative framing of futōkō. She writes and edits books on topics related to futōkō and about their movement.

As researchers point out, the mass media is ‘the main arena for the public expression of opinions and opinion formation’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:220), and thus the effective use of the media could enhance the chances of movement success. The futōkō movement, as illustrated above, has made effective use of the media to spread the movement message. At the same time, the futōkō movement also demonstrates the capacity to develop themes that resonate with social beliefs, cultural values, as well as the experience of wider Japanese society. A content analysis of the editorial column of the FS in Chapter Five will illustrate how the movement has articulated culturally resonant themes that are salient to the target of mobilization and reflect broader social changes in Japan.

4.3 External linkages: networking, funding, and collaboration

As a strategic approach to expand futōkō activism, futōkō SMOs have connected to a number of established social and institutional organizations through networking, funding, and collaborations.

4.3.1 Networking

Networking (Nettowākingu) by proliferating NPOs and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Japan since the 1990s has had a significant impact on the pattern of social movements in Japan. Across the 1990s, an alliance of domestic politicians, women’s and children’s groups and NGOs drew in lawyers, academics, men’s rights groups, counsellors, politicians, women’s studies scholars, and foreign experts to bring into public discussion previously unmentioned topics around

67 Information on publication by Okuchi Keiko is available from Tōkyō Shūre website, http://www.shure.or.jp.
sexuality and violence (Chan-Tiberghien 2004:5-7, 18-19, 76, 147-9). While Chan-Tiberghien (2004) discusses topics around sexuality and violence, a similar pattern of activism is manifested in futōkō. Striking links with credible entities has been an important tactic of the futōkō movement, especially since the attestation of major futōkō SMOs.

Credible networking functions as a kind of ‘social capital’ (Diani 1997:129-47), which often facilitates participation in movement activities when social individuals see chances of self-realization through participation. Linking up with established and reputable social actors is a way of attracting and sustaining individual participation, because in a movement network, individuals pursue goals which are not only concerned with political ends but also and often more significantly with personal self-realization. Even individuals who are not members of any specific organization may come together from time to time for specific initiatives and activities organized by cultural operators, service structures, and so on.

(della Porta & Diani 2006:131)

In the case of futōkō activism, the movement is of particular appeal to those who are concerned about the rights of children. It has links with the Network for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The movement has engaged human rights activists like Ohta Takashi and Ashizawa Shunsuke as their frame articulators (more details about frame articulators are given in Section 4.5 of this chapter). Ohta and Ashizawa were two prominent advocates who promoted ‘The Urgent Petition to Discuss the Juvenile Law from the Viewpoints of Children’ in a 1998 campaign organized by the Tokyo Bar Association and the ‘Special Committee for the Rights of a Child and the Juvenile Law’ (FS 18, 15/1/1999). By June, 2000, the campaign successfully gathered 647,556 signatures, which were later submitted to the Diet.

In addition, children from Tōkyō Shüre spoke at a citizens’ gathering called ‘This is My View on the Juvenile Law’ on 10 February 1999 to ‘critically challenge the revision of the Juvenile Law which was based on adults’ perception of children, yet fail to take into consideration the rights of children’ (FS 21, 1/3/1999). The involvement of futōkō citizens were highlights in the FS, as one of the newspaper
headline reads: ‘the office in charge of petition confirmed that they have received signatures from futōkō citizens’ (FS 21, 1/3/1999). When the revision was passed by the House of Representatives on 31 October 2000, the FS called an emergency meeting, which was attended by 320 people, and invited credible speakers including a lawyer, a judge, counsellors, commentators, an academic and a paediatrician to denounce the revision (FS 62, 15/11/2000).

The other human rights issue that FS closely followed is the change in the Fundamental Law of Education to include the love of the nation (e.g. FS 109, 31/11/2002), and the debate on the definition of compulsory education (e.g. FS 81, 1/9/2001). FS engaged leaders of political parties like Kan Naoto, Chairman of the Democratic Party (FS 81, 1/9/2001), to support their opposition to the change which activists thought was an infringement of the rights of children (more details in Chapter 5). It also conducted interviews with various political parties and sought their support on the rights of futōkō children.

These examples show that futōkō is part of this movement that might be loosely defined as the human rights movement. The rights frame is one of the few master frames, that is, frames that are broad in interpretive scope, inclusivity, flexibility, and culturally resonant (Benford & Snow 2000:619, as discussed in Chapter Three, p.20). As such, alignment with the rights frame could be a strategic effort to enhance the salience of the futōkō movement frame.

4.3.2 Funding

Networking has also been an important source of funding for the movement, with Tōkyō Shūre being the most successful in securing funding. It has secured funding support from a number of public and corporate organizations. Examples of support from foundations obtained by Tōkyō Shūre include a ¥2.5million grant from the Japan Initiative for Youth Development (JIYD) in 1999 for holding the 8th round of the World Free School Conference, also known as the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC), and grants of ¥1.16 million in 2002 and ¥880,000 in 2003 to the Child Line project in Kyoto. The JIYD is a foundation set up in 2001 and funded by the Matsushita Electric Industrial Company Limited, a major Japanese
electronics manufacturer, to provide grants for NPOs that promote the development of youth aged between 8 and 25.68

Another example is funding received from the Welfare And Medical Service Agency (WAM), an ‘Incorporated Administrative Agency’ (IAA) which administers a variety of programs, as prescribed by the Welfare and Medical Service Agency Law, to promote and improve social welfare and medical services. WAM provides subsidies to various projects initiated by private non-profit organizations to improve sound development of youth. The subsidies are financed by the annual proceeds accrued from a fund established by the Government.69 In 2004, the futōkō SMO Free School National Network successfully applied for a grant of ¥2,627,000 from WAM to promote youth development projects. In 2003, the Child Line Support Centre, or the Child Line, which is a project initiated by Tōkyō Shūre, was granted ¥4,888,000 by the Child Development Support Foundation of WAM to promote the Child Line Network. In 2001, the Child Line Support Centre was also granted ¥4,600,000 by another foundation under WAM.70 Examples of other sources of funding and support solicited by Tōkyō Shūre include:71

- the Children’ Support Fund under Welfare and Medical Service Agency
- the Children’s Dream Fund under National Olympics Memorial Youth Center
- the Japan Foundation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
- the Ishibashi Foundation whose activities are overseen by MoE
- The Toyota Foundation
- the Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group
- Japan Post
- the Silicon Valley Foundation (USA)
- the Nagayama Children’s Foundation
- the Pfizer Japan Incorporation
- the NTT Tokyo Information & Directory Services Corporation
- the Asahi Life Asset Management Company Limited

4.3.3 Collaborations

The futōkō movement has also achieved considerable success in collaborating with other social actors to promote education and youth development. The latest endeavour is the opening of a junior high school specially catering for futōkō children in Katsushika, Tokyo, one of the government’s special zones for structural reform. The new school, called Tōkyō Shūre Katsushika Secondary School, was opened in April 2007 in a disused municipal primary school. The new school is run in the same way as Tōkyō Shūre. The collaboration benefits both parties. For the Katsushika Ward government, Tōkyō Shūre put to use a disused school which had been closed since 2001, and helps to tackle futōkō in the region. As Kenichi Oshio of the Katsushika Ward Education Board said,

We welcome the new school as it will increase options for futōkō students and their parents in the ward.

(Yomiuri Shimbun, 22/10/2005)

For Tōkyō Shūre, the opening of the new school helps to raise its status. This is because to grant the lease of the former public school building and grounds to Tōkyō Shūre, the ward government has to ask for permission from the central government. Also, the law requires that school grounds and buildings have to be owned by a school corporation. The lease signifies that Tōkyō Shūre could enjoy a status comparable with that of traditional schools.

Meanwhile, Tōkyō Shūre is one of the NPOs commissioned by MoE to develop program or curriculum for futōkō children.72 It also works on MoE research projects on the use of NPOs as a counter-measure of futōkō, with the Chiba Prefectural government to create ibasho for futōkō students, with the government of the Tokyo metropolitan area on projects to train staff supporting child-rearing, and so on. Examples of other organizations with which Tōkyō Shūre collaborates are the Global Network for Children, the NPO Promotion Network, and the Tokyo Volunteer Action Centre, among others.73

73 Details of funding and collaborative organizations and activities are from the website of Tōkyō Shūre, http://www.shure.or.jp/cgi-bin/wiki/wiki.cgi/aboutTokyoShure, accessed on 23/03/2007.
4.4 Leadership in social movements

Strong and effective leadership is another factor that accounts for the sustainability of the futōkō movement. It is generally agreed among researchers that the ability to coordinate internally and to represent the movement to outside parties is more relevant than being charismatic and able to exert control over SMOs (e.g. Melucci 1996: 344-7). Researchers maintain that owing to their ‘participatory nature’ and ‘democratic orientation’, SMOs ‘often reject authority and hierarchy on principle’, but leaders must still assume the role of coordination and representation (della Porta & Diani 2006:142-3). The implication of such SMOs for leadership is that leadership roles need not entail control over a unified organization, or explicit recognition of charisma from followers. They may also, far less obtrusively, result from certain actors’ location at the center of exchanges of practical and symbolic resources among movement organizations.

(Diani 2003:106)

Further,

“leadership” may be associated with actors’ ability to promote coalition work among movement organizations, or to establish connections to the media and political institutions, which in turn lead to operating de facto as movement “representatives”.

(della Porta & Diani 2006:143)

The role of Okuchi Keiko, the leader of the futōkō movement, reflects to a great extent these leadership functions of coordination and representation. Okuchi is the founder as well as spokesperson of the movement. She is the head of all key movement SMOs. She has been instrumental in the framing of the movement, which in turn has been inspired by her personal experience. Her profile mirrors the development of the futōkō movement.
4.4.1 Soul of the movement – Okuchi Keiko

Okuchi Keiko was born in 1941 in Tōkyō and raised in Hiroshima. She was a graduate from the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Science of the National University of Yokohama. After graduation, from 1963 onwards, Okuchi was a teacher in public schools in Tokyo and Hiroshima for 22 years. However, in 1985 she resigned from teaching and opened Tōkyō Shūre. This significant change was brought about by the tōkōkyohi of her eldest son starting in 1978. She recalled how

14 years ago, my eldest son started tōkōkyohi. In the first two years, there was very limited information about the issue. I was holding all sorts of mistaken ideas and the preconception that ‘children have to go to school’. I tried to gently push him back to school, but as a consequence, my son started refusing to eat.

(Okuchi 1992:40)

At that time, Okuchi and her family met the child psychiatrist Watanabe Takashi. The encounter with Watanabe brought about fundamental changes in the family’s perspective towards futōkō and their lifestyle. Okuchi explained how

(f)or two years, I had been visiting different doctors, only to see that my son’s condition worsened. When he was critically ill, I met Dr Watanabe Takashi, who was working in the National Kōnodai Hospital, and I was told about the Kibō no kai (The Association of Hope), which was a parents’ association in the hospital. My son told Dr. Watanabe that he didn’t feel like himself whenever he went to school, but when he didn’t go to school he could be himself. The doctor told him that if it was so, there was the chance [of recovery by staying away from school]. My son met the doctor just once, and he was cured. This, however, was not in terms of so-called specialist treatment. Rather, it was through a new realization brought by Dr. Watanabe Takashi, that I had internalised the [value of] ‘school faith’, [which inadvertantly had cornered my son]. Each month, at the Kibō no kai, parents shared experiences and feelings. We learnt a lot from that and became a strong support for each other.

(Okuchi 1992: 40-41)

75 For background of Watanabe and his influence on citizens activism on futōkō, see discussion in Section 3.2.1 in Chapter Three, pp.3-4.
Okuchi described this encounter with Watanabe as one that removed the ‘scales from the family’s eyes’, for not only did the condition of her son begin to improve but also, for the first time, Okuchi and her husband came to realize that they had been ‘blinded’ by a deep-rooted ‘faith in school’ (gakkō shinkō) – a belief that had until then been virtually unchallenged (Asakura 1995:65; Okuchi 1992:41). Okuchi recalled that she gained tremendous support and benefits from the meetings with other parents. The self-help nature of this initiative was the cornerstone of futōkō activism when it was founded. Okuchi was convinced that only a change in perspective on the one hand – by discarding the deep-rooted ‘school faith’ – and a support network of parents on the other, could help futōkō children. Okuchi recounted the motives of her futōkō activism as follows.

Even today, I feel guilty about driving my children into a corner, and I wish to share my experience with as many people as possible so that no children will be ruined by the same mistakes and pain that we went through. This feeling underlies my activism from that point.

(Okuchi 1992:40-41)

The self-help style and support network of the Kibô no kai were subsequently reflected in the form of activism and the organizational structure of the futōkō SMGs. As illustrated in Section 4.1 in this chapter, the movement has adopted a loose form of network structure with the various Oya no Kai forming the building blocks. Participants in these Oya no Kai often came to know about these gatherings through their personal connections to people already involved. As researchers point out, ‘[personal] connections help them to overcome the innumerable obstacles and dilemmas that people usually face when considering whether to become active on a certain cause’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:131). Mother volunteers who help with the distribution of the FS are one example (as discussed in Sections 4.3.2). In addition, as pointed out earlier, ‘the amount and type of individual networks also affect the chances of people remaining active for a long time, or instead reducing their commitment, or cutting it altogether, after brief spells’ (p.131). The type of network Okuchi participated in and helped to develop is built on strong mutual support, open-hearted sharing, and trust. Participants very often develop a strong bond with each other that helps to sustain them.
In addition, Okuchi’s prior experience as a public school teacher for more than 22 years means that she is in a position to critique the issue of futōkō from an insider’s perspective. Her experience and knowledge of school education gives added persuasiveness to her change in perspective. At the same time, as illustrated in Sections 4.1 and 4.2, Okuchi and activists of the movement have been very careful to avoid the anti-school tag so that they do not drive away both apolitical and politically conservative parents, and other potential supporters. In fact, she is proactive in working with local boards of education.

The expansion of her leadership role in the movement is proof of her leadership ability. Okuchi’s roles in the futōkō movement include the following.76

- Representative Director of Tōkyō Shūre since 1985.
- Representative of Kangaerukai Network since 1990.
- Guest lecturer at Chiba University since 1997.
- Founding member of the FSS in 1998 and Representative Director of NPO Futōkō Shimbun since then.
- Director of NPO Child Line Support Centre since 1998.
- Founder of Shūre University, which was set up in 1999.
- Representative Director of NPO Free School National Network which was attested in 2001.
- Deputy Chairperson of Children and Parents Support Centre in Prefecture of Chiba since 2001.
- Executive Director of NPO Centre for Japanese Children from 2002 to 2005.
- Member of the ‘Committee to Review New Futōkō Measures’ in the Prefecture of Chiba since 2004, an initiative commissioned by MoE.
- Member of the ‘Committee to Review Futōkō Measures’ in North Ward, Tokyo since 2005.

- Chair of the board of directors of the Tōkyō Shūre Institute and chair of the Tōkyō Shūre Educational Foundation from 2006.
- From April, 2007, Okuchi will be the principal of the new school to be set up in Katsushika.

The multiple roles assumed by Okuchi indicate that she has ‘the ability to promote coalition work among movement organizations’ and ‘to establish connections to the media and political institutions, which in turn lead to operating de facto as [a] movement “representatives”’ (della Porta & Diani 2006:143). She leads as well as represents the futōkō SMOs before the public, the government and the mass media (more details on the movement’s use of media in Section 4.6). She is also skilful in working with political institutions, and has been representing futōkō citizens in MoE commissioned projects and committees, as listed above. In addition, one of Okuchi’s main strengths was the ability to write well. Okuchi has published numerous books, including 8 books as sole author and 10 books as co-author or co-editor.\(^77\)

Another indication of Okuchi’s successful leadership is that, under her leadership, the movement was able to establish linkages that benefit its development. Many such linkages have already been mentioned in Sections 4.2 and 4.3, including linkages established between futōkō SMOs and other social and institutional actors. Under her leadership, FS also enlisted the support of prominent individuals as their editorialists, including Ōta Takashi, who is an Emeritus Professor at Tokyo University and Honourable Chairman to the Association for the Protection of Children in Japan, and Ochiai Keiko who is a prominent female activist and writer. The way Ohta and Ochiai and many others help to frame and sustain the frame of the movement will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Okuchi is supported and aided by top intellectuals working in the fields of education and medicine, whose political and professional forcefulness and philosophical strength have given frame resonance and salience to the movement. Most of these supporters have been editorialists of the FS. They are pivotal frame articulators’ in the discursive aspect of movement framing.

\(^{77}\) Information of publications obtained from ‘amazon.co.jp’ and Tōkyō Shūre website:
In the processes of framing, frame articulators are ‘viewed as signifying agents actively engaging in the production and maintenance of meaning’ for other movement parties (Benford & Snow 2000:613). The resultant products of their framing activity are referred to as ‘collective action frames’. ‘Hypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator, and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings’ (2000:620, see also Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3). In futōkō activism, the key frame articulators include top educational and medical experts as well as experts and prominent figures in other fields.

Watanabe Takashi, who inspired Okuchi into futōkō activism (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1 in Section 4.4.1 above) is one of the key frame articulators following Okuchi. As a veteran child psychiatrist who has more than 50 years experience with futōkō children, Watanabe is one of the most credible experts who can challenge the hegemonic psychiatric diagnosis of futōkō. The success of the Kibō no kai is a testimony to the salience of his alternative interpretation. Although Watanabe was not involved directly in the movement started by Okuchi, who put into practice his diagnosis and prognosis, he is a continuing source of the movement’s alternative frame by offering his expertise as a consultant psychiatrist for the clients of Tōkyō Shūre.

In addition to Okuchi Keiko and Watanabe Takashi, the panel of FS editorialists best illustrate the credibility of futōkō frame articulators. Table 4.2 summarizes the background of FS editorial writers. From the first issue of the FS to FS 147 (1/6/2004), that is, the last issue before FS changed its name to Fonte and adjusted its approach, 19 editorialists wrote 138 editorials for the FS. Among this group of writers, there are two counsellors, two paediatricians, five academics, one school social worker, two lawyers, two commentators and journalists, one religionist, two professional writers, one night school teacher, and one teacher-turned futōkō activist (that is, Okuchi Keiko). Table 4.2 below also indicates that all except two of the 19
Editorialists have been on the editorial board of *FS*, and that eight out of the 19 editorialists have contributed at least 10 articles. Their consistent support of the newspaper has been crucial in the maintenance of the salience of the movement frame.

*FS* editorialists are all experienced in their respective fields of expertise, and many of them are well-known and influential individuals in society. This helps to create for *futōkō* activism a wide resonance for their alternative interpretive frame and action frame. A few examples will highlight the credibility of *futōkō* frame articulators.

Ochiai Keiko is a famous feminist writer, journalist, novelist, essayist, and lyricist. She had been a popular disc jockey (DJ) and later became a prolific writer. She has authored more than 140 books, and co-authored and translated a number of works. In 1976, she set up her own children’s bookstore called Crayon House. She has received numerous prestigious awards in Japan in recognition of her contribution to feminist and children’s literature, and for promoting the interests of women in Japan. She publishes a journal called *Kodomoron (Children's View)* and is editor of a magazine called *Women’s EYE*. She claims to represent the voice of the minority, and to focus on issues that concern them such as women’s issues, environmental issues and family issues. Her writings highlight the idea of ‘living true to yourself’, and she strongly supports lifestyle choice. She speaks on behalf of the socially weak, the aged, women, homosexuals, and *futōkō* students. She categorizes these people as ‘the others’ and identifies with them. Ochiai is also an editorialist for *Shūkan Kinyōbi (Friday Weekly)*, a weekly magazine known for its critical point of view.
Table 4.2 Backgrounds of FS editorialists and their involvements in the FS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of editorialist</th>
<th>Intellectual background</th>
<th>Number of FS editorials written (N=140)*</th>
<th>Involvement in the FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tada Hajime</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>11 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Co-founder and chief board member since 1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okuchi Keiko</td>
<td>Veteran public school teacher before founding Tōkyō Shūre.</td>
<td>9 (6.4%)</td>
<td>Co-founder and chief editorial board member since 1998.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamada Jun</td>
<td>Night school teacher</td>
<td>5 (3.6%)</td>
<td>Co-founder and ex-chief board member from 1998 to 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asaka Yūho</td>
<td>Disabled activist, counsellor</td>
<td>12 (8.6%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakabayashi Minoru</td>
<td>Paediatrician</td>
<td>11 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Ex-editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamashita Ézaburo</td>
<td>School social worker</td>
<td>11 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamada Sumio</td>
<td>University Lecturer (developmental psychology)</td>
<td>11 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uchida Ryōko</td>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>11 (7.9%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ozawa Makiko</td>
<td>University lecturer and clinical psychologist</td>
<td>10 (7.1%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsuda Genji</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>10 (7.1%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashizawa Shunsuke</td>
<td>Commentator (social issues)</td>
<td>9 (6.4%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honda Katsuichi</td>
<td>Journalist/writer</td>
<td>7 (5%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member (to 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ōta Takashi</td>
<td>Emeritus Professor</td>
<td>6 (4.3%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azumi Mana</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>6 (4.3%)</td>
<td>Editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ochiai Keiko</td>
<td>Feminist writer</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>Ex-editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okamura Tatsuo</td>
<td>University lecturer (educational administration)</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiro Sachiya</td>
<td>Expert in Buddhism</td>
<td>3 (2.1%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumazawa Makoto</td>
<td>University lecturer (work relationship)</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>Ex-editorial board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mori Hidetoshi</td>
<td>Paediatrician</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
<td>Ex-board member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There are 138 issues of FS in the data set, but 140 editorialists because the first editorial published on 1 May 1998 was written by the then three chief board members of the FS – Okuchi Keiko, Tada Hajime, and Yamada Jun. Information as of July 2007.
Also speaking from the perspective of ‘the others’ is renowned journalist Honda Katsuichi, also an editorialist for Shūkan Kinyoubi, as well as being an explorer and pharmacist. He was a war correspondent in Vietnam from 1966 through 1968, and worked at the AS (Asahi Shimbun) for many years. He is famous for pioneering ‘ethnographic journalism’, and for his patriotism toward Japan through severe criticism of Japanese society. He is the author of more than thirty works in Japanese, which include The Last Diary of the Soviet, and The Patriot and the Traitor. He wrote a series of articles on the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during World War II, including the Nanjing Massacre. He is also well known for his writings on the Ainu (an ethnic minority in Japan) and Japanese society. Some of his works are translated into the English language, for example, The Impoverished Spirit in Contemporary Japan: Selected essays of Honda Katsuichi (1993), and Harukor: An Ainu Woman’s Tale (2000). He writes from the perspective of ‘the controlled’ (Shihaisareru gawa) and ‘the others’ (the minorities).

As discussed earlier, the futōkō activists have drawn on the ‘human rights’ frame to support their framing. In this regard, Ōta Takashi plays an important role as a renowned professor and advocate of the rights of children. He has travelled all over Japan to give talks, and he has opened his home to teachers and parents to meet and exchange learning experiences. Ōta has authored and edited 30 books, mainly on the topic of education.

The counter-framing of futōkō by activists focuses on denouncing the medical point of view, and critiquing medical experts and counsellors. In this regard, the opinions of Wakabayashi Minoru, Asaka Yūho, Uchida Ryōko, and Ozawa Makiko play an important role in refining the diagnosis and prognosis of the futōkō movement. They are also among those who have contributed the largest number of articles to the editorial column (see Table 4.3). Wakabayashi is a paediatrician who has written books on futōkō and is a strong opponent of treating futōkō children from a medical and psychiatric perspective. Ozawa is a clinical psychologist who is active in educating the general public. Asaka is a counsellor who has an inherited bone deformity. Despite her disability, she has been an activist for the disabled since her

78 Honda Katsuichi’s ‘ethnographic journalism’ brings anthropological methods of fieldwork and participant observation to his coverage of the Vietnam War and aboriginal concerns in Canada and the United States.
At the age of 22, she chose to leave her parents and to lead an independent life. In 1983, she went to the USA and studied for half a year, bringing back to Japan the idea of peer counselling. Asaka is a representative for an ‘Independent Living Support Centre’ for the disabled and an NPO called ‘Link’, which is a program to raise funds to support schooling for poor children in the Philippines. She has written five books, four of them focusing on the theme of independent living for people with a disability. She also writes articles for journals on topics covering the concerns of the disabled, women, and peer counselling. Her own experience and background reinforces the self-help approach and alternative lifestyles she advocates for futōkō.

Also a famous counsellor, Uchida Ryōko runs a free school called Momo no heya. She is a highly-regarded expert on ‘children’s hearts’, that is, on children’s psychology and emotions. She is an adviser of a NHK radio program on child counselling, and frequently appears on television programs to talk about issues of childhood education. Her opinion contests those of mainstream psychiatrists who diagnosed futōkō as a problem of ‘children’s hearts’. The popularity and media exposure of Uchida enhances the public profile of the futōkō movement.

Yamashita Œzaburo works with children on a daily basis. Yamashita is one of the first school social workers in Japan. He is a member of the FS editorial board. He provides a counselling service at the Crayon House, a place for children established by Ochiai Keiko. He is known as one of those few counsellors who is able to put themselves in the shoes of children.

FS editorialists also include legal experts who are active in promoting the rights of children, such as Tsuda Genji and Tada Hajime. Tada is a core member of the movement, co-founder of FS and a chief board member of the newspaper since 1998. He is an expert in juvenile and family law, and was a prosecutor before he established his private practice. He is also a professor at the law school of Nanzan University, a university highlighting respect for mankind. Tada has published books in his area of expertise. He maintains a high profile in the area of child protection. He is an executive member of the network for the prevention of child abuse in the prefecture of Aichi, holds the chair of the Nagoya Kangaerukai (one of the Oya no Kai), and has represented victims of child abuse. Like Okuchi, Tada was motivated
to speak for futōkō children by the futōkō experience of his eldest son, and such personal experience and background enhances the persuasiveness of his discourse in the FS. 79

Another legal expert, Tsuda Genji, is also outspoken and helps to educate the public to re-think matters regarding education from a more child-centred perspective. Tsuda is an attorney who specializes in child welfare law. He is member of the drafting committee for the Japan National Coalition Group of NGOs and Citizens for Preparing the Alternative Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NCNAR). Tsuda has played an important role in raising public awareness of the deprived state of childhood in Japan, which he attributes to the post-war education system. He is the founder of a national network focusing on the impact of the Basic Law of Education on children. Tsuda has pointed out that

(e)ven since the Meiji Era, Japan’s educational system has been designed to strengthen the nation-state. The emphasis has been on producing people who can help Japan to become a great power…. The inertia to the status quo has preserved this antiquated system, embedding it deeply in the social psyche.80

The way Tsuda frames the state of education and child welfare in Japan invokes a sense of urgency that people should rethink the implication of the educational system for futōkō children. In social movement terms, this is motivational framing (Benford & Snow 2000:617), encouraging urgent mobilization of the public to support proposed changes. The legal expertise of Tada and Tsuda helps to bridge the movement frame with that of the master frame of human rights, and lends it a kind of universality and professionalism that differentiate the movement frame from anti-establishment movements which might drive away conservative and apolitical supporters. Their presence and those of other editorialists enhances the credibility, breadth and depth of the movement frame.

In the social psychology of communication theory, it is a well-established fact that speakers who are regarded as more credible are generally more convincing. The

expertise of futōkō frame articulators allows them to create a persuasive antithesis to the deep-rooted faith in school held by Japanese society, and a powerful critique of its associated values about the worth of an individual based on socio-economic status. These beliefs and values are articulated as contributing factors to futōkō. In fact, FS editorialists also see these beliefs and values as the cause of social problems in general (there is more on this in Chapter 5). As each of the editorialists draws on his or her professional knowledge in the framing of futōkō and child-related issues, the resultant frame gains both depth – in terms of their professionalism in their area of expertise, and breadth – in terms of the variety of issues and topics they introduce into the futōkō discourse. What has emerged is a collective action frame, not just about futōkō children, but also about young people, juvenile delinquents, the aged, disabled, women, victims, the weak, and those unskilled by the standards of the mainstream society which highlights the importance of academic achievement (Figure 4.2). These people can be categorized as what Ochiai called ‘the others’. In Figure 4.2, each space represents a speaking position, and the names in brackets are examples of editorialists who speak from that particular position or for that particular group of people. The spaces overlap each other to indicate that the various fields of discourse share some common concerns and values in their understanding of futōkō and other social issues. For instance, Asaka who speaks for the disabled and Tsuda who speaks for juvenile delinquents adopt the human rights frame to support their claims. At the centre of the figure are the futōkō children, indicating that all frame articulators are aligned by their concern for futōkō. The discursive aspect of the reframing of futōkō by FS editorialists will be detailed in Chapter 5.
4.6 Conclusion

Overall, the futōkō SMOs are able to show potential adherents that joining the movement can enhance their personal identity. Getting futōkō children involved in collaborative projects, for instance, helps them to liberate themselves from the stigma that ‘futōkō is an illness’, ‘futōkō children are no good’, and to experience the fact that ‘there are lots of things one can only do when one is tōkōkyohi’ (tōkōkyohi o shiteinakereba dekinai koto ga yamahodo aru to omou). Thus many children begin to accept the identity of ‘one who is not going to school’ in a positive light (Asakura 1995:164). Asakura argues that this change is evident. Tōkyō Shūre children who identify themselves in this category were mostly those under 15, which is the normal age of entering senior high school. They made up three quarters of the Tōkyō Shūre student membership.

Fig. 4.2 Discursive aspects of the futōkō movement frame.
One of the 14 year-old members wrote the following in a composition:

At the moment, I am enjoying my tōkōkyohi life. There are as many things one can only do in that state of tōkōkyohi as one can only do when going to school. By trying out and experiencing different things I am in fact ‘leading a good life’. For instance, in Shure, I have been the chair and member of the executive committee for activities like the summer camp and Christmas party. Although there were things like ‘responsibilities’ (sekinin), ‘discipline’ (kejime), and ‘exhaustion’ (hirō) involved in all these, I felt great when I overcame these hurdles … While trying out different things, I get a sense of fulfillment. I also began to discover my aspiration, things I want to try and my areas of interests…

The futōkō network, at the same time, has illustrated that framing and identity construction are two key aspects that condition mobilization. As Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) maintain:

(f)raming and identity construction processes condition micro and mesomobilization activities. For movement participants, frame and identities are part of an obdurate “reality” that conditions, constrains, and enables collective action (see Blumer 1969). That is, SMO actors follow certain lines of collective action rather than others based, in part, on their perceptions of the parameters implied by particular framing and identity constructions.

(p.203-4).

Through strategic framing and identity construction, futōkō movement activists have attended to both the micro and mesomobilization activities, that is, mobilization of direct participation, and mobilization of organizational/financial resources respectively. There are other factors that can constrain the interpretive work and are beyond the control of a movement, such as history, social structures and cultural arrangements. However, as Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994) maintain, framing is still a key factor that conditions the development of a collective action frame. They claim that

81 Translated from the writing of a 14 year old boy in issue 69 of the Tōkyō Shūre Newsletter, 1992.
(h)ow these “realities” condition interpretive work, however, depends on how SMO actors’ perceive history, social structures, and cultural arrangements. Particular lines of collective action emerge or fail to emerge not because objective conditions allow or prohibit them, but rather because SMO actors perceive “objective” conditions as allowing or prohibiting them … In short, to understand the emergence of particular expressions of collective action, analysts need to attend to SMO actors’ intersubjective definitions of “reality.”

(p.204)

Indeed, with the change in the social and political environment in Japan that favours the rise of NPOs, ongoing maintenance of resonant and salient framing is more important than ever in the continual mobilization of organizational and financial resources. This, in turn, underlies the important role of activists – as a human resource – in the framing of futōkō. Movement leaders and frame articulators, and their sophistication in utilizing various media to disseminate the alternative futōkō frame, are crucial factors in accounting for the expansion of the movement and its mobilizing structures.
Chapter Five

The *Futōkō Shimbun* – A Content Analysis

5.1 The alternative voice for *futōkō*

The *FS* is the only newspaper in Japan that focuses specifically, but not exclusively, on the issue of *futōkō*. It discusses current issues that concern primarily young people and children. These include social phenomena like *hikikomori*, education reform, juvenile delinquency, family violence, youth problems like suicide, and issues concerning the rights of children. It also covers interviews with renowned figures in Japanese society, and stories of, and by, young people who are or have been *futōkō* students. Subscriptions to the newspaper have also risen between 1998 and 2002 when the number of *futōkō* students was continually increasing (see Figure 1.1). Yamashita Kōhei, a member of staff at the *FS* Osaka editorial office, ascribes the popularity of *FS* to the interpretive aspect of the newspaper. He says that

(a) as a Non Profit Organisation newspaper, our newspaper sales rapidly increased to 6000 copies. In 1998, the number of refugees from compulsory education was more than 100,000 children. Then more people paid attention to the issue of school refusal. We speak out about our understanding of school refusal. We don't think school-refusing children are wrong. We advocate growing up outside of the school system. In this situation, our perspective is greatly appreciated.82

The message from Yamashita reflects what McAdam *et al.* call ‘the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world

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82 Email to the author from Yamashita Kōhei, received on 28 October 2004.
and of themselves that legitimize and motivate collective action’ (McAdam et al. 1996:6). The editorials of the FS play a key role in this ‘conscious strategic effort’.

5.2 The Futōkō Shimbun editorials

As the major opinion piece of the newspaper, the FS editorial column is central to understanding the alternative frame of futōkō. A content analysis of the FS editorials demonstrates that the FS editorial discourse has opened up the discursive field of futōkō, formerly dominated by medical experts and the government. The FS editorialists challenge not only the hegemonic framing of futōkō, but also the values and beliefs underlying futōkō related issues. Through their critiques, FS editorialists proffer cognitive structures – that is, frames – to readers which guide their perception and representation of the reality surrounding futōkō. The FS cognitive frames regarding futōkō are that:

- the hegemonic discourse on futōkō (i.e. psychiatric and behavioural discourses) wrongly interprets the issue of futōkō and futōkō children;
- the roots of futōkō are fundamental problems in the current school/education, and the wider social system;
- the mainstream approach has a general misconception about the personality, capability and potentiality of futōkō children, and young people in general, owing to the lack of a child-centred perspective;
- futōkō citizens have to act collectively to rectify the misconceptions about futōkō and create a new culture focusing on the lessons they have learnt from futōkō, and to re-evaluate mainstream beliefs and values that frame public understanding of the relationship between society and individuals.

These shared understandings have been classified into three main categories of issues covered in FS editorials (see Table 5.1): school/education, the wider social system and a child-centred perspective. One hundred and thirty eight FS editorials published over a period of 6 years between May 1998 and June 2004 are analysed. This time period is of particular significance for two reasons. First, as mentioned above, the
number of futōkō students experienced steady and continual growth over this period of time, exceeding the psychological barrier of 100,000 in 1998, and reaching an historical high of 138,722 in 2002. Also in 1998 MoE replaced the official category ‘dislike of school’ with ‘futōkō’ to a change of understanding to what the movement contributed (see discussions in Chapter 6).

Second, the futōkō movement became increasingly organized and sophisticated during this period. The FS was established at the height of the futōkō movement as a means to disseminate the movement’s messages. In June, 2004, the FS changed its name to Fonte. It is to be noted that there was a nominal decline in the number of futōkō students from 2003, which could have affected the change in name and the shift in focus of the movement’s newspaper (see Chapter 1, Fig. 1.1, and discussions in Section 1.2). Fonte has a different lay-out and format, and is more compact in size than FS, while the number of pages remains basically the same (6 pages). The position of the logo and name of the newspaper is changed from the conventional position on Japanese newspapers, which is at the top left hand corner, to the top right hand corner of the newspaper. Unlike the FS, the editorial in Fonte is on the second page of the newspaper, and does not appear in every issue — a change that seems to reflect an adjustment in the direction of the movement in response to changes over time surrounding the reality of futōkō (see discussions in Chapter 6). As Figure 5.1 shows, under the name of the newspaper, activists were able to explain its name change as follows:

Fonte is a Latin word, meaning, ‘from the source’. The newspaper extends its concerns from futōkō to issues concerning the wider population of children; issues including children’s rights, hikikomori, and other current social issues affecting society. Hence, from June 2006, the name is changed to Fonte.

(Fonte 153, 1/9/2007)

The front page layout of Fonte has also been adjusted to the change in focus. As shown in the image below, Fonte looks more like a community newspaper than did the FS, which resembles mainstream newspapers. The new look highlights the role of Fonte as a community force for change that has evolved from futōkō activism. Considering the achievements of the movement, especially of its SMOs like Tōkyō Shure (see discussions in Chapter 6), the year 2004 concludes one stage in the
development of the alternative futōkō discourse. This thesis thus chooses to end the survey period at the last issue of the FS before its name change.

NOTE: This figure is included on page 144 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Fig. 5.1 First page of the new futōkō newspaper Fonte.
5.3 The analysis

*FS* editorials are concerned with three crucial aspects of society that have had a significant impact on the way in which the issue of futōkō, futōkō individuals, and individuals in general are treated. The content of editorials can be categorised into three groups as shown in Table 5.1. They are:

- school/education – that futōkō and children are not the source of problems, but schools and society are;
- the wider social system – that the wider social system, its associated values and beliefs are at fault; and
- the child-centred perspective – that the individuality of the child should be given space to stretch.

The three groupings represent the major groups of topics discussed in the *FS* editorials. Each group is divided into a number of sub-groups which carries a number of themes as shown in Table 5.1. The percentages of distribution (the column on the right) is worked out by dividing the number of editorials in each group and sub-group by the total number of editorials, that is 140, which appeared between 1998 to 2004. These themes are chosen because they are thought to best represent how the alternative frame of futōkō is constructed. They illustrate the fundamental ideas and the core values that are of ideological as well as strategic significance underlying the framing of the futōkō movement. In the content analysis, it was found that some editorials carry more than one theme; thus the same article may be used to illustrate different themes. This analysis starts with a discussion of the categories, and a detailed examination of each theme is given in the subsequent sections.

The multiple themes, as shown in Table 5.1, at the same time suggest that the futōkō movement frame incorporates more than one master frame. This complements the analysis in Chapters 3 and 4, in that the nature of the linkages, networks, structures, leadership, and frame articulators of the movement suggests that there are the rights frame, the environmental frame, the choice frame, the injustice frame, and the so-called ‘return to democracy frame’ (Noonan 1995).
Table 5.1 Categorization, themes and distribution of 140 FS editorials between May 1998 and June 2004 (percentage of total articles in which issue is featured).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Topics/Themes</th>
<th>Distribution out of 100% (N=140)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>School/Education</td>
<td>52.1% (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-group 1</td>
<td>Futōkō and futōkō citizens’ support</td>
<td>24.2% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Futōkō is not a problem, society is the problem (meritocratic society)—identification of adversary frame and introduction of agency frame for FS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Children are not the problem, school is the problem (school absolutism)—identification of adversary frame and reinforcement of agency frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The life theme – life is more important than school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Futōkō is the right of children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Social change as the solution (justification of futōkō activism)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-group 2</td>
<td>Education system/policies</td>
<td>27.9% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. The demand for conformity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Kokoro no kyōiku (education of the mind and heart)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>Wider Social System</td>
<td>30% (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-group 1</td>
<td>Legal rights and individual rights</td>
<td>11.4% (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. The juvenile accountability frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Shonen kan (the perception of adolescents)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Rehabilitation and symbiotic relationship between juvenile offenders and society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-group 2</td>
<td>Role of family and media in propagating social beliefs</td>
<td>14.3% (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Education-focused family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Role of the media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-group 3</td>
<td>Medical/expert perspectives</td>
<td>4.3% (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Internal critique of expert perspective by experts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Personal experiences versus expert opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Role of counsellors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>Child-centred Perspective</td>
<td>17.9% (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Being an individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Role of school in repressing the self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The construction of children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1 Group 1: School and the education system

Group 1 articles illustrate what FS editorialists think are problematic with the school and the education system that contributes to the problem of futōkō. These articles have a specific reference to the examination-oriented system, and the negligence of emotional health and character development in individual students. They articulate a diagnosis of and a prognosis for futōkō and other school-related issues. This group is
the largest group of topics in the editorials reviewed, making up over half (52.1%) of the total number of articles analysed. The two sub-groups in Group 1 are more or less evenly divided between the reasons for, and the explanations of, futōkō and futōkō citizens’ support (24.2%), and a critique of the education system/policies (27.9%). This proportion, on the one hand, suggests an emphasis in FS on the role and institutional structure played in the framing of futōkō, the central claim in the citizens’ discourse as discussed in Chapter 1, while on the other hand it brings forth the themes underlying such a claim, themes that have been accentuated and refined by editorialists over years and which have contributed to the enhancement of the citizens’ discourse developed since 1984.

5.3.1.1 Sub-group 1: the reasons for, and explanations of, futōkō and futōkō citizens’ support

Sub-group 1 contains articles presenting the diagnosis of and the prognosis for futōkō. Their frames of understanding challenge the hegemonic one and present school and the education system as adversaries to futōkō children. In doing so, they frame futōkō citizens as agents of social change and justify their activism. There are five themes that underlie futōkō activism.

Theme 1: futōkō is not a problem; society is the problem

In the hegemonic discourse, futōkō has been perceived as a ‘problem’ and futōkō children are sick children. However, editorialists argue that futōkō reflects not the problem of the individual student but problems of the school and society. In the inaugural issue of the FS, leading futōkō activist Okuchi Keiko stated that

(1)the futōkō of young people is just an instinctive response…. In other words, futōkō itself is not a problem, but the problem lies in society which makes futōkō a problem.

If we see school as the only place to bring up children, we are actually cornering children and causing them to suffer. In this meritocratic society, we are used to seeing the system (seido), common sense (jōshiki), and widely supported principles and practices as more important than life itself.
Confronting futōkō has corrected our thinking. We have learnt a lot from futōkō.

(FS 1, 01/05/1998)

In saying this, Okuchi was trying to legitimise futōkō as normal, and present futōkō as a challenge to society and its associated values. This creates a niche for the FS in the discourse arena of futōkō, and a rationale for activists to engage in collective action. FS was assigned the strategic role of clarifying the misunderstandings and correcting the misconceptions which society has long harboured towards futōkō children.

Building on 20 years of experience, the Futōkō Shimbun came into being today. The feeling is so complicated…. As a non-profit making citizen activity, [the Futōkō Shimbun] brings children and parents into the focus of attention, and is made up mainly of ‘tōjisha’ (the person who is directly concerned). It is hoped that it will become a nation-wide medium, and create a space for the enlargement for national networks like the Association of Parents (Oya no Kai). It is hoped that over time, as those who have futōkō experience charted their own life course, they can actually show people that ‘there is nothing to fear about futōkō’.

(FS 1, 01/05/1998)

As such, the FS assumes the role of bringing about social change by creating a new culture through lessons which futōkō citizens learnt from futōkō. Okuchi therefore asserts that

… we want this newspaper to be a source of relief to those who have been isolated and are suffering. We are looking forward to seeing this newspaper dispel prejudice and discrimination [against futōkō], and to create a culture and society that attaches importance to individual lives.

(FS 1, 01/05/1998)

FS presents futōkō as a challenge against a society in which the system (seido), common sense (jōshiki), and academic credentialism (gakureki shakai) rather than life (seimei) itself, are regarded as life’s priorities (FS 1, 33). It framed futōkō as an
important life experience for the individual child. It is described as a thought-provoking, life-enriching experience, and as important as going to school, as it argues that school is not the only place in which children can be brought up (‘kodomo ga sodatsu no wa gakkō dake dewanai’) (FS 1). FS discourse challenges the legitimacy of academic credentialism underlying the hegemonic discourse that futōkō is a problem of children. It thus shifts the focus of ‘problem’ from the individual onto society. Editorialists not only perceive the broad entity of society as the source of the problem, but also, more specifically, believe that school is largely responsible for futōkō.

Theme 2: children are not the problem; school is the problem

The FS is particularly blatant in its criticism of ‘school absolutism’ – the general belief that ‘no matter the circumstances, [children] should not stop going to school; children who do not go to school are no good’ (FS 33, 01/09/1999). Okuchi believes that what is problematic about the official interpretation of futōkō and measures to bring children back to school is the unquestioned assumption that the ‘school [system] is perfect and that it is natural to go to school’, which she argues is dubious in the face of the reality that in school there is no respect for life and the developmental needs of students are not attended to (FS 57, 01/09/2000). In the majority of FS editorials, school is framed as a hostile, obsolete entity, and an adversary to children. Okuchi contends that, by contrast

(i)n this age, the value system has become individualized and diversified. MoE should, therefore, give up without delay the ideal of ‘school absolutism’ and measures aiming at driving all children back to school as though they are an undifferentiated mass.

(FS 57, 01/09/2000)

In a similar vein, Wakabayashi Minoru, a paediatrician, criticizes the mentality of linking school with personal happiness, claiming that ‘it is problematic to link not

83 Others who have spoken from a student-centred perspective include, for instance, Asakura (1995), Ishikawa et al. (1993), Kodomotachi (1991), Yokoyu (1992), and Watanabe Takashi (1992). Many of them also argue that futōkō is a positive personal experience which facilitates personality development and inspires creativity.
Counsellor Uchida Ryōko maintains that schools fail to change and adjust to a changing reality.

In short, if schools remain unchanged, futōkō children who have agonizing school experiences will not go back to school. Furthermore, there is a possibility that those who are still going to school will one day run away from school too.

(FS 11, 01/10/1998)

To counter-frame the notion of ‘school absolutism’, FS editorialists invoked the rights frame. For instance, Uchida maintains that:

(i)t is urgent to carry out a social transformation which brings children a kind of citizens’ right to enable them to grow up outside school and survive in Japanese society.

(FS 11, 01/10/1998)

Two particular incidents mentioned by Hamada Sumio further question the value of the school system. Both were related to complaints made by parents on behalf of students. In one case, a school boy committed suicide and his father believed that the cause of death was ijime (bullying). However, the school in question refused to investigate the complaint made by the father. In another case, a number of parents complained to the principal that their children had been sexually harassed by a teacher. Among those parents, there were reporters working in the media. In order to avoid negative media attention and to calm angry parents, the principal forced the teacher to sign a letter of apology to parents for things he claimed he had not done. The teacher was eventually laid off by the school, but appealed for reappointment (FS 45, 01/03/2000).

What struck Hamada was that first, in the whole incident, the voice of children were never heard (kodomo tachi kara chokusetsu niwa issai jijō o kiiteinashi). Second, he suspected that schools often did not carry out thorough investigations and might have made scapegoats of innocent people in order to pacify parents. Examples like these reinforce the negative image of school as a place where children's voices are not
heard and the truth is distorted. Arguments like these reinforce the image of schools as static, authoritarian, and resisting change.

To FS editorialists, under the existing school system, it is *children for schools* rather than *schools for children*. School absolutism also manifests itself in the way teachers present themselves. According to Ōta Takashi, teachers often appear to be perfect (*kanzen*) and holy (*sēshoku*) before students. He says that

(i)ndividual human beings are all different from one another. Besides, no one is perfect…. When imperfect individual human beings put together their knowledge to create a new country, this is called a democracy. The sovereign is also imperfect. It has been more than 50 years since the creation of democratic governance in Japan. However, parents and teachers still put on a perfect image before children….

(FS 6, 15/07/1998)

Ohta asks readers to evaluate critically what people used to believe about teachers and schools. To further demonstrate that school has lost its meaning to students, an FS editorial cited the result of a survey indicating that 65.2% of high school students in Japan believe that ‘school students are free to play truant’ (*zuruyasumi o suru nowa honnin no jiyuu da*) (FS 5, 01/07/1998).

So far, the majority of editorial writers discussed share a congruent view of *futōkō*. They blame the mainstream education system and criticize its rigidity and incapability of responding to problems. They see FS as an agent of change through which *futōkō* is reframed as resistance against school authority, as a right and a choice of children.

*Internal contest of futōkō frames*

One contributor to the editorial, Kumazawa Makoto, has expressed a different view of the issue. Kumazawa is a very prominent and respected left-wing scholar, and his point of view may be representative of a wider constituency of opinion on the left. Instead of dismissing the role and value of schooling, he looks at schools in a positive light and affirms the value of schooling.
For young people who are born in ordinary families and do ordinary jobs like factory workers, drivers, shop assistants, and receptionists, the role of school certainly cannot be denied.

(*FS* 1, 01/05/1998)

Kumazawa looks at futōkō from a macro-economic perspective, integrating concepts of workforce and labour relations, which is his area of expertise, into his arguments. While he agrees that ‘futōkō is the absolute right of children’ (*FS* 15, 01/12/1998), he maintains a more traditional left-wong view and perceives the importance of school education in particular for futōkō young people – for school education is beneficial by providing them with fundamental knowledge and social skills that they need in order to become independent and to be able to contribute to the workforce. Kumazawa says:

School is a place where young people, including students from very ordinary families, are given the opportunity to learn many different topics. This helps them to develop their sensitivity …

One of the possible roles of schools is that they provide equal opportunities to individual students to broaden their cultural horizons, opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible to those from a disadvantaged background…. Another function of schools is that…they are places where young people can develop their socializing skills…. From this point of view, going to school is a valuable experience. Instead of retreating to their own shell, children at school learn to ask, express, discuss, and to seek consensus amid differences. I wonder how many teachers today expect to see students develop such abilities? Teachers may not think too much of the future of students after they graduate. Nevertheless, even without thinking about this, life at school can be a kind of vocational education for students.

For young people who gain certain kinds of skills which allow them to go into a particular vocation, who learn to run their family businesses so that they can eventually take them over from their parents, or who can share their opinions in an open-hearted conversation with friends on issues and news happening around them, there is no particular problem with futōkō. What makes futōkō a
‘problem’ is when quite a number of young people are rejected by schools; then these people will involuntarily be alienated from the opportunities provided by schools as mentioned above, like the development of skills to live on a simple job, the chance to be exposed to and enjoy different cultures, and to develop one’s language, and social skills.

It is recommended that the ‘Futōkō Shimbun’ should explore the possibilities of schools and teachers for their improvement, and hence always be prepared to look at the reality critically.

(FS 15, 01/12/1998)

As Kumazawa’s reformist view was not congruent with Okuchi’s view of futōkō, she, as the chief board member of the newspaper, issued a prompt response in the ‘kagaribi’ (‘The Beacon’) column in the issue that followed (FS 16). The ‘bonfire’ column is penned by the three chief board members of FS, and is representative of the central position of FS. Okuchi responded as follows.

Based on the common concern of upholding children’s human rights … (w)hat Dr. Kumazawa said must have aroused lots of discussion. Probably he just did not want readers to be shocked by thinking that it is no good not going to school. My opinion on the editorial by Dr. Kumazawa is that I do not denounce the function of schools, and I agree that the possibilities of schools should be further explored. However, what I do not agree with is his negative statement about futōkō when he said that futōkō alienates children from school. This is not acceptable, is it? That will make society continue to reject futōkō children. Isn’t it necessary to think from the viewpoint of the person who keeps a distance from school?

Now, it is high time to acknowledge the decision [of children who] choose not to go to school in the same way as those who go to school, isn’t it?

(FS 16, 15/12/1998)

The response by Okuchi shows an internal contest over framing in the FS discourse. To put it another way, Okuchi wants to normalize and legitimize futōkō in the same way as going to school is considered absolutely normal and necessary. No matter how good a school is, futōkō is a personal choice and should be respected. In the
words of Giddens (1989), Okuchi considers *FS* an expression of a collective attempt to ‘further common interests [of children] through collaborative action outside the sphere of established institutions’ (Giddens 1989:630). Any incongruent voice such as Kumazawa’s is promptly ‘corrected’ in order to maintain the frame consistency of *FS*. In fact, Kumazawa only appeared once in the editorials reviewed.

Another example of the *internal contest over framing* is Yamada Jun, an ex-chief board member and a veteran night school teacher who believes in opportunities offered by night schools for futōkō students and others. In an editorial commenting on the closing down of five night schools by the local government in the city of Yokohama, Yamada says that

[night school] is one of the options for futōkō children after they leave junior high schools….

‘Stop switching off the lights of night schools’ is not a kind of nostalgic movement that aims at preserving the past. Isn’t it better to explore the potential of existing night schools? [The fadeout of night schools] should not be regarded as an inevitable development. It would be worth finding out the positive meaning of why people chose night school, wouldn’t it? I remember that in a staff meeting 24 years ago how I was touched and moved by each night school student, who nonetheless has as full a human value [as any mainstream school student].

(*FS* 68, 15/02/2001)

Yamada stresses that night school is a valuable and an indispensable option for young people, including futōkō students.

This year, I am the class teacher for first year students. It has been a long time since the last time I was a class teacher. There are 28 students in my class, actually nearly half of them were either futōkō students when they were in their primary or junior high schools, or were transferred from full-time high schools….

(*FS* 68, 15/02/2001)
There is a strong democratic ideal behind Yamada’s education discourse – not only that all individual members of society should be treated equally, but also that all educational institutes, including existing schools, should also be treated equally. He saw that behind night schools is an idea of respect for individuals who use their free time to study. Yamada has been teaching in night schools since he was 29 and has witnessed how part-time schools have been a valuable alternative for futōkō children and others. In other words, Kumazawa and Yamada are both trying to seek the good in the existing system while most of the editorialists do not put their hope in schools to change. Yamada resigned from the position of chief editor of the FS in 2002, though he continued to contribute occasional articles to the newspaper. While the reason for his resignation is not clear, his departure may imply that, in the tension between unconditionally supporting futōkō children and seeking reforms in the regular education system, the former position triumphed within the citizens’ discourse.

**Theme 3: the value of life**

The third theme in sub-group 1 illustrates the supreme importance of life over school. For instance, in FS 33, Okuchi highlights the agony and struggle of futōkō children through the use of emotion-laden words such as naiatsu (internal pressure), kutsū (agony), zetsubō (despair), puresshā (pressure), taihen omoi (exceedingly heavy) etc. The use of physics terminology, such as naiatsu (internal pressure), to describe the emotional state of children exemplifies an appropriation of vocabularies. This is one of the tactics employed in social movements to provide ‘adherents with compelling accounts’ and rationales for engaging in ameliorative collective action and for sustaining their participation (Benford & Snow 2000:617). The construction and adoption of vocabularies of motive is one of the core framing tasks identified in the literature on framing. This task entails the development of what Gamson (1995) refers to as the ‘agency’ component of collective action frames.

Benford (1993a), in his study of the US nuclear disarmament movement, identified four generic vocabularies of motive that emerged in the course of interaction among parties involved. They are vocabularies of severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. In FS, Okuchi uses vocabularies of severity to give readers a ‘compelling account’ of
the suffering of futōkō students and in so doing, generates an adversarial frame against schools which justifies ‘rescue’ actions by futōkō activists. Her arguments tend to trivialise or even overlook the role and importance of school and magnify the agony of children in their struggle to go to school.

Compared to school, life is more important; compared to school, children’ kokoro (the heart and the mind) is more important.

*(FS 33, 01/09/1999)*

Stories revealing that school is a threat to the lives of students are used to illustrate this claim. Okuchi quotes an incident that happened on 1 September 1997, the first day of the second school term. A group of high school boys set the school stadium on fire. When being interrogated by the police, they told the police that: ‘We think that if we burn down the school, then we do not have to go to school’ *(FS 33, 01/09/1999)*. The incident, in a way, lends support to claims by editorialists like Wakabayashi Minoru that

(t)he act of futōkō is probably a means of self-defence to protect life, which is more important than anything else.

*(FS 14, 15/11/1998)*

What editorialists argue for is the ultimate importance of the value of life over that of the school, and of the rights of children in making decisions for themselves, including going to school.

**Theme 4: futōkō and education are the rights of children**

In FS editorials, the institutional system is often depicted as an adversary, a threat to children’s rights and wellbeing. The constitutional rights of children are often invoked to support this framing. In FS 33 (01/09/1999), for instance, Okuchi argues that

(from the point of view of the Basic Law of Education, education is the right of children. Children are not obliged to go to school. The obligation of
compulsory education (*gimu kyoiku no gimu*) refers to the obligation of adults to provide education for children.

(*FS 33, 01/09/1999*)

*FS* editorialists argue that if education is for the sake of children, it should not be confined to school education, but varieties and alternatives should be provided in order to cater for the different needs of individual children (*FS 33, 01/09/1999*). In *FS 25* (01/05/1999), Tada Hajime (a former judge and a board member of *FS*) contends that in the area of education, the government has actually ignored the advice of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and thus abused the rights of children on the issue of *futōkō*. He maintains that

(1)he education system in Japan is highly competitive, and this has adversely impacted on the physical and mental health of the child. With reference to the following clauses stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child: clause three (the best interests of the child), clause 6 (the rights to live, to grow, and to develop), clause 12 (the right to express opinions), clause 29 (the right to education), clause 31 (the rights to rest and play etc.), the Committee advised that the government ‘take appropriate measures to prevent putting too much pressure on children and *futōkō*’.

According to the clauses quoted… ‘to prevent *futōkō*’ should be understood as securing places outside of schools for children to learn and to play in order to release their stress…..

The number of *futōkō* children has been increasing these past five years, and is now over 105,000, according to the survey conducted by MoE. This makes it plain that measures aimed at getting children back to school are ineffective. One of the things we need now is to make sure that there are places for children who do not go to school. Government measures like the ‘Schooling Support Programme’ (SSP) do not work as they aim to get children ‘back to school’. From this point of view, the government’s school-oriented point of view is going in the opposite direction from the advice of the Committee and is losing sight of the nature of the problem.

(*FS 25, 01/05/1999*)

Okuchi also criticizes MoE from the same perspective. She points out that
(t)here is virtually no measure [introduced by MoE] which has the rights of futōkō children in mind.

*(FS 57, 01/09/2000)*

By contrast, the role of FS as a movement agent to protect children’s rights (*kodomo no kenri o mamorōtosuru shimin no undō*) is reiterated. Tada maintains that

*...*citizens’ movements for the protection of the rights of children are thriving…. To be sure, the rights of children should first be realized by children themselves and through partnership with adults who are close to children, and then supported by legislative and administrative measures. In this regard, I would like to see the *Zenkoku Futōkō Shimbunsha* (the National School Non-attendance Newspaper Company) become a useful medium that helps children, and that its activities further expand, including the building up of a supportive network to help children to achieve independence.

*(FS 25, 01/05/1999)*

By framing education as the right of children rather than the obligation of children, editorialists legitimise futōkō. By framing the institutional system as an adversary to children, they also highlight in readers’ minds doubts regarding the sincerity of the establishment to improve the situation of futōkō children.

**Theme 5: social change as the solution**

This theme can be understood in the light of the four themes discussed so far. Themes 1 to 4 outline the raison d’être regarding futōkō, thereby justifying the need for social change. *FS* claims that it assumes a specific role in bringing about change. It states that

*...*e are looking forward to seeing this newspaper dispel prejudice and discrimination [against futōkō], to relieve the loneliness and agony of children, and to create a culture and society that attaches importance to individual lives. We are looking forward to seeing this newspaper having a bright future.

*(FS 1, 01/05/1998)*
In justifying their prognosis, *FS* editorials highlight the incapacity of schools to understand the nature of *futōkō*, and hence persuade readers to act collectively outside the existing system to create a congenial environment for *futōkō* children. Nevertheless, there is also a resistance to change in society, as many in society still believe that giving up school means giving up life. Wakabayashi writes that

(o)ur view regarding *futōkō* is still met with strange and disapproving gazes from the world….

Hence, it is the mission of this newspaper and others to tell the world to rectify such misunderstanding and prejudice….

It can be imagined that adults who support *futōkō* children will be fighting against what the world called 'common sense'. Like the light at the end of a tunnel, this newspaper is here to offer these people strong support.

(*FS* 44, 15/02/2000)

To overcome the resistance to change, *FS* encourages families to share and publish their experiences. Wakabayashi says that

(c)onfronting children with *futōkō* can be very difficult… Instead, we should tell families to recognize *futōkō*. They should be able to find lots of people who share the same experience. They can gather these shared experiences and compile them into volumes and publish them. In this way, ties between families can be strengthened.

(*FS* 27, 01/06/1999)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, *FSS* has published books on the shared experiences of parents, for example *Things Parents Can Do* (*Oya ni Dekiru Kototte?*) (2003), and *What These People Say About Futōkō* (*Kono Hito Ga Kataru Futōkō*) (2002). Together with other aspects of the movement discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, publicising the issue represents the efforts of *futōkō* activists to mobilize the wider society to social change. The role of *FS* is to promote the movement in an articulated form. Editorialists such as Asaka Yūho, for instance, challenge *futōkō* young people to create new values in society (‘*atarashii kachikan o shakai ni tsukuri dashiteiru*’), and to envisage their dream world, dream society and their ideal education system
('wakai hito tachi ni totte donna sekai ga, donna shakai ga hoshii no ka’). In short, young people are challenged to choose their own way of living ('jibun no ikitai jinsei o erabu'). She criticizes the existing education system as one that enforces conformity ('kyō no kyōiku no naka kara oshitsukerareru fukujū ya jūjun…') and fails to encourage critical thinking (shikōryoku) and vitality (kōdōryoku). She likens futōkō children to the handicapped like herself, who are treated as people flicked out by the existing system (hajikidasareta hito). Hence, according to Asaka, instead of relying on society to take care of them, people who are disadvantaged should take over the control of their own destiny and create a new social environment and culture for themselves. This is an extension of the independent living movement (jiritsu seisakusho undo) that Asaka started for the handicapped. She asserts that

(a)s individuals, people with disabilities also have the right to decide where to live, whom to live with, and what they want to do. If society fails to protect these rights of theirs, they are to think of creating [these conditions] by themselves, sending a fresh gust of wind into society.

(FS 4, 15/06/1998)

She challenges herself and encourages other handicapped people to leave their abode, facilities or home, and form themselves into new communities in which they can live, work, marry and do what they want. She regards futōkō students as part of this group who dare to advance their own interests, and thus as warriors fighting for control of their own destiny.

Futōkō people are people who determinedly say no to the present system of school education in which obedience and submission is enforced. In saying no, they release themselves from the agony caused by school education. They are people who, by their own effort, choose for themselves the best place to be.

(FS 4, 15/06/1998)

This is also an example of a movement articulator framing futōkō as a deliberate choice on the part of an individual to regain control of one’s own life. In this way, Asaka perceives children, like herself, as initiators of social change. Futōkō children are viewed as having rocked the foundation of the belief in school absolutism (Gakkō
In arguing for the need for social changes, the social norm of male-dominance in society is also called into question. One editorial by Asaka criticizes the male-dominant society (otokoshakai) for its arrogance (gōmansa), insensibility (donkansa), and inflexibility (kōchokusei). In this way, Asaka associates the male sex with the negative qualities mentioned, and maintains that it affects the postwar education system in that it is characterized by compliance. She calls for a kind of ‘self-consciousness/awareness’ (jikaku) that would enable social individuals to see that society is sick (byō). Asaka says that

(postwar education did not aim at enhancing children’s creativity and imagination. Instead, it resulted in rearing children in order that they become corporate warriors, and answer to commands.

(FS 16, 15/12/1998)

To activists like Asaka, social change starts by changing oneself.

In order to change society, one must change oneself first. It is a kind of persistence that is backed by a dream and a hope.

(FS 16, 15/12/1998)

Futōkō children are thus framed as agents of social change and the source of hope, light and peace in society. The contrast between children and the establishment is described as a contrast between light (hikari) and darkness (kurasa), and hope (kibō) and despair (zetsubō) (FS 61, 01/11/2000). The reality is described as tragic (muzan), and futōkō children are presented as a challenge to the existing order in school and society.

5.3.1.2 Sub-group 2: school/education system/policies

Sub-group 2 is the single largest sub-group (28.3%). This sub-group involves an elaborated discussion of what editorialists see as major problems in school and/or the education system that create and/or perpetuate school-related problems like futōkō. It also reflects attempts by editorialists to counter-frame the hegemonic notion of school education. Editorialists propose a non-institutional framework – a framework in which individual needs should precede conformity to authority; reality-related
curricula should replace competition for academic excellence; freedom to express, openness and flexibility should replace rigidity and convention. The discussions in this sub-group focus on two main aspects:

1) the demand for conformity; and

2) the ‘kokoro no kyōiku’ (education of the heart) curriculum.

Theme 1: the demand for conformity

In the diagnostic frame of FS, debates surrounding MoE’s Education Reform and the compulsory use of the national flag and anthem in school ceremonies are prime examples of MoE’s increasing pressure to demand conformity from students and teachers.

Education reform has been given top priority by the Japanese government in its reform initiatives in recent decades. This is due in large part to the threat posed by the escalating magnitude of student problems to the ‘raison d’être’ of public education. In the face of all these problems, the National Commission on Education Reform was established under the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, and the Central Council for Education published a draft report on the education reform in 1998, showing attempts to liberalize public education. However, reform attempts are criticized by many, including FS editorialists, for not only failing to address issues like ijime and futōkō, but also failing in their promise to liberalize education by giving more rights to children and parents to choose their schools.

(FS 10, 15/09/1998)

For instance, Okamura Tatsuo, a FS editorialist and an academic, criticizes the 1998 Report for evading questions posed to public education (kō kyōiku), with particular reference to compulsory education which claims to promote ‘civil/public rights’. He also criticizes MoE for shaping the education system as a state engine to serve the nationalistic/militarist interests of the leaders at the expense of individual free will and individuality. In particular, he criticizes the notion of ‘compulsory education’ (gimu kyōiku) for neglecting the innermost need of human beings. Okamura argues that after the Second World War (WWII), ‘public education’ was characterized by a

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84 A new set of education reforms are underway by the Abe administration since 2006. The 1998 reform is discussed here as it is the most relevant reform to the futōkō movement in question.
A high degree of conformity that aimed to train highly productive and subservient nationals to rebuild Japan economically. He criticizes current education reform by the government as a continuation of this post-WWII policy, which only serves to enforce further conformity (FS 36).

The other focus of debate on conformity concerns the ‘hinomaru’ flag, the national flag, and the ‘kimigayo’ song, the national anthem. A bill to codify the hinomaru and kimigayo as the national flag and anthem was submitted to the Diet in June 1999, and on 9 August the Law Concerning the National Flag and National Anthem was enacted by the Diet (hereafter as ‘the act’). The government measure to legalize the two symbols associated with war time aggression have alarmed many, in particular teachers and their trade unions, causing them to rally against the bill (Cripps 1996:77-108). Opponents of the bill included the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), teachers, workers and citizens including the ‘Nikkyōso’ teachers union (the Japan Teacher’s Union) and the Buraku Liberation League. The JCP, for instance, argued that the bill contradicts the Constitution that stipulates that the people are the sovereign element of the nation. Nevertheless, the bill was passed by an expected majority on 9 August 1999. Since then, the fear of revival of wartime nationalism has become a regular topic in the discourse on educational policies (Cripps 1996:95-100). Educators who refused to comply with directives from the MoE and local Boards of Education, stating that the flag and anthem must be used in certain school ceremonies, are under enormous pressure and emotional stress. Teachers who refused to sing the ‘kimigayo’ song faced punishment by school boards (Aspinall and

85 Burakumin are one of the main minority groups in Japan, like Ainu of Hokkaidō, and residents of Korea and Chinese descent. The Burakumin has been the most disadvantaged group of people and treated as social outcast in Japanese society. In resistance to the prejudice and discrimination they encountered in their everyday lives, the Burakumin organized themselves together and launched a social movement called the Suiheisha movement in 1922. In his work Political Protest and Social Control in Pre-war Japan: The Origins of Buraku Liberation, Neary (1989) has detailed the process that led to the formation of the Burakumin communities and the Suiheisha movement in the 1920s and 1930s, a social movement for the Burakumin, and the Yuwa policy, a specific government policy that aimed to initiate reform for the improvement of conditions of the Burakumin in order to control and replace the Suiheisha movement. The Japanese government started taking more vigorous measures to solve the mounting anger among the Buraku communities against the government and the society in general since the 1920s, when there was a surging interest and activism throughout the country in anti-establishment campaigns, liberal, anarchist and Bolshevik (Neary 1989:58). In the final years of the movement, as Neary (1989) points out, the Suiheisha’s influence was weakened because of internal divisions and the restrictions placed on it by the police (p.205).

86 Views of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) on the issue of ‘hinomaru’ and ‘kimigayo’ from the website of JCP, URL: http://www.jcp.or.jp/english/e-990315-flag_song.html, accessed on 22/05/2006.
Cave 2001:81, Cripps 1996:83), as was the case in Seirei High School in Hiroshima described below (Lauer 2000).

The hasty drafting of the bill was triggered by the suicide of Ishikawa Toshihiro, the principal of Seirei High School in Hiroshima. It was reported that Ishikawa received daily phone calls from the local Board of Education pressuring him to implement a government directive that had no legal sanction, by compelling teachers in his school to honour the flag and sing the anthem at the graduation ceremony on 1 March 1999. For various reasons, teachers in his school were almost united in ignoring the directive. Ishikawa was sandwiched between the school board and his own conscience. He committed suicide the day before the graduation. The next day, that is, on the day of the school graduation ceremony, fifty teachers disobeyed the directives from the MoE and twenty-one of them were disciplined by the local Boards of Education (Lauer 2000). The government response was to rush a bill through the Diet to grant legal status to the hinomaru and the kimigayo, reinforcing the existing Ministry stipulation that they were compulsory as stated in the national curriculum.87

The controversy over the use of the hinomaru flag and the kimigayo song lies in their symbolic significance. These were symbolic apparatuses used during the Meiji modernization period to create a sense of national unity based on loyalty to the Emperor. The hinomaru flag bears the image of the Sun, which has been a historical symbol of the reign of the divine emperor. The kimigayo song hails the lasting reign of the emperor. To many Japanese, the symbols bring back memories of the catastrophe of WWII. To the people in neighbouring Asian countries and regions, the kimigayo song and the hinomaru flag were symbols of aggression during the Pacific War. FS Editorialist Honda Katsuichi frames the flag-and-anthem as symbols of alienation (FS 39, 01/12/1999) with reference to the relationship of Japan with neighbouring Asian countries. To many in Japan, they are symbolic devices used to ‘regiment the people in rigorous conformism which tolerated no dissent’.88

88 ibid.
From MoE’s point of view, the lack of the love of the nation accounts for a large part of the current school-related problems, and as part of a solution it passed the flag-and-anthem bill to impart patriotism to students. Honda Katsuichi criticizes such patriotism as having a proclivity to develop into militarism and therefore as being ‘superstitious’ (meishin), and criticizes MoE for brainwashing young people to conform and to become militant (gunkoku shōnen). He claims that

Japan is now going in the opposite direction to the rest of the world, asking our grandchildren to hold up the same kind of superstitious ideology of becoming militant youths serving the [aggressive ambition of the] state…. Teachers with a conscience are forced to mobilize against the directive… university students have been rendered ignorant and unable to protest against this kind of education.

(FS 39, 01/12/1999)

Honda opposes the framing of military aggression founded on the tradition and culture of Tennō (Emperor) worship and ‘love of the nation’, because it threatens the individual conscience. He draws on the emerging global trend (sekai no chōryū) of democratisation, and counter-frames patriotism that is based on loyalty to the Tennō symbolized by the hinomaru flag and the kimigayo song as ‘superstitious’.

The debate regarding the bill in the FS in general reinforces the framing of school as an adversary. Editorialists criticize the bill as a manifestation of the nation’s pursuit of state power (kōkenryoku) at the expense of individual freedom (FS 23, 01/04/1999). For instance, Okamura Tatsuo points out that

(a)fter defeat in the war… ‘hinomaru’ and ‘kimigayo’ somehow were adopted in school education. At any rate, these are symbols of aggression and colonization against Asian and Pacific countries based on loyalty to the sovereignty of the Emperor. In particular the lyrics of ‘kimigayo’ pay homage to the everlasting reign of the Emperor. After the war, although constitutional democracy was introduced, no public opinions were sought on the issue of the national flag and anthem. Legalizing ‘hinomaru’ and ‘kimigayo’ would raise a whole lot of issues, for instance, questions concerning the sovereignty of the people and responsibilities over war atrocities committed by the Japanese army. Hence, the state bypassed the law, and from 1958 onwards the ‘national
flag and national anthem’ have been made part of the Study Guidelines and implemented through the system of compulsory education. In these forty years, about 900 teachers who refused to follow the directive were faced with disciplinary punishment by the authorities. This kind of strengthening of authoritarian rule should not be encouraged.

To make everyone sing this song that glorifies the Emperor is a pursuit of state power, and such imposition means infringement of individual freedom of thinking, beliefs, and conscience. Although this law in general can barely be applied to society, it is enforced in school in the name of an ‘education directive’. If conscience is overturned in the name of ‘education’, then the rationale behind such kind of ‘education’ in schools must be questioned. To ask attendants to stand, bow and sing to the national flag and anthem is a kind of [social] control. It is also a kind of ideological control, making them ‘prisoners’ of certain thoughts.

I think it is now necessary to tell [MoE] to listen to the voice of conscience, and to stop making people ‘prisoners’ of their own conscience.

(FS 23, 01/04/1999)

His narrative highlights the issue of conscience, the principle of democratic education, the notion of ‘patriotism’, and the apparent struggle and pressure on teachers with a good conscience (ryōshin) under a system that demands conformity at the expense of individual needs and expression. The discussion echoes the findings by Yoneyama (1999). By introducing a set of comparative data on educational practice in Australia, Yoneyama (1999) highlights the school system in Japan as a mechanism of social control that serves to silence and disempower students through aspects of school life: alienating student-teacher relationships, routine discipline and punishment, stringent and ubiquitous school rules, and an overwhelming load of study (pp.59-154). The controversy over the national flag and anthem serves to accentuate the framing of school as an adversary of the intellectual and mental development of children.

In addition, the issue of the hinomaru flag and kimigayo song has raised the issue of the image of school authorities and teachers. Editorialists believe that teachers in Japanese schools always have to appear faultless and infallible in front of students, to
present themselves as ‘sacred’ or ‘holy’ (*FS* 24, 15/04/1999). For the sake of maintaining this ‘sacredness’, teachers demand that students conform to the prescribed school norms, and students are always blamed for problems like *ijime*, and *futōkō*. For instance, in *FS* 24 (15/04/1999), Uchida, the counsellor, said:

A look at the reports of the mass media...will find that the ability of parents to raise children and the worsening of family environment are often ascribed to factors of ‘anarchy in classrooms’. But is this really the case? This kind of framing has been popular from the late 1960s to the early 1990s, when *tōkōkyohi* was regarded first as an education problem and then as a social problem … At any rate, the school and classroom where things happen are never examined; the school till now is still being made a ‘sacred place’ (*sēki*).….. *(FS 24, 15/04/1999)*

She presents an alternative diagnosis and prognosis of school-related problems and contends that the contributing factors are the lack of trust among children towards adults, and the enclosed environment of the classroom that gives children a sense of being trapped and hopeless.

According to *tōkōkyohi* children, it is true that what the media called ‘anarchy in classrooms’ happens. In those classrooms or schools, children who are targets of *ijime* are further hurt by teachers whose advice is not commensurate with reality. Children find it hard to trust teachers, and they eventually become *tōkōkyohi*. From this point of view, the so-called ‘anarchy in classrooms’ is a reflection of the situation in schools…. In the closet-like environment of school, children just see no way out and many of them eventually take their own lives. This once again confirms that the school environment is the root of the problems.

Problems cannot be solved if adults just see things from outside. This does not help to solve the situation and deal with the root of the problem. It is necessary to talk with children who are experiencing all these problems…. It is necessary to create a place where children can converse with adults on an equal level. *(FS 24, 15/04/1999)*
This is another extension of the idea of equality. In reality, Uchida herself has created a free space – the ‘MoMo no Heya’ – where this kind of equality is practised.

Yamashita Ėzaburō, a school social worker, likewise comments that the Japanese school system, which emphasizes conformity and groupism, is smothering individuality. As argued by Yoneyama (1999) in her study on the experience of students in schools, Japanese schools can be considered places where pressure to conform is especially strong not just because of the control mechanism from above, that is, the school authority (pp. 61-154), but also the ‘fierce pressure from below (from classmates)’ to ‘do the same thing as others’ (p.181) for fear of being targets of *ijime* (collective bullying).89 Yamashita and others like Okamura point to a similar problem, with conformity in schools being the cause of problems like *fuitōkō*. Yamashita says that

(i)n America, there are private alternative schools and home-based education. One just cannot help but see that the so-called conventional schools are falling apart. In reality, we have different cultures and races, and the backgrounds of children are complicated. In this situation, it is not surprising to find that a uniform system of education does not work. I honestly think that we should not stick to the old system, but we have a lot to learn to restructure a school system in accordance with the reality children are facing.

(*FS* 28, 15/06/1999)

The inflexibility of the school system is ascribed as the cause of increasing instances of open conflicts between the school system and individual students. In one instance, a young man who had refused to go to school was practically forced to graduate (*FS* 48, 15/04/2000). Despite the fact that he had barely passed the school exam to graduate from his high school and said that he did not want to graduate, his voice was ignored. Out of the ‘good intention’ (*zen-i*) of his parents, high school principal and teachers, he was granted a very exceptional graduation. A graduation ceremony exclusively for him was held with about 10 teaching staff and the principal attending.

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89 Yoneyama (1999) maintains that *ijime*, or collective bullying, that is, ‘victimisation of a single individual by a group’ (p.165) is the price of ‘super-conformity’ in Japanese high schools. For details, see Yoneyama (1999: 157-85).
The year after he was granted graduation, he made frequent trips to his alma mater to appeal for a cancellation of his graduation. He said:

No matter how much I have to pay for it, I’ll bring this to court.

*(FS 48, 15/04/2000)*

This incident was used by Uchida to highlight the rigidity of the school system and the core value of education, which has imposed enormous pressure to conform on students and adults, including parents and teachers. More importantly, Uchida maintains that under such a system, ‘an individual is denied consistently and continually the right to make decisions for one’s own life’ (*jibun no jinsei o jibun de erabitoru toiu jikoketteiken o, shūshi ikkan hiteisaretsuzuketeimasu*). FS editorialists specifically focus on the MoE measure of *kokoro no kyōiku* (education of the mind and heart) to highlight institutional control on individual students.

**Theme 2: Kokoro no kyōiku (education of the mind and heart)**

The *Kokoro no kyōiku* curriculum introduced in 1997 by MoE is another educational initiative that illustrates how FS counter-frames hegemonic notions in education. FS editorialists critically claim that the term gives the impression that there are problems with the ‘heart and mind’ of students, and reinforces the hegemonic view that students are the cause of problems like futōkō.

*Kokoro no kyoiku* literally means ‘education of the heart’, but is translated as ‘moral education’ in official documents like ‘*Kokoro no Nōto*’ (a notebook to be used by students in moral education), and by ‘*Kokoro no Sensei*’ (moral education teachers).90 The curriculum was promoted as a major strategy to tackle student problems. In August 1997, consultations were held to have the notion instituted for pre-schoolers. By the end of March 1998, an interim report was published with regard to this measure. The FS criticizes the report as being merely ‘a huge collection of slogans’ (*bōdaina hyogohū*), as ‘school language on parade’ (*gakkō kotoba no onparēdo*), reflecting shallow and cliché (*chinpu*) thinking on the part of schools combined with their lack of respect for the capacity of students to think

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independently (kihan ishiki) (FS 5, 01/07/1998). It is a common practice in Japanese schools that various kinds of banners with slogans are hung around the campus to boost morale, reinforce certain values, or raise the consciousness of certain issues. This is especially so when something serious has happened, like a homicide or a suicide. In such cases, the school principal will have the whole school assembled in order to lecture students, urging them to ‘respect life’. Hamada points out the problem underlying such typical responses to crisis.

If such slogans are chanted every time something tragic occurred, before long the language will become dead. When language is dead, communications between children and teachers, and children and parents will be broken down…. I am afraid that this terrible consequence is now happening across schools.

(FS 5, 01/07/1998)

He further argues that

(t)he interim report, after all, fails to demonstrate an understanding of the reality in school. Without knowing the reality in school, simply talking about ‘kokoro no kyoiku’ and parading slogans is not only questionable, but also dangerous.

(FS 5, 01/07/1998)

In a rhetorical way – by describing language in school as ‘dying’ (kotoba ga shinde iru koto) – Hamada implies that schools are impotent in the face of real-life situations. Some FS editorialists perceive the focus on ‘kokoro’ as a strategic device by the government to shift the blame and responsibility onto students. For instance, Ozawa Makiko asserts the following.

What does ‘kokoro’ actually mean? Actually no one, including those experts [who create the term] knows what it really means.

Referring to children as ‘children who have problems’ is to reinforce the pattern of ascribing the cause of issues to the ‘kokoro’ of individual children. I think this is tyrannical and impertinent.
What is the ‘kokoro’ that has been so much emphasized in this factitious concept?

‘kokoro’ is a device which not only separates people from each other, but also causes anxiety.

…does it mean that one has to let experts decide what one’s own ‘kokoro’ is?  

(FS 59, 01/10/2000)

The notion of ‘kokoro’ is criticized as a mechanism to influence the way people perceive student-related issues like futōkō as a matter of the ‘heart’ of the individual person (kojin no naimen). Ozawa contends that even the person her/himself cannot tell exactly what one’s own ‘kokoro’ is, let alone other people, not even ‘the experts’. Ozawa’s arguments demonstrate again the way language is used to shape perceptions of issues. It reinforces the view that MoE is using the notion of kokoro to shift the blame of school-related problems onto children.

‘Education’ has become a fence that shields school and society. While emphasizing the necessity to educate the ‘kokoro’, MoE has actually snatched the ‘kokoro’ out of children....  

(FS 23, 01/04/1999)

The discourse on ‘kokoro’ indicates that the government still perceives children as the root of school-related problems, and this is reflected in the way school counselling works: to tame children. The school counselling system was introduced by MoE in 1995. FS editorials have specifically focused on the ethics and practice of counsellors, which is discussed in Group 2. This is because both the counselling system and the ‘kokoro’ policy are two of the most significant futōkō measures and have been publicized by the government as effective in bringing down the number of futōkō students.
5.3.2 Two contesting frames of futōkō and school

Analysis on Group 1 articles – articulation of the school and education - indicates that there are two major contesting frames regarding futōkō and the school/education system in which the issue is embedded:

1) the mainstream frame represented by MoE ; and
2) the alternative frame articulated by futōkō supporters.

The two frames hold contesting perspectives and values as summarized in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Two contesting frames of futōkō and school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative frame for futōkō and school</th>
<th>Mainstream frame for futōkō and school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life is more important than school.</td>
<td>Children must go to school no matter what happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is the right of children.</td>
<td>Going to school is compulsory for children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education does not equal to going to school.</td>
<td>Education means going to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution for futōkō to be found ‘outside school’.</td>
<td>Solution for futōkō is to ‘return to school’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futōkō is the right of a child.</td>
<td>Futōkō clashes with civil obligations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futōkō sets a child free and gives a fresh start to life</td>
<td>No school, no happiness in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futōkō is a choice of children.</td>
<td>Futōkō is unacceptable behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kokoro of children is not the problem, but school.</td>
<td>kokoro of children has problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppressing individuality creates problems like ‘class collapse’ and futōkō.</td>
<td>Allowing individual expression creates problems like ‘class collapse’ and futōkō.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only do the FS articulate an alternative understanding of futōkō that is at odds with the hegemonic one, but it also indicates that editorialists are framing futōkō as a social movement and a new trend. Uchida in FS 11 outlines the mission and goals of futōkō activists. On the last day of a national summer camp organized by the Kangaerukai, she said that

(t)here were 326 children in the camp. It was full of creativity, joy, and vitality. We heard children use their own words to voice their own opinions. They directly and thoroughly questioned the notion of education. School refusal is a new style of movement. I was left with the strong impression that there is a new trend emerging – children are creating a culture of learning and growth by themselves and for themselves. I can feel that this is the trend defining the growth of citizens in the 21st century.

(FS 11, 01/10/1998)
FS editorialists perceive the role of the FS newspaper as an agent, aiming at changing social perceptions on the issue of futōkō. FS sees itself as a force countering the dominant framing of futōkō by ‘the world’. Wakabayashi claims that FS is a voice for children and a spiritual support for adults who engage themselves in this ideological war. He maintains that

(while prejudice against futōkō children continues to exist, adults who are supporting these children probably have to fight a war against the so-called ‘common sense’ of the world. This newspaper will continue to offer strong support to these people and act as a light at the end of the tunnel.

(FS 44, 15/02/2000)

The concerns of FS writers are not confined to matters of education and school, but also extend to the wider society and its impact on the life of social individuals at large. The next section will elaborate on the kind of topics which are discussed by these writers in relation to the wider social system. Their discussions draw attention to the impact of the social system, and the perceptions and beliefs of individual social members.

5.4 Group 2: Critique of the wider social system

In Group 1 discourse, it is argued that futōkō reflects problems with society and schools. As the school and the education system is embedded into the wider social system, FS editorialists call into question the wider social system, and its associated values and beliefs that frame public perceptions on futōkō and other child/youth-related issues. In Group 2, FS editorialists point out what they believe is at fault with the wider society and how this affects the framing of futōkō; they then offer their counter-frame of those perspectives.

Group 2 has the second largest coverage (30%) and discusses three major aspects in the wider social system. They are:

1) legal rights and individual rights (11.4%);
2) social beliefs, issues and phenomena (14.3%); and
3) the medical/expert perspective (4.3%).

It demonstrates attempts to locate the futōkō discourse in the institutional, structural and cultural framework in society. In doing so, it widens the discursive field of futōkō, and bring readers’ attention to other social systems to determine the root of social problems (See Table 5.1).

5.4.1 Sub-group 1: Legal rights and individual rights

In the FS’s framing of futōkō, going to school is a choice which reflects the rights of children rather than their responsibilities (as discussed in Group 1). The critique of the hegemonic notions of the rights of a child constitutes a main part in the alternative futōkō discourse. In this relation, the jurisdictional system, which oversees the execution of such rights, is pivotal to the understanding of how children and young people are framed in the eyes of the establishment, and why futōkō citizens argue against such framings. The FS is concerned about whether there is adequate protection in the legal system to guarantee such rights. Hence, any change in the jurisdictional system and constitutional issues regarding the rights of the child would affect the framing of the futōkō movement. In this respect, the discussion on the revision of the Juvenile Law in 2001 is the key to understanding the viewpoints of FS editorialists. The law change not only affects the treatment of juvenile offenders by the government, but also, more fundamentally, the hegemonic perception of ‘problematic’ children and young people in general, including futōkō children. The three themes in this sub-group explain how the FS critiques the hegemonic shōnen kan (perception of adolescents). At the same time, FS editorialists articulate a juvenile accountability frame and advocate a symbiotic relationship to counter-frame hegemonic framing. As the Juvenile Law change in 2001 is a key to understanding the three themes articulated, it is necessary to examine the revision of this and the debates around it.

The 2001 Juvenile Law revision was an aftermath of the Kobe incident in which a 14-year-old boy murdered an 11-year-old, decapitated him and placed his head at the

91 The word ‘shōnen’, which literally means ‘boy’, is used to refer to juveniles in general (i.e. teenage men and women) in Japanese.
school gate only hours before students arrived for classes on 27 May 1997 (The Asahi Evening News and The Japan Times, 27 May through 29 June 1997). Media reports indicated that the 14-year-old apparently was conscious of the lighter punishment for a minor, and took advantage of it in his crime. In the light of such heinous crimes, in 2000 the Diet lowered the age of juvenile offenders eligible for criminal punishment from 16 to 14. This was the first time the Law had undergone major revision since its implementation in 1948. It was passed by the Diet in April 2001, and was one of the topics which induced substantial criticism from FS editorialists (11.6%). The other important change to the Law was the introduction of a prosecutor into the system, and the sending of teenage murderers to criminal courts. The revisions were pushed through by conservative politicians without the involvement of bureaucrats or expert advisers.

There are many speculations on the causes of such crimes. Whatever the causes are, some critics at least partially blame the education system of Japan for putting children under extreme pressure to achieve success. The Kobe murderer, in one of his letters to the media, wrote:

…compulsory education which formed me, an invisible person.

The thing about the Japanese educational system is that it is highly regimented, highly disciplined…. It is very conformist and people that don’t fit in are routinely bullied.

(BBC 2001)

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Hence, most experts in the legal and education field point out that the Law should be about rehabilitating young people rather than punishing them. Most experts believe that stiffer penalties are unlikely to have any effect on young offenders who commit random, violent crime. FS editorialist Tada Hajime and the then Justice Minister Moriyama Mayumi believed in tackling the issue through education, and were opposed to the imposition of tougher laws. Moriyama claimed that

(t)hese problems should be dealt with from the viewpoint of education and welfare tasks for the benefit of juveniles, and more effort should be made to improve the environment surrounding boys and girls.

(Yomiuri Shimbun, 18/7/2003)

Tada believed that

(w)hat we need is not more stringent law and regulations for juvenile offenders…. There must be a redoubling of efforts on the part of adults to make juveniles feel at ease.

(The Daily Yomiuri, 18/7/2003)

In this sense, the Juvenile Law change could pose a threat to the alternative frame of futōkō. This is because in the movement frame, society is problematic and needs to change, not children. However, the Juvenile Law revision reinforces the prevalent view that children are problematic and need to be punished for what they did without regard to the social and institutional factors behind their actions. The contesting framing of children could be explained by the three themes discussed below.

Theme 1: the juvenile accountability frame

The primary concern of futōkō citizens is that the rights of children to grow and develop themselves should be adequately protected under the legal system. Based on this premise, Tada and Tsuda, two of the legal experts among FS editorialists (as discussed in Section 4.5, Chapter 4), criticize the legal system for framing young offenders as ‘enemies of the citizen’ (shimin no kataki) (FS 43, 01/02/2000). They also blame the media for focusing on the ‘indulgence of children’ (kodomo no amayakashi), and for arousing disproportionate fear in society by highlighting
reports on serious crimes committed by young people. For instance, Tsuda is critical of the fact that

(s)ome of the media has made a big fuss about the series of juvenile incidences that have occurred, and reinforced in the mind of the general public that the present Juvenile Law is the root of ‘all evils’.

*(FS 32, 15/08/1999)*

To counter the hegemonic framing of the juvenile, Tsuda and others highlight the role of the legal system in protecting juveniles. Tada maintains that

(t)eenagers who find themselves being respected and their value as a person being recognized would also be able to respect other people’s rights and basic freedoms…

The revision of the Juvenile Law goes in the opposite direction of what is needed to improve the situation of teenagers in reformatories. It actually aims at strengthening the bureaucratic control over juvenile offenders of serious crime, or so-called citizens’ enemies, through punitive measures and heavy punishment. …

*(FS 43, 01/02/2000)*

Tsuda and Tada also emphasize the human rights of children as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that the growth and development of children should be ensured and facilitated. Their articulation could be called the ‘juvenile accountability’ frame. It is one that denounces the punitive approach adopted by the government. They emphasize the need to help juvenile delinquents to retrieve their ‘humanity’ (*ningensei*), and to teach them about their individual dignity and values (*jiko no songen to kachi*) *(FS 43, 01/02/2000).* Along this line, they believe that the juvenile law should aim at ‘giving helpless children, who are facing a crisis in their growth and become delinquent, the last chance to regain their footing’ *(FS 8 15/08/1998; FS 32, 15/08/1999; FS 47, 01/04/2000).*

Based on the arguments in the *FS* editorials, two contesting frames regarding the Juvenile Law revision are produced. The left-hand column of Table 5.3 summarises the criticisms of the Juvenile Law revision by *FS* editorialists, while the right-hand column presents the *FS* counter discourse on the issue. In the hegemonic frame, the
revision is criticized by the FS as a change for the worse (point 1), a regression of the global trend in juvenile law development (point 2), a breach of the United Nations’ protocol regarding the rights of a child (points 3, 4, 9 and 11), a disregard of more fundamental underlying social factors that provoke juveniles to commit crime (points 5 and 6), a form of humiliation (points 7 and 8), and being partial and cosmetic in that it only treats the symptoms (point 10).

In the counter-frame, as illustrated in the right hand column of Table 5.3, the FS reiterates the importance of: legal and statutory support for juvenile offenders (points 1, 3 and 8), rehabilitation and re-education (points 5, 9, 10), social support (points 2, 6 and 7), the role of the establishment in looking after the welfare of juvenile offenders (point 4), and awareness of human rights issues (points 1 and 11). This group of editorials emphasizes again the impact of a highly competitive and regimented education system that displaces juveniles from their orientation and sense of purpose in life (FS 8, 15/08/1998; FS 32, 15/08/1999; FS 58, 15/09//2000). They point to social environmental factors as the cause of ‘all evils’ that push young people to the verge. The two contesting frames regarding the Juvenile Law revision also support two contesting representations of shōnen.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism against Juvenile Law revision</th>
<th>Diagnoses and prognoses in the FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) All in all, a change for the worse (<em>kaiaku</em>) (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999; <em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999; <em>FS</em> 47, 01/04/2000); unconvincing, contradictory, inconsistent (<em>FS</em> 62, 15/11/2000).</td>
<td>1) The legal system should give the highest priority to the interests and healthy development of juvenile offenders (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999, <em>FS</em> 62, 15/11/2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) A regression in the development of Juvenile Law and contrary to the global trend, which aims at helping young people to regain self-confidence and trust. (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999; <em>FS</em> 62, 15/11/2000).</td>
<td>2) Should create an environment in which children’s awareness of human dignity and respect for fellow human beings could be raised (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) In breach of the United Nations’ protocol (clause 27, 48) on the rights of the child e.g. lengthening the detention period of juvenile offenders from four weeks to twelve weeks (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
<td>3) Should fulfil the protocol for children’s rights (clause 43) (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Detrimental to the growth and development of juvenile offenders (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
<td>4) Should be responsible for protecting juvenile offenders, their growth and development (<em>FS</em> 8, 15/08/1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Did not take into account the opinion and participation of children (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
<td>5) Should help them to restore their self-esteem and values, and to learn to respect those of others (<em>FS</em> 62, 15/11/2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) An easy way out by shunning the responsibility to tackle problems faced by children, problems like discrimination, corporal punishment, <em>ijime</em> (bullying), stress etc. (<em>FS</em> 8, 15/08/1998).</td>
<td>6) Should endeavour to retrieve the human aspect (<em>ningensei</em>) in society, an aspect that children nowadays have been deprived of due to a worsening in social environment (<em>seiiku kankyō no akka</em>) (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Inhuman (<em>hiningenteki</em>): reliance on severe punishment and judgement (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999); no respect for human dignity (<em>FS</em> 21, 01/03/1999).</td>
<td>7) Should endeavour to retrieve the humanity nature (<em>ningensei</em>) in society (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Leaves juvenile delinquents in a state of helplessness (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999).</td>
<td>9) Should help them to return to the right path and to integrate into society again (<em>tachimaori</em>) (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999; <em>FS</em> 8, 15/08/1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Treats young offenders as enemies of citizen (<em>shimin no kataki</em>) (<em>FS</em> 43, 01/02/2000); and the then Juvenile Law as the ‘root’ of ‘all evils’ (<em>shoaku no kongen</em>) (<em>FS</em> 32, 15/08/1999) because it does not impose more severe punishments on juvenile offenders.</td>
<td>11) Should see juvenile delinquents as victims (<em>higaisha</em>) of society (<em>FS</em> 43, 01/02/2000; <em>FS</em> 62, 15/11/2000).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 2: *shōnen kan (the perception of adolescents)*

The discussion of the Juvenile Law revision has generated two contesting frames of *shōnen kan*: a dominant one as articulated by the government, the media, and accepted by the general public; and an alternative frame articulated by *FS* editorial writers. In the dominant frame, children in the eyes of adults are spoiled (*amayakashi*), rowdy (*arakure*) (*FS* 8, 15/08/1998) and bad (*warui*), and they have to be corrected (*kaisei*), cannot be tolerated (*yurusuna*) (*FS* 21, 01/03/1999), are law breakers (*hanzaisha*) (*FS* 32, 15/08/1999) and victimizers (*kagaisha*) (*FS* 43, 01/02/2000). In short, they are framed as a threat to society and therefore have to be dealt with by using harsh laws.

In the contesting frame created in *FS*, young offenders are framed as victims of the situation; the threat to society actually comes from a hostile social environment and institutional system, but not from children. This is a counter-framing of the ‘root of all evil’ originally articulated by the hegemonic position. Tada quotes a director of a reformatory saying that

> there is no doubt that juvenile delinquents are victimizers. Nevertheless…they are also ‘victims’, unfortunate teenagers…. In general, they do not trust adults. What they are looking for are people … who will try to understand them and care about them from the bottom of their heart.

(*FS* 43, 01/02/2000)

In proffering an alternative way of looking at juvenile offenders, Uchida Ryōko uses vocabularies that invoke a sense of empathy towards these children. Uchida describes juvenile delinquents as follows.

It is reported that each of these teenagers is very intelligent. Until a certain point of time, they have always been behaving very well, observing rules and regulations. Their families also are capable of educating them. In every sense, they are the so-called ‘good children’, ‘ordinary children’ without any perceived problems. One more commonality is that they are either third year junior high school students, or third year senior high school students. Those are the years when the pressure from examinations is the greatest. Also, the age of 14 and 17 are puberty ages when they are creating and searching for their own identities. It
is a critical and turbulent period, when they are confronted with the formidable hurdle of examinations and come to realize the cruelty of social reality. Even though they have overcome the hurdles of examinations, now that the life-long employment system that prestigious companies used to offer has collapsed, it seems to them that hope and dreams [of finding a secure job] have all vanished. There seems nothing for them to look forward to in the terms of a future. Nevertheless, they are still being pushed to study hard for examinations. Facing this reality left them with a sense of emptiness. What is the future for young people? The future is like an abyss, opening its mouth wide to swallow young people who are searching for their own identities. Young people are being tormented by hopelessness and loneliness, and facing the risk of being isolated from each other. Yet, it seems that adults are not aware of what they are facing: all the pressures from reality, including those from the communities, families and schools they belong to. They are left fallen into a deep abyss....

To these children who are trapped in such a deadlock situation, do you think to revise the Juvenile Law and to impose more severe punishment will help? The answer is ‘no’.

What is necessary at the moment is.... to try every possible way to find out what are the factors that isolate and corner children to the extent that they do such things. Shouldn’t we invest time in open-hearted discussions for truly effective ways to prevent anyone from falling victims again?

(FS 60, 15/10/2000)

By using expressions that illustrate the unpleasantness and cruelty of society, Uchida invokes the sympathy of readers for children. Examples include ‘examination hurdle set up to fulfil the principle of competition’ (kyōsō genri no kantetsushita juken no takai hādoru), ‘cruelty of society’ (shakai no hijōsa), ‘the tragic collapse of a life time employment system’ (shūshin koyō toiu kōzu ga muzan ni kuzureteiru), ‘a wasteland without dream or hope’ (yumei mo kibō mo mieynai kōya) and ‘without any prospect’ (nan no tenbō mo naku). All these illustrations together point to a bleak future faced by children which leaves them in a state of being ‘tormented’ (sainamare), of ‘hopelessness’ (zetsubō) and experiencing a ‘sense of isolation’ (koritsukan), ‘barely keeping afloat’ (abunai baransu wo tamotte iru), and feeling ‘hard-pressed’ on every side. By focusing on the reality as the cause of the social
misery (hisan), a different shōnen kan is presented – they are victims rather than the real threat to society. As a prognosis to the problem faced by juveniles, the FS elaborates on the importance of forming a symbiotic relationship in society.

*Theme 3: rehabilitation and the symbiotic relationship between juvenile offenders and society*

In the FS framing, a ‘symbiotic relationship’ (kyōsei ni tsunagaru) embodies empathy, forgiveness, acceptance and mutual support. As such, punitive laws should be replaced by forgiveness and rehabilitative support. It is argued that a punitive approach is not only ineffective in lowering crime rates, but also causes unhealthy thoughts and negative feelings welling up in individuals. In FS 49, Yamashita cites the example of Amity in Arizona in the United States. According to its official website, ‘Amity Foundation is a non-profit corporation dedicated to rehabilitate and restore personal dignity to the lives of substance abusers such as addicted mothers and their children, homeless substance abusers, victims of violence, children at high risk of becoming addicted, criminal gang members and incarcerated substance abusers’. The Amity Foundation provides psychotherapeutic services for participants based on the Therapeutic Community model. It has claimed success in lowering the rate of repeat offending. Yamashita highlights the efficacy of the community support in bringing about a high rate of complete rehabilitation.

Amity is an organization for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and criminals. It has been in Arizona, America for 30 years. Amity uses various methods to bring healing to the spirit and past hurts that participants have experienced. This has been successful in lowering the rate of repeat offences in participants. From early to mid-April, Amity held workshops across the country to enlist volunteers who want to help victims to find a way out of their agony, and to help criminals to come out of the dark side of their emotion. It has touched the hearts of many. That is to say, we should talk about finding solutions that handle issues from an emotional perspective of an individual being rather than taking a punitive approach. The effort of Amity offers us a significant insight.

*(FS 49, 01/05/2000)*
In stating this, Yamashita has tapped into certain extant social beliefs and values of forgiveness, acceptance, and mutual respect. These are also values embraced by, for instance, many other humanitarian organizations. The adaptation of existing cultural values, beliefs, and narratives is a process of frame amplification which is one of the key framing processes. The process involves the highlighting of certain issues, events or beliefs as being more salient than others. The highlighted issues and beliefs ‘may function much like synecdoches, bringing into sharp relief and symbolizing the larger frame or movement of which it is a part’ (Benford & Snow 2000:623). The extent to which a frame is amplified is one of the key factors determining the resonance of a proffered frame (p.624). Since Amity receives as high a regard in the Japanese society as it does in America, highlighting the values it upholds would enhance the resonance of the FS framing of the Juvenile Law issues. 

In advancing a symbiotic and therapeutic approach to the Juvenile Law discourse, people like Yamashita have bridged the children’s rights frame embedded in Tsuda and Tada’s discourse to those of humanitarian and other NPO movement groups that are founded on the principles of peace, communal support, and the elimination of discriminations of various kinds. Frame bridging, in turn, enhances the diffusion of the ideological frames of futōkō movement into the wider society.

On the whole, the framing of Juvenile Law revision shows consistency with that of Group 1 articles. In Group 1, because of the articulation of futōkō and school, the individual is framed as innocent of futōkō and school-related problems. Likewise, on juvenile crime issues, juvenile offenders are framed as victims of the wider social system rather than the cause of social problems. The counter-framing of the hegemonic juvenile image is further reinforced in the critique of ‘role of family and media in propagating social beliefs’.

94 Amity’s work received national attention in the US and international recognition since the 1990s. For instance, in 1993, Amity drew the attention of the President’s Commission on Model State Drug Laws; in 1999, former US Attorney General Janet Reno invited Amity to present to a specially-invited audience on the topic of women’s criminality; in 1995, the President of Argentina invited some Amity staff members to travel to the country and advice on how to implement anti-substance abuse services. In Japan, the work of Amity became known and recognized by the residents and staff from organizations for community building, treatment, corrections, and government, including the Ministry of Justice, the Asia-Pacific Addiction Research Institute (APARI), and the Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Centre (DARC), when Kaori Sagakami, an documentary maker for Japanese television NHK, produced and shown the Japanese public a film about the personal transformation in the Therapeutic Community in the late 90s (http://www.amityfdn.org/Continued.php, viewed 23 April, 2008).
5.4.2 Sub-group 2: Role of family and media in propagating social beliefs

While FS editorialists agree that futōkō is a normal response of a normal child to potentially life-threatening situations, futōkō is still stigmatized and futōkō students remain under lots of social pressure to attend school. FS editorialists argue that extant social values and beliefs have been the causes of all misconception and discrimination against futōkō. As such, critique of the beliefs and values that form the social milieu surrounding futōkō has become strategically important to the movement. Sub-group 2 illustrates how FS editorialists target two key social aspects that underlie the hegemonic framing of futōkō. They are

1) the education-focused family; and
2) the role of the media.

Theme 1: education-focused family

FS editorialists criticize the drive for academic excellence as the culprit of a number of social idiosyncrasies and tragedies. For instance, in FS 42, commentator Ashizawa Shunsuke comments on a murder case involving a two-year-old girl who was admitted to an elite kindergarten in November 1999 in Tokyo. Ashizawa writes that

(t)he summary and special point about this incident is that the murderer of the two-year-old girl was herself a mother of a two-year-old girl. On top of this, the two mothers belonged to the same social group of parents who enthusiastically exchanged information about examinations. They were regarded as ‘friends’ of one another….

(FS 42, 15/01/2000)

The incident is used by Ashizawa to critique a social phenomenon called kyōiku kazoku, literally meaning education-focused families. In Japan, it has always been the desire of every parent to get their children into a good school, and very often mothers are deeply involved in preparing their children to enter a prestigious school.
Many mothers join groups for exchanging information on entrance examinations for their children. Ashizawa explains that the intense desire to be a successful *kyōiku kazoku* has created fierce competition within such groups and even animosity among mothers. That means that not only children, but also adults, are affected. He states that

(t)his kind of crime is bound to happen when the phenomenon of education-focused families developed into its top form ... I defined *kyōiku kazoku* as families whose sole concern is academic performance. They are not relationship-oriented families, but families who believe that ‘the future of children is decided by parents’. In such relationships, mother and child are more like a partnership....

*(FS 42, 15/01/2000)*

As Ashizawa explains, the lure to become an ‘education-focused family’ lies in the promise that it will bring ‘family success’ (*kazoku no seikō*), thereby moving the family to a higher social standing (*iegara*), thus benefitting the family with a high standard of living (*seikatsu suijun*). As such, mothers push children to excel in academic performance for the sake of the family, and this has been the cause of many child abuse cases. Ashizawa maintains that the drive to achieve academic success has created animosity within mothers’ groups. He points out that

(t)he mothers’ groups maintain a close relationship on the surface but deep down they are extremely competitive with and do not trust each other.... The two mothers in the group are actually opponents of one another.

*(FS 42, 15/01/2000)*

The illustration given by Ashizawa highlights the overriding importance of academic supremacy in Japanese society, and its negative impact on the relationship between individual social members. The ideology of academic credentialism is thus framed as a factor that alienates social individuals – between mothers and children, and among competitive parents.

In order to ‘shine’ (*kagayaku*) in these ways, [parents] take things into their own hands immediately, and choose the path of education for their children. To put it in an extreme way, [families believe] that once children can get into a famous kindergarten and primary school, the standard of living and social standing of the family can be boosted.
Ashizawa used the term ‘faceless’ families to describe the subsequent fate of these families. The term refers to families that do the same things, think the same thoughts, uphold the same values, pursue the same goals (kyōiku kazokuka shita kazoku wa kao wo ushinatta kazoku de aru), and thus end up losing their own uniqueness as a family. Children in such families have to face immense pressure to bring ‘success’ to their families. This resonates with the claims of Japanese scholars like Kariya (1995) and Takeuchi (1995). They maintain that academic credentialism has become the dominant value system in Japanese society, framing people’s perceptions about others and themselves. They suggest that as far as values and beliefs are concerned, Japan is a classless society where people believe that there is no other means to success other than by academic credentials.

The ‘education-focused family’ provides what Mouer and Sugimoto call ‘ideologically coloured lenses that have been used to give many Japanese a narrow view of success in their own society’ (1986:14). This obsession with the pursuit of academic excellence, as suggested in Ashizawa’s articulation, accounts for the alienating relationships among mothers. In this relation, the Oya no Kai of the futōkō movement presents a huge contrast to the group of exam-oriented mothers. Members of the Oya no Kai, who are predominantly mothers of futōkō children, are by contrast child-oriented. They share common interests in supporting futoko children as well as each other. Also, in the same information group, exam-oriented mothers undergo constant and intense pressure to compete with each other, while mothers of Oya no Kai have their pressures taken off when they meet.

Furthermore, the kind of alienating and even hostile relationships created by academic credentialism directly challenges the notion of wa, that is, harmony, which is hailed as a social value and virtue governing interpersonal relationships in the Japanese society. The notion of wa highlights cooperation and renounces open competition and confrontation within groups. It stresses the importance of fulfilment of social roles by group members. Paradoxically, the drive to achieve ‘family success’ causes interpersonal tensions. The critique of the ‘education-focused

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95 See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.1 about Oya no Kai and the rapport among mothers who belong to the same kai.
family’ draws the attention of readers to the need to review the values and beliefs that have been governing the everyday life of individuals in Japanese society.

**Theme 2: role of the media**

In the *futōkō* discourse, while medical constructions have played a key role in blaming *futōkō* children for the problem, the media has been playing a central part in sustaining this child-blaming discourse. *FS* editorialists point out the failure of the media to provide a sustained alternative analysis of *futōkō* from the perspective of parents-children; rather they have been much more likely to construct the child as a ‘problem’. For instance, Wakabayashi has criticized the fact that the reportage of increasing frequency of juvenile crime was not substantiated by statistics. Tsuda has criticized the way in which media reports on cases involving juveniles and children has helped to perpetuate the belief that heavy punishment is the solution to all juvenile problems.

Why up to these days do media reports still focus only on finding out who is to blame?

The Japanese government has been ignoring the advice of the United Nations. They advise the government not to rely on severe punishment to prevent juvenile crimes. The government, on the contrary, has been moving all the way to make the law more stringent. The media is still being spell-bound by this idea….

(*FS* 130, 15/09/2003)

The issue of the Juvenile Law has continually been the focus of the *FS* since its revision in 2001. This indicates that the *FS* has been continually and persistently engaging in the counter-framing of dominant media discourse. Tsuda writes:

We must put in lots of effort to inform the wider public about the role of the Juvenile Law.

The first thing we want people to know is that the Juvenile Law aims to give children who have gone the wrong way and become delinquents, and who are being left on their own, the last chance to go back on to the right track…. We have to spread the message and let those who are worrying about the present...
state of juvenile delinquency understand that the proper way to solve the problem is to take seriously the spirit of the current Juvenile Law….

(FS 32, 15/08/1999)

As pointed out in the critique on the Juvenile Law revision, Tsuda blames the media for focusing on the ‘indulgence of children’ (kodomo no amayakashi) as the cause of the problem, which resulted in the negligence of issues pertinent to the protection of children set down in the protocol for children’s rights – protection which facilitates the growth and development (seichō, hattachi) of children (FS 8, 15/08/1998). He holds the media accountable for developing a public consensus to support more stringent laws against juvenile delinquents.96

Along the same line, the media is also criticized for singling out juvenile offenders as a threat to social order. Hamada Sumio, a university lecturer who specializes in developmental psychology, criticizes the media for making a fuss about the age of juvenile criminals, thus giving the general public a negative impression that juveniles are trouble makers (FS 55, 01/08/2000).

Recently, the age ‘17’ has been used as a pronoun. This morning (7 July) at the very top of the front page of the newspaper, a title in large print reads ’17-year-old from Okayama arrested in Akita’ ….

…. What bothers me is that recently news reports are frequently making a topic out of age.

…. On top of that, this kind of report that highlights the ‘17 year-old’ bears a resemblance to the kind of reports 3 years ago on the ’14 year-old’ Sakakibara incident. This shows that the media is intentionally making an issue out of age….

…. this is not just a problem of the mass media, but it also impacts on the way children identify themselves.

(FS 55, 01/08/2000)

In another editorial, Hamada raises a similar concern over the way the media highlights the age of a young offender, who was only 12 years old then. When approached by the media to comment on the case, Hamada refused to do so.

No doubt I am making a living out of developmental psychology. However, I cannot make any generalization about questions like ‘what are 12-year-olds thinking?’ The nation has more than one million 12-year-olds….

These days the media still makes use of hot topics and reports them in a sensational way in order to catch the readers’ attention.

(FS 127, 01/08/2003)

In fact, not only local media is criticized for making teenagers a spectacle in society; foreign media is also held responsible for the tendency to do so. For instance, a foreign journalist approached Ōta Takashi when a number of serious crimes involving juveniles made headlines in national news. He asked Ōta, ‘In general, what has become of today’s young people in Japan?’ (ima nihon no wakamono wa ittai dōnatteirunda). Ōta refused to comment on specific incidents but instead talked about ‘human problems’ (ningen no mondai) in the society of Japan in general. He says that

Japanese people nowadays have fallen into a state of immense stress. The source of the stress can be summed up in a few words -- ‘hunger for love’. Those who are most sensitive [to such hunger] and are hit squarely [by the lack of love] are young people who are going through puberty.

(FS 51, 01/06/2000)

He maintains that the society of Japan is an ‘inorganic society that has run dry of love’ (aijō no kokatsushita mukiteki shakai), causing people to drift apart from each other (tasha to no kakawari ga soen ni natteiru), and thus leaving in them a desire for that very thing which they lack but cannot name. The yearning for love is manifested in what Ōta has called ‘purposeless frustration’ (yokkyu fuman). Clusters of such purposeless frustration, Ōta explains, cling onto the person chronically and leave the person feeling disgusted or angry, and likely to explode from time to time in unimaginable ways. As such, Ōta contends that the way police handle juvenile
crimes from a punitive and solely legal point of view will only create a vicious cycle, and further aggravate the situation.

In Ōta’s opinion, the media should report from a child’s perspective rather than reinforcing the dominant discourse on juveniles. He maintains that these kinds of social problems should be taken as warning signs, and adults should see that it is their responsibility to respond to the situation (otonashakai eno keikai keihō toshite, otona no sekinin de kangaetemiyō). In this way, adults are regarded as agents of change. He believes that the solution is to listen to the ‘true voice’ (honne) of young people, genuinely accepting them with their frustration, their agony and their complaints that they express through words and deeds. This is, in a way, a criticism of the media for failing to project the ‘true voice’ of children. It is obvious to the Japanese readership that in the mainstream news children are rarely, if ever, interviewed and their views are rarely reported, whether in relation to juvenile crimes or futōkō. He sees that the creation of an environment of love and trust (ai to shinrai no sōzō wo mezasukoto) is crucial to allow children to express their opinions, to make their own decisions, and to participate in society.

Overall, the media critique in FS indites what it sees as the failure of the mainstream media to provide reliable facts to substantiate their stories about juveniles or teenagers. Hamada calls this a ‘pathology’ of the society (FS 55, 01/08/2000). Ōta adds that media framing of juveniles indicates that society fails to practise mutual acceptance. The case is the same with futōkō. The FS portrays the media, and in a broader sense the society, as being discriminatory against teenagers, intolerant, repressive, competitive, hypocritical, dominated by the establishment, and as having a very narrow view of success. Nevertheless, the child-blaming discourse sustained by the media originates from experts, and primarily the medical establishment.

5.4.3 Sub-group 3: Medical/expert perspectives

In the discourse of futōkō, the government approach has been to blame futōkō children, and the psychiatric and medical profession has been a central part of that. In this regard, criticizing medical constructions is central to the critique of the dominant explanation of futōkō. At the same time, it is also found that editorialists
also validate their personal experiences that challenge the hegemonic framing of reality. Also, while the medical construction is the central part of the child-blaming hegemonic discourse, the counselling system, which is a major initiative by MoE, plays an active part in perpetuating and reinforcing such a discourse. The critique of expert perspectives is thus arranged to reflect these three aspects:

1) an internal critique of expert perspectives;
2) personal experiences versus expert opinions;
3) the role of counsellors.

5.4.3.1 Internal critique of expert perspectives

The most intrepid FS critic of the dominant framing of futōkō is Wakabayashi Minoru. As illustrated in Chapter 4, Wakabayashi is one of the veteran futōkō experts from the medical field. On top of his professional qualifications and experiences, his shift in perspective towards futōkō presents a powerful antithesis to the hegemonic framing by the medical establishment – that children are sick. His criticism is directed against the blind faith of people in medical experts and medical science as having solutions to all sorts of problems, including family violence, juvenile delinquency and futōkō. He maintains that

(p)arents have been talking with schools, health centres, and seeking police help, and many of them know too well by experience that these are useless….

(FS 54, 15/07/2000)

Wakabayashi in particular criticises the diagnosis of prestigious professors of psychiatry. He contends that

in psychiatry, the diagnosis of medical officers has a fairly strong element of subjectivity.

On the question of futōkō, what actually have been the pros and cons of the psychiatric approach? Those who have been concerned with this question should know all too well about it. Aren’t there numerous examples of futōkō children being diagnosed as having schizophrenia or depression who were forced to take prescribed medicines and be hospitalised? If doing so did help to improve the
situation, then futōkō would not have become a social problem, and this newspaper should not have gained ongoing support.

…there are already juvenile offenders being hospitalised and put on prescriptive medicine. We should not, in the first place, think of using medication to solve this kind of problem, should we?

(FS 54, 15/07/2000)

In fact, the most persuasive aspect of the articulation of Wakabayashi is his personal change in perspective towards the medical establishment.

The main job of doctors is to prescribe medication to patients. All medications have side effects. As for myself, I also cannot avoid prescribing medication to patients. Nevertheless, I will also let patients know that a certain kind of prescription has the so-called side effects of ‘anxiety, confusion, and dullness’.

In general, under the influence of alcohol, even well behaved people would behave in the most unexpected ways. To make juvenile offenders take prescribed medicines is obviously detrimental to their ability to make sound judgements, isn’t it?

(FS 54, 15/07/2000)

Wakabayashi points out the problem of society relying too much on medical experts, just as it does on the absolute authority of school.

It seems that most of the doctors do not understand the feeling of so-called ‘dislike of school’. They can only think that there must be something physiologically or psychologically wrong with those who cannot go to school. Under the present insurance system, there must be a name for every ‘illness’ in order to sustain the system…. It is easy to make up all sorts of names.

This does not only apply to psychiatry, but also to prescribed medicine….

It is unbelievable that although there has been actual advancement in medical development, the number of patients does not decline at all. It may be hard to believe, but the fact is that the more advanced the medical technology, the more the kind of illness that one has never heard of…. 
Many children have been infected with AIDS through blood transfusion. They are victims of medical advancement. This shows that medical advancement can bring harm to the human society….

Faith in medical treatment has caused pain to futōkō children just as ‘school faith’ has…. There is no such prescription that can make children grow to love school. Instead, many of our readers find that they are so relieved when they give up medication….

Whether teacher or counsellor or doctor, no matter how capable they are, they are far from knowing futōkō children well. Instead of relying on the advice of experts, I believe that the best policy is to learn from those who have futōkō experience.

\[(FS 67, 01/02/2001)\]

As a specialist in child psychiatry, Wakabayashi offers a powerful counter-framing of the psychiatric and behavioural discourse. The internal critique of experts as such has been identified as a powerful tool in enhancing the salience and thus the resonance of a movement frame as discussed in Chapter 4.

In the critique of the medical establishment, medical experts involved in the articulation of a counter-frame also include Mori Hidetoshi, who is a paediatrician, Ozawa Makiko, a clinical psychologist, and Hamada Sumio, who specializes in developmental psychology. An internal critique by medical and psychiatric experts is the highlight of the antithesis to the hegemonic discourse. Together with an internal critique of the school and education system by educators (see Section 5.1 above), and a critique of the jurisdiction by legal experts (see Section 5.2.1), FS editorialists are capable of generating a powerful and persuasive alternative expert framing of futōkō and related issues. At the same time, they also bring in their personal experience to substantiate their viewpoints.

5.4.3.2 Personal experiences versus expert opinions

Personal experiences have often been utilized by futōkō citizens and students to challenge the hegemonic framing of futōkō. Editorialists also bring in their personal
experiences to challenge hegemonic expert perspectives. For instance, Asaka Yūho, who is disabled and an activist for the rights of the disabled, tells of how she decided to give birth to a child despite advice and discrimination from most of the experts she encountered. Asaka Yūho questions the ethics of medical practice through an account of her pregnancy experience (FS 40, 15/12/1999). She criticized the way most of the doctors had treated her.

Although my daughter has a disability, I accept this as a significant part of her being.

Having said that, it was a very difficult experience for me. I believe that my case is a very rare example in the society of Japan. In most cases, disability has been made a very big issue. If a baby is found to have a disability before birth, probably there will not be even one among a thousand parents who would decide to give birth to the deformed baby. Sometimes I cannot even understand why people have such a great fear of other people’s disability. As a result, many decided to kill the unborn life….

With regard to the birth of my daughter, I was treated awfully by doctors other than the doctor-in-charge of my case. They not only delayed performing the ultrasound review for me, but also kept saying things like ‘do you understand that your baby has a disability?’, or repeating to themselves that ‘she doesn’t understand’ when they overheard something. There is a lot to be desired in terms of the ethics and sincerity of doctors….

Whatever the condition of a child is, all children are entitled to be born into this world.

(FS 40, 15/12/2999)

Asaka also maintains that she

seriously believe(s) that it is time for people to stop embracing uncritical acceptance of all sorts of scientific and medical advancement. To appraise any kind of scientific or medical advancement, one must ask an ultimate question: how do these people see life and death? As laypeople, we do not understand things like genetic manipulation or genetic engineering. However, without asking questions, these so-called experts will manipulate life even without seeking
mutual agreements among themselves. Intuition told me that I should object to such practices.  

\textit{(FS 40, 15/12/1999)}

Asaka believes that society has responsibility for the life and death of individual beings. She contends that

I have a disability, and on top of that my daughter has a disability. Having been born into this society where there are suppression and discrimination, I have to face all sorts of doubts and anxiety while trying to keep myself afloat. It would be impossible to give birth to my child without the support of friends and some experts around me. Life is not just created by a person, or even by a man and a woman, but by the society.  

\textit{(FS 40, 15/12/1999)}

Although the experience of Asaka is not related to \textit{futōkō}, as one of those who belong to a marginalized group in society, like \textit{futōkō} students, her experience could invoke similar reactions from \textit{futōkō} students to stand up for themselves. Presenting personal experiences is one of the characteristics of \textit{FS} editorials. In the framing theory, this is known as experiential commensurability. It refers to framing that is congruent or which resonates with the personal experiences of targets of mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000:621). It is one of the factors that contributes to the salience of a collective action frame. According to a study by Benford and Snow (2000), ‘hypothesically, the more experientially commensurate the framings, the greater their salience, and the greater the probability of mobilization’. The experience of editorialists such as Asaka, who was marginalized and discriminated against because of her physical disability, could resonate among groups of people who are being marginalized in different ways, such as the handicapped, the minority groups like Ainu, and other disadvantaged groups (\textit{FS} 40, 15/12/1999).

In addition, the experience of Asaka is an extension of an idea beyond the actual \textit{futōkō} people to other groups of people. \textit{Futōkō} children and their parents could easily relate to the experience of people like Asaka when they are at the mercy of experts. Expert critique in the \textit{FS} asserts the rights of parents to make decisions for their children, irrespective of medical expertise. The idea of exercising personal
rights to resist expert diagnosis and prognosis is extended from futōkō children to the parents of children with disabilities. In the social movement theory of framing, this is called frame extension. Frame extension refers to the extension of a movement frame ‘beyond its primary interests to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential adherents’ (Benford & Snow 2000:625). Although empirical studies show that frame extension activities ‘can cause intramural conflicts and disputes within movements regarding issues of ideological “purity”, efficiency, and ”turf”’(p.625), in the case of the futōkō movement the counter-expert frame is shared by a cross-section of society – patients, the disabled, and students. This potentially facilitates the spread of the futōkō movement to various sections of society.

Another example of experiential commensurability is found in the account by Ōta Takashi. Ōta Takashi relates his experience as a hospital in-patient who found himself being treated as an object rather than as an individual human being. He said that when he decided to refuse to undergo an examination process and explained his concerns to a senior medical expert, he was ignored. He criticizes the expert as follows.

He does not care at all about the lifestyle of patients. Armed with authority, he treats people as if they were only a set of figures in medical reports.…

There was a shocking case in the hospital affiliated to the Municipal University of Yokohama. In that case, doctors mistakenly removed part of the healthy lung and heart of patients. In general, in large hospitals, the person is not given due respect. Experts and skilful technicians in various departments are only concerned about the figures in patients’ records and they treat only the disease, but not the person. Personal backgrounds and the personality of patients are given no regard to. These details are excluded from medical reports. As a result, unbelievably outrageous incidences can occur.

(FA 19, 01/02/1999)

Ōta likens his rights to refuse treatment to that of futōkō.
The school records, which record instructions and a five-stage appraisal of a student, contain nothing about the well-being and development of a student. Students are left to struggle on their own. Through my experience in hospital, I can somehow relate to the experience of students. To exercise the rights of tōkōkyōhi or futōkō is not simply a challenge to the meritocratic society of Japan. As technology advances, I think it is necessary to strike a balance between the global trend of digital information and personal experience so as to create a more affluent culture.

(FS 19, 01/02/1999)

The validation of personal experience to counter-frame expert diagnoses indicates that expert intrusion into the private/individual realm of life happens to not only futōkō children, but also to everyone. Readers are encouraged to exercise their rights to refuse such intrusions. Like medical experts, counsellors have also played a central role by intruding into the life of futōkō children, influencing how people perceive and treat these children, which in turn impacts on how children perceive themselves.

5.4.3.3 Role of counsellors

As mentioned before, the government approach has been to blame the futōkō children, while futōkō has been handled as a kind of ‘problematic student behaviour’. The school counselling system is a major initiative by the government as a response to the ‘major educational issue’ of futōkō and other ‘problematic student behaviours’ (Okamoto 2002). In this regard, the school counselling system has been playing a significant part in perpetuating and reinforcing the child-blaming discourse. Critique of the role of school counsellors is, therefore, another significant part of FS discourse.

School counsellors were introduced into the school system in 1995 (Murayama 2000, Okamoto 2002). They are clinical psychologists who are sent as ‘emotion specialists’ to schools. MoE claimed that ‘the allocation of school counsellors has achieved numerous successes, proving beneficial in preventing, discovering and eliminating problematic student behaviour and providing advice to parents/guardians and teachers on interacting with children’ (MoE 2004a). However, the FS criticized the school counselling system as providing yet another means of control over
children. For instance, veteran school social worker Yamashita maintains that the school counselling system has become more of a ‘chic’ profession than a help to children. He contends that

(i)t is very dangerous to enlarge the school counselling system without knowing the kind of people who conduct counselling in school, and the value system they base (their services) on. Offering a counselling service without carefully considering the impact of the education environment on children, and knowing what it means from the point of view of children when they say that school is ‘not suitable’ for them, counsellors end up imposing a set of theories on children and trying to tame them so that they could fit into the system. To children, this kind of counselling has become just another means of oppression.

*(FS 38, 15/11/1999)*

Yamashita continues:

If school counsellors continue to practice in such a way without realizing those kinds of danger, they will just drive children, who are already painfully struggling, into the fathomless sea of hopelessness. I want those who are doing the ‘wonderful’ job of counselling to take such issues seriously.

*(FS 38, 15/11/1999)*

That is to say that school counsellors have been *counsellors for schools*, but not counsellors for children. The school counselling system is framed as an adversary of *futōkō* children, a framing that is consistent with, and aligns with, the framing of *futōkō* in Group 1 on the school and education system. It shows that the counsellor system is another mechanism to suppress the individuality of students. Furthermore, the critique on the role of counsellors challenges the efficacy of this government measure in solving the problems of *futōkō* as well as others. This echoes the challenge against measures to tighten the Juvenile Law as an effective way to contain juvenile delinquency. Both critiques question the efficacy of the prognosis by the establishment to solve problems. Frame consistency is one of the three factors that strengthen a movement frame. The other two factors are empirical credibility and the credibility of frame articulators (Benford & Snow 2000: 619-20). Critique of the
role of school counsellors also represents one form of resistance to the dominant culture and its influence. Ozawa maintains that

‘kokoro’ (the ‘heart’) has now become the target of service…. Many young people say they ‘want to become counsellors’…. 

As society develops, people have been making a living out of various domains of life…. 

There used to be still a small number of domains in life that cannot be commoditized. These domains are the core of our everyday life. In short, they are domains related to personal feelings and sentiments, as well as interpersonal relationships. However, by means of counselling, these domains are now being commoditized…. 

These private domains that sustain us are now intruded upon by a society that upholds the value of mass consumption…. 

(FS 20, 15/02/1999) 

Ozawa goes on to criticize schools for succumbing to this modern culture of counselling.

Our feelings motivate our actions ... Making a profession out of feelings and relying on such professional service have made a commodity out of life. Schools also have come to rely on professional counselling services to solve their problems. What futōkō students and parents are looking for are relationships with other people and a lifestyle. These should come through a process of learning…. They do not require counselling. I support activities which create, maintain and strengthen such relationships. 

(FS 20, 15/02/1999) 

In short, critiques from a medical and expert perspective is an insiders’ critique of third-party experts, that is, experts who fail to take a tōjisha perspective. It is a resistance to the dominant culture, which subscribes to a kind of professional absolutism as it does to school absolutism. Together with critiques on social values and beliefs, and jurisdiction and individual rights, Group 2 critiques on the wider
social system reaffirm the rationale of activists’ support for futōkō children to reassert themselves. Group 3 articles reflect how editorialists reframe the ‘self’ through presenting two different constructions of a child.

5.5 Group 3: a child-centred perspective

The previous two groups of articles (Group 1: school/education and Group 2: the wider social system) have focused on the structural, institutional, and social aspects that have impacted on the lives of social individuals. Group 3 articles (17.9% of the total) present the construction of the ‘self’, or the individual social being of children/youth. Aspects discussed under this Group shows that FS writers have been adapting elements and concepts from marginalized groups in society to challenge the mainstream values, and in doing so, have framed futōkō as a movement to empower the disadvantaged in society. As illustrated in Groups 1 and 2, resisting the framing of children by the establishment has been at the centre of FS discourse, and thus challenges to the mainstream framing of what makes up an individual child or person is one of the focuses. The alternative frame that FS proffers emphasizes individualism, and the emotional and spiritual needs of children. These elements reflect a challenge to the dominant social system that represses and marginalizes the disadvantaged, including the minority, the weak, the old, and women. Thus there is a strong element of feminine, if not feminist, values in Group 3.

Group 3 demonstrates that FS maintains a child-centred perspective in their interpretations of youth and child issues. It posits a challenge to readers to rethink the notion of ‘self’ from three dimensions:

1) being an individual;
2) the role of school in repressing the ‘self’; and
3) the construction of children.

The child-centred discourse reiterates the core argument that sustains the counter-framing of the hegemonic discourse – that futōkō children are not sick.
5.5.1 Being an individual

Being an individual is a recurring theme in this group of editorials. One indicator is the ample use of expressions of ‘self’. For instance, in six of the articles in this group, the word ‘jibun’ (oneself) is used 42 times, and there are other expressions of ‘self’ like ‘jishin’ (oneself, personal, for one), ‘ko’ (one’s/individual), and ‘jiko’ (self/oneself). The repeated message is ‘living for oneself’ (jibun o ikiru) in a social reality in which the pressure on an individual to be the same as everyone else (minnato onaji) (FS 41, 01/01/2000) is enormous. This is a motif that echoes a theme in sub-group 2 - ‘the demand for conformity’ - and suggests that in reality the ‘self’ is very much suppressed. In fact, most of the editorialists who write about the suppressed ‘self’ are female. They also write from, and identify with, other marginalized groups. These include Ochiai Keiko, a prominent feminist journalist, Azumi Mana, an ex-futōkō student, and Asaka Yūho, a disabled counsellor. FS, in this regard, serves as a platform for the marginalized to air their views, and provides a space in which they can assert their ‘self’’. It is interesting to note that three of the articles in this group were published in the first issue of FS for the year 1999, 2001, and 2002. This could imply that this speaking position is maintained by the FS. FS 41 (01/01/2000), in particular, is full of expressions encouraging the projection and assertion of self. These include:

- **Damedayo, jibun ni gohōbi wo agenakucha** (it is no good not to reward/pamper oneself)
- **Jibun o ikiru** (live one’s own life, to be oneself)
- **Jibun de jibun o aishiteyatte** (love oneself)
- **Jibun no jinsei** (one’s own life)
- **Watashi no nozomu watashi de mazu wa aritai** (more than anything else, I want to be the person I aspire to be)
- **Jibun e no gohōbi wa, jibun ga kitai suru jibun o ikiru koto kara hajimaru** (rewarding oneself begins with living up to one’s own expectations)

In a society in which the pressure to conform is strong, these expressions regarding ‘self’ indicate that there exists a strong desire to break away from the social pressure
of living up to the expectation of people around them, which is especially felt by individuals in the marginalized groups. Ochiai recounted a conversation she had with a female friend to illustrate this social pressure that is often felt at the subconscious level. Her friend said:

I was taught to live in a way that pleases people around me rather than being myself…. This is not my life.

I used to think that it was my life – to live up to the expectations of family, teachers, other adults, and friends.

If this is all of life, it is suffocating.

(Ochiai, 2000)

Ochiai identifies people like her friend as ‘the others’ and their voices as ‘voices from the outskirts’ (Ochiai, 2001). They differentiate themselves from the value system of the mainstream, and highlight the value and uniqueness of each individual person, and the need to take control of one’s own life.

Other voices are different. They are not the mainstream voices, but those from the margins. ‘Voices’ in other words could be understood as ‘values’.

The ‘mainstream’ in this century is after ‘the faster, the bigger’ in everything. Those who are in the mainstream do not question such values, but work hard to achieve optimal productivity and efficiency, to ‘grow bigger’.

However, those who belong to the ‘Other Voices’ are children, females, the minorities, those who already have various so-called ‘disabilities’, and the elderly etc.

Those who identify themselves as ‘Other Voices’ are ‘individual beings’….

The ‘Other Voices’ are … a ‘unique’ group, but at the same time, they are a ‘diversified’ group.
We, Other Voices, should take actions, live it out and make it a popular movement…

‘I’ do not belong to anywhere or anyone.

‘I’ aim at learning from and growing together amid differences….’

(\textit{FS} 65, 01/01/2001)

This articulation of ‘the Other Voices’, or ‘the others’ is an endeavour to create a space for the marginalized to voice their opinions. It is a call to arms to mobilize the marginalized, which include futōkō children, to ‘make it a popular movement’. ‘The Other Voices’ challenge the dominant values that place importance on socio-economic success over individuality. Dominant values are associated with the values of the most powerful members of society. They basically exclude women in general (including feminists), minorities such as Ainu and Koreans, and those with disabilities, social movement activists and so on. The dominant value system is more readily challenged from the margins, producing a position which values difference and diversity. Ochiai believes that the pressure to comply is the same for everyone in society (\textit{minnato onaji}) (\textit{FS} 65, 01/01/2001). As arguments in Group 3 in general shows, \textit{FS} writers challenge the dominant values that are associated with commercialism and commoditization of identity. People adopting the dominant values are seen as assessing the ‘self’ through income earning and consumption ability. However, these leave people hungry for meaning, for a ‘life story’ (\textit{monogatari}) (\textit{FS} 18, 15/01/1999). Hamada Sumio, a psychologist, observes that this hunger is felt both by adults and children alike in a world overloaded with information and choices.

Recently, the word ‘\textit{monogatari}’ (story) has been very popular in various circles…. it has appealed to the heart of many…. There are a number of reasons.

One of the reasons is that nowadays people are presented with many choices in the material world and there seems to be many different choices of lifestyle.

However…. despite the ‘richness’ of choices in life, deep down [in the heart of people] an empty feeling wells up from time to time. That is why people are hungry for stories.
For instance … films for adults with a children’s story line have become enormously popular. As far as quality is concerned, these movies leave much to be desired … I hate it when we all have to quench our spiritual thirst with such meaningless stories.

The situation is the same with children. They are living in a world overwhelmed by information. By contrast, school life has become monotonous. What school promises is only a monotonous story about a good stable life in a material sense when children successfully climb the ladder of the school system…. Nevertheless, they still feel empty and sometimes agonized deep down.

In this monotonous reality, even learning has become a passive experience. They cannot find a ‘meaning’ for the ‘self’…. reality has lost meaning to children, and they gradually develop a hunger for a ‘life story’.

(FS 18, 15/01/1999)

The editorial points to a reality in which there is a hunger for a meaning for life in every social individual, including even those who can fit into the system. FS readers are encouraged to find their own life stories rather than going after fictitious ones.

Meanwhile, in the discussion of ‘jibun o ikiru’ (living for oneself), there occurs a tension. The idea of living for oneself emphasizes two aspects: to encourage individuals to break away from the ‘ordinary’ framework constructed by society and to be ‘ordinary’ in one’s own way. This idea of being ‘ordinary’ in one’s own way as well as being an individual indicates an adaptation of the Western constructions of individualism. In Western constructions, the idea expressed is often that the individual is unique, not ordinary. However, in the FS discourse, ‘ordinariness’ becomes an issue in the manifestation of individualism. The personal experience of Azumi Mana, the ex-futōkō female writer, leads her to claim that the mainstream notion of being ‘ordinary’ is an expression of ‘meritocracy’, of being mundane. She in fact breaks herself away from that mainstream framework of being an ‘ordinary’ individual, and makes herself an individual through futōkō (FS 66, 15/01/2001). The mainstream and elements associated with it are considered to be a mechanism repressing the ‘self’ and producing mundane individuals. School is one of these mechanisms that have undergone FS criticism.
5.5.2 Role of school in repressing self

In the mainstream framework of being an individual, school plays a fundamental part in repressing the self of a child rather than facilitating self-expression. School is said to be a place where individuals experience anxiety (*fuan*), restlessness (*shōsō*), a feeling of having one’s background (character, history, empathy, and things that appeal to the ‘self’) ‘ripped off’ (*seimei no haikei (sono hito no kosei ya rekishi, kyōkansei ya jibun to mukiau koto nado) o hagitoru*) (*FS* 66, 15/01/2001). Children are identified by their class and year rather than their personal backgrounds like age, place of residence, family and so on (*FS* 7, 01/08/1998). Ozawa Makiko (university lecturer) regards this as an imposition of identity and repression of the ‘self’ of students. She says:

> children are identified by their role in school….

> Children should be known by their full name and age. They are not the property of schools.

(*FS* 7, 01/08/1998)

Besides a hierarchical structure in school, repression in school is manifested mainly in communication between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves. According to the *FS* editorials, teachers do not listen to and understand their students but execute unfair judgments (*FS* 13, 01/11/1998); they are insensitive to the personal differences between students and only focus on their academic performance (*FS* 66, 15/01/2001). They often verbally abuse children by using insensitive and inappropriate language (*FS* 103, 01/08/2002). As a result, trust between adults and children breaks down (*FS* 13, 01/11/1998). Students find no way of communicating their needs and feelings as no one cares to listen (*FS* 56, 15/08/2000). Among students, repression occurs through bullying and ostracism by classmates (*FS* 103, 01/08/2002). The result is the welling up of negative feelings, including feelings of loneliness, agony, despair, confusion (*FS* 63, 01/12/2000), of fear and disgust (*FS* 52, 15/06/2000), till the point at which they snap (*kireru*) (*FS* 103, 01/08/2002). The suppressed ‘self’ either finds its way out through becoming
rebellious, violent, abusive (*FS* 29, 01/07/1999), and displaying bullying behaviours, or by becoming social automatons, which is the latent cause of issues like *futōkō*, *hikikomori*, and suicide (*FS* 53, 01/07/2000). The story of a student exemplifies that latter case. The student wrote:

I was living in hell during my primary and secondary school years. My parents are tough teachers. My family is very strict…. I didn’t want to go to school. I wanted to find an excuse to stay away from school…. But anyway, I went to school. I could not get away from it. I killed my own heart’s feelings, and became my mother’s puppet. I continued like this until I graduated from high school as an honours student. However, during my school years, I cut my wrist with a razor every night. To me, there was nothing scary about death. I have even written a suicidal note. I wanted to die in order to show my teachers and parents my utter distress. They did not notice a bit of it at all.

(*FS* 131, 01/10/2003)

*FS* writer Uchida Ryōko has criticized the government for downplaying the role of school in the behavioural problems of students. In a study by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) in 2002 on children who ‘snap’, the Institute maintains that family and personal backgrounds of children are the main factors, while ‘schools play a relatively small part in this’ (*FS* 103, 01/08/2002). Uchida challenged the claims in the report.

It is indicated throughout the report that school and classrooms are the most popular places where ‘snapping’ occurs. They occur everywhere where teachers used language in an insensitive way, or give non-specific guidelines irrespective of situations; or when children are bullied or ostracized by classmates.

(*FS* 103, 01/08/2002)

Snapping, she argues, is the last resort of children who want to communicate to others all that they have suppressed inside. Ochiai quotes a poet who writes about the feelings of these children.

No matter how I talked back, no one cares to understand. Nobody understands how painful it was for me to try to hang on there, until the very last moment, I blow up. This is my last resort. This is all I could do to communicate my feelings.
This is the kind of autocratic, hierarchical relationship that characterized teacher-student relationships that have been existing in mainstream Japanese high schools for decades. A study by Kamata back in 1984 shows strikingly similar experiences of students. Students said that they were labelled ‘problem kids’ by teachers, not given any chance to express themselves, and that they were punished with violence (cited in Yoneyama 1999:67). Repression of the ‘self’ by school has been addressed by scholars like Freire (1972) and Illich (1971) in the field of sociology of education, and has been discussed widely in the context of Japanese education (e.g. Horio 1988). A comparative study of Japanese and Australian high schools by Yoneyama (1999) argues that schools in Japan represent ‘an extreme control model of a social institution where all kinds of mechanisms operate to silence and alienate students’ (p.23). Yoneyama (1999) has examined the control mechanisms used in Japanese high schools as they are experienced by students. She considers four aspects: student-teacher relationships, discipline and punishments, school rules and study, and concludes that Japanese schools are anti-democratic, highly regimented, and that each of the four aspects constitute a part of ‘an integrated system of social control in Japanese schools’ (p.55). On the whole, these studies found that teacher-student relationships in Japanese high schools are relatively more autocratic and teacher-centred than in Australia. The NIER report mentioned in FS 103 (01/08/2002) continues to bring to light such relationships which have changed little over time. In other words, the establishment still maintains a child-blaming perspective, which in turn perpetuates the social milieu of suppression. As such, the individual expression of children in schools is still an issue. By bringing the autocratic aspect of school to the attention of readers, editorialists again challenge readers to evaluate critically the credibility and salience of the dominant framing of children and young people. While Group 2 highlights the role of the school, Group 3 elaborates the problem with the hegemonic construction of the child that has been the cause of labelling and stigmatization of futōkō children, or of children and youth in general.
5.5.3 Construction of children

As mentioned in the previous section, the process of socialization in school is seen by the FS editorials as having produced two opposite constructions of children – one is the over-socialized automatons who have repressed their true nature; the other is the portrayal of children as ‘problems’. Both types display the same kind of emotions, however, according to the FS editorials, including loneliness (FS 63, 01/12/2000), agony (FS 63, 01/12/2000), despair (FS 63, 01/12/2000), confusion (FS 63, 01/12/2000), fear (FS 52, 15/06/2000), dislike/hatred (FS 52, 15/06/2000), and distrust of adults (FS 53, 01/07/2000).

It has been argued in the FS editorials that the over-socialized automatons often become futōkō, hikikomori, and sometimes suicidal (FS 53, 01/07/2000), whereas students who are labelled by society to be ‘problem children’ are often seen by society to be ‘savage, unreasonable, bad-tempered’ (FS 52, 15/06/2000), ‘rebellious’ (FS 37, 01/11/1999), rash, frivolous, and self-indulgent (amae) (FS 37, 01/11/1999; FS 56, 15/08/2000), not serious about life (FS 53, 01/07/2000), violent (FS 9, 01/09/1998; FS 29, 01/07/1999), impossible to understand (FS 13, 01/11/1998), ruthless, cruel (FS 29, 01/07/1999; FS 63, 01/12/2000), bad (FS 63, 01/12/2000), impatient, aggressive, and discontented (FS 103, 01/08/2002). In the view of FS editorialists, the government perceives futōkō children as belonging to the second type, that is, as ‘problem children’. This image as ‘problem children’ is often amplified by the government and in the mass media, as discussed in Group 1 (critique of the school and education system) and Group 2 (critique of the wider social system).

As FS editorialists present, the government identifies futōkō children, as well as hikikomori individuals, as ‘problem children’ who are a source of threat to social and economic security and stability because according to the government: being futōkō – not going to school – means having no future and not being able to contribute to the sustainability of the economic development and the competitiveness of the nation; being hikikomori means not taking part in any socially or economically productive activity, becoming a ‘parasite’ on their families, living off the legacy of their aging parents, which is again detrimental to the nation’s economic growth; and becoming
delinquents means to become a threat to the life and safety of the community, and they are therefore to be treated like enemies of the public.

In contrast, the two different constructions of children, as over-socialized automatons and ‘problem children’, invoke in FS writers and other like-minded people sympathy and a sense of urgency to act collectively to help children and young people. Both constructions of children are seen by the FS as reflecting the dominant values and belief system in the wider society, and its impact on individuals. In other words, to change the way the public perceives children, and therefore responds to youth-related social issues, is a political action. It involves the introduction of alternative values to change the dominant ideological orientation of society. As a prognosis, FS writers have introduced a feminine perspective in lieu of the mainstream ones.

5.6 Female values as an alternative

The construction of a child in Japanese society has a gender element in that it reflects the projection of the values of a male-dominant society on a child. Nowadays, patriarchy still dominates spheres of life in Japanese society (Sugimoto 1997; Tachibanaki 1996). In FS editorials there are two opposite sets of values articulated: one is the mainstream or the patriarchal view that represents the perspective of the majority in society, in particular the establishment; the other features a more maternal, or feminine, perspective that FS proffers. By patriarchal values, FS editorials refer to values of the most powerful members of society, and believe that these values have been imposed on Japanese society as the standard (kakuitsu), and are exclusive of all other values (yuitsu) (FS 65, 01/01/2001), and tolerate no differences of perspective (FS 56, 15/08/2000). The FS argues that the most powerful members of society emphasize socio-economic success, competitiveness, and mammonism; are arrogant, insensitive and are aggressive in nature (FS 63, 01/12/2000; FS 65, 01/01/2001); create walls between individuals (FS 66, 15/01/2001) and pressure for everyone to conform (FS 65, 01/01/2001); are artificial or fake (FS 56, 15/08/2000); establish artificial structures called schools which restrict the physical and mental development of children (FS 56, 15/08/2000; FS 66, 15/01/2001); and allow no personal space and freedom of development, and no
expression of individual values. Asaka Yuho describes the qualities of arrogance and insensibility (donkansa) as qualities of a male-dominant society, which are characterized by rapid progress but which are disruptive (FS 63, 01/12/2000). She ascribes these values to the creation of a nation that is kōganmuchi (impudent and shameless), with particular reference to the war crimes committed by Japan during WWII. They are qualities that render the nation incapable of raising young people with the noble qualities of integrity (shōjikisa) and purity (junsuisa).

By contrast, the alternative values found in FS that align with feminine values are values of the ‘outskirts’, the minorities, the weak, and the disabled (FS 17, 01/01/1999). They embrace diversity and incorporate difference (FS 41, 01/01/2000; FS 65, 01/01/2001). They feature gentle approaches instead of being competitive and aggressive (FS 65, 01/01/2001). They value integrity and purity instead of socio-economic success (FS 63, 01/12/2000). They accept individuals as they are and do not force them to conform (FS 53, 01/07/2000). They highlight openness, empathy, the importance of nurture, connection with other individuals and expression of true self (FS 9, 01/09/1998; FS 56, 15/08/2000; FS 66, 15/01/2001). They allow possibilities of various kinds and do not confine individual development of children within the school structure (FS 56, 15/08/2000). They are associated with nature, and support individual beings in their attempts to claim their subjectivity (FS 65, 01/01/2001). They respect the need of the individual child for personal space (ibasho) (FS 17, 01/01/1999). These feminine values are amplified by both female and male FS writers as a better alternative to the dominant male values. The contrast between the mainstream/patriarchal values and the alternative/feminine values are summarized in Table 5.4.

Furthermore, many FS writers exhibit a proclivity to associate feminine qualities with nature, with ‘what is good’ in society. For instance, Honda links feminine qualities of nurturing, connecting with people, and self-expression to the crucial role of nature in the growth of a child (FS 9, 01/09/1998; FS 56, 15/08/2000). He maintains that

(c)hildren can only learn what the original world is like and the balance between all living things, including human beings, through going out to the ‘shizen’ [nature]. This is what ‘learning’ really means. Children cannot learn truly
important lessons when, at the critical period of their growth, they are confined in schools, cram schools and at home studying for exams.

Hence, ‘the longer one lives in the so-called civilized society, the more one loses one’s sensitivity towards the balance and harmony of nature, and the further apart one is from the spiritual world, in the innermost part of an individual being’.

When children are detached from the ‘spiritual world’, they become restless, anxious, and behave in an abnormal way. The pain is felt all the more by children who are more sensitive [to their spiritual needs]. One manifestation of such detachment is refusal to comply with the abnormal education system.

\[(FS \ 9, \ 01/09/1998)\]

Honda believes that nature has a purifying effect and the lack of contact with ‘divine’ nature is at the root of many youth problems nowadays \((FS \ 56, \ 15/08/2000)\). He believes that the closer one is to nature, the more at peace one is with each other and the world, and the less likely juvenile delinquency is to occur. Claims by Honda reflect a kind of aesthetic sensitivity to nature and a strong desire for acceptance and nurturing.
Table 5.4 Two contesting frames of mainstream and feminine values in the FS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainstream values</th>
<th>Feminine values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Represent dominant culture, that of the powerful in society; the weak and</td>
<td>The outskirts, the minorities, the weak, disadvantaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disadvantaged are excluded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuitsu (the only one) value.</td>
<td>Sorezore (various) values, diverse, rich, (tayō).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘More, faster, bigger’.</td>
<td>Gentle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuit of socio-economic success, competitive, aggressive, mammonism.</td>
<td>Open to possibilities; non-materialist values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial, confined within the school building, fake; school is a closed structure</td>
<td>Close to nature, associated with nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(heisoku).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute standard for all (kakuitsu); differences are eliminated.</td>
<td>More open; incorporates differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to conform.</td>
<td>Subjectivity; in control of oneself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed, alienating people.</td>
<td>Open, empathetic, nurturing, connection, self-expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No personal space and freedom, only conformity and living to expectations of</td>
<td>Value ibasho (personal space).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School is the epitome of the mainstream society.</td>
<td>School is not everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not accept individual values.</td>
<td>Accepts individuals as they are (so, have to accept hikikomori and futōkō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individuals as well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause social problems.</td>
<td>Resolve social problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrogant, insensitive</td>
<td>Emphasize integrity, purity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed above, the writings of FS editorialists like Honda focus on compassion and tolerance towards rebellious and spoiled children. Their perspectives find agreement with the viewpoints of eco-feminists in the 1950s and 1960s. Eco-feminists ‘advocate the rediscovery of the feminine principle – of “the nature within us” – and this in turn implies a rediscovery of traditional communal structures … which, in Japan as elsewhere, have been obliterated by the creation of the modern state and the post-Meiji patriarchal family’ (Morris-Suzuki 1998:136). In the FS, editorialists argue that patriarchal dominance is manifested in the mainstream representation of children. In the dominant representation, children are recalcitrant and need to be repressed. This kind of construction can be regarded as a form of violence against children and youth. FS writers thus present their disapproval of the dominant values through calling upon their feminine and naturalist perspectives.

By incorporating a feminine perspective, FS extends its frame to that of Japanese feminists. Japanese feminists concern themselves with the relationship between
‘gender, ethnic, and national identities’ (Morris-Suzuki 1998:137), further extending the reach of futōkō activists to these groups. Also, the FS narratives of the ‘self’ fall in line with what McLelland (2005) called ‘a discourse of rights, citizenship and belonging’ (2005:106-7). This brings them into partnership with groups supporting greater egalitarianism and individualism, and with proliferating NPO and NGO communities. They turn away from the bureaucracy that represents ‘harmony’, and increasingly use the law to resolve issues (McLelland and Dasgupta 2005:8). The articulation of issues of the wider social system in Group 2 shows that FS successfully solicits the support of legal experts like Tada Hajime and Tsuda Genji as their frame articulators. In addition, as illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4, futōkō movement organizations have built networks with a great number of organizations and maintain close links with communities that support human rights and individualism. Incorporating gender issues renders the FS frame culturally resonant to the historical milieu, as there has been a move towards a gender issues frame in Japan, and this encapsulates the human rights frame. However, there has also been a backlash to all these rights movements – the enactment of the hinomaru flag and the kimigayo song, and the change in the Fundamental Law of Education as discussed in Section 5.3.2 indicate difficulties which confront rights activists.

In fact, culture and gender are important themes in citizens’ movements in Japan in the 1990s. As mentioned in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.3) when discussing the external links of the movement, an alliance of women’s and children’s groups and NGOs emerged to challenge the hierarchical nature of Japanese society and ‘the old paternalism (of experts, professionals, the press and even self-proclaimed leaders of minority rights’ groups’)’ (Chan-Tiberghien 2004:5-7; McLelland and Dasgupta 2005:8). These groups attracted lawyers, academics, counsellors, politicians, women’s studies scholars, foreign experts and even men’s rights groups who brought into public discussion sensitive topics in Japanese society (Chan-Tiberghien 2004:5-7). The futōkō movement group is one of these groups. It has mobilized a large number of women across the nation involved in bringing social change through futōkō.

97 For discussions on links of the futōkō movement and its partnership with other organizations, see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.
5.7 Conclusion

To conclude, the content analysis of *FS* editorials suggests that the futōkō movement attempts to legitimise futōkō and highlight individual autonomy. Themes elaborated in the editorials indicate that *FS* has been challenging the hegemonic notion of school education; jurisdiction in relation to minors; social perceptions towards young people (shonen kan); conventional beliefs concerning academic credentialism; explanations offered by the medical establishment and experts in relation to, but not exclusive to, futōkō; the media construction of children and social events; the notion of being an individual; the role of school in the repression of individualism; and the construction of the child. These themes conjure up a picture of the existing institutional establishment as static, patriarchal, aiming at suppressing individuality and reinforcing conformity. At the same time, a diagnosis, or counter-framing, of futōkō and related issues is articulated. The *FS* editorialists counter-frame that school, not children, is problematic; school is not the only place to educate children; going to school is the right of children but not their obligation; the belief of school absolutism is the root of futōkō; school, the education system and society is suppressing the individuality of children; futōkō manifests problems with school and society, not children; school and MoE are incapable of change, and therefore futōkō citizens need to act outside the system. In other words, themes in *FS* editorials highlight the role of the school, the institutional and the social environment in creating the phenomenon of futōkō, and they propose that the solution lies in changing the social and institutional environment. The diagnosis points to a need for collective actions to support futōkō children in order to resist the school/expert identity imposed on them.

In performing this content analysis, the social movement theory of framing has been useful in that it reveals the interpretive frame that is collectively shared by *FS* editorialists, the frames and ideas they object to, and the issues which can be/should be acted upon. For instance, the concepts of core framing tasks of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing are useful in identifying

1) what *FS* editorialists object to (that is, futoko is a problem of children);

2) what they believe is the reality (that is, futoko is a problem of school and society); and
how they motivate the wider public to act collectively to proffer their alternative interpretive frame (that is, by using vocabularies of urgency, severity, propriety, and efficacy).

Moreover, a number of tactics are found in the articulation and development of the FS frame. These include frame articulation, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame bridging. They are found useful in enhancing the credibility, salience and resonance of the FS frame. They render the alternative frame of FS more inclusive and flexible, and thus they potentially extend the interpretive and collective action frame of the futoko movement to involve supporters and adherents from a wider social spectrum. In return, editorialists enrich the futōkō frame with their professional knowledge and personal experience. Their discussions shared a central concern for ‘life’, a concern that helps to depoliticize the nature of their discourse. A depoliticized nature is important in facilitating mobilization of the public to participate in the futōkō movement in the social context of Japanese society, in which futōkō movement members are in general cautious about taking part in politically sensitive activities. Also, in terms of tactics, FS writers have appropriated Western concepts of human rights, freedom and individualism to develop their frames. All these give the articulated frame cultural credibility and therefore makes it more acceptable to the targets of mobilization.

Futōkō, therefore, as framed by FS editorialists, is more than a reframing of futōkō. By drawing in viewpoints from writers who come from a cross-section of the society, the alternative futōkō discourse has become a cross-institution critique. Also, in discussing various issues in society, whether futōkō, juvenile delinquency, or the idea of ‘self’ and individuality, FS writers very often extend and develop their critique to cover society in general. The FS critique goes beyond reframing the issue of futōkō to critiquing the educational system, the legal system, the social system of meritocracy and its associated values, the state of human rights, of democracy and equality, aspects of patriotism, nationalism and militarism in Japan, the system of counselling, the practice and ethics of medicine and the media, the institutional formulation of the image of the ‘child’, and adults’ responsibility for children. Futōkō has spurred cross-institutional critiques from a cross-sector of Japanese society. It has bridged its frame with those of peace, rights, equality, ecology,
justice and choice, and has challenged the hegemonic frame, to borrow from Melucci, as ‘the criterion of efficiency and effectiveness’, and as the ‘the only measure of sense’ (1994:102).

Analysis of the FS editorials indicate that while futōkō is the central issue, the futōkō discourse has also moved out to cover wider human rights and other discourses, and bridged futōkō with the choice frame and injustice frames. The three main categories of topics identify that futōkō has been framed and constructed as a critical appraisal of Japanese society with broad implications for many different aspects of the everyday life of its citizens. Figure 5.2 captures this discursive nature of the FS editorial discourse: futōkō as the core concern of activists has inspired critiques of other school-related issues and the relationship between the individual and the society. Futōkō was an opening used by activists to extend their activism to issues related to school, education, and the wider social system that have impacted on the life of social individuals. In fact, their activism on some of these issues like Juvenile Law change (as discussed in Group 2 articles) has the potential of becoming another movement-specific frame. As categorized by Benford and Snow (2000), a movement frame that is capable of creating space for a variety of movement-specific frames could be a master frame (2000:619). Given the extended scope of futōkō activism, the futōkō movement frame could have the possibility to develop into a master frame.

This chapter has explored the reframing of futōkō. Chapter 6 explores the new measures of sense which it imparts in changing policies and practices, particularly in dialogue with MoE, the main proponent of the hegemonic futōkō frame.

Fig. 5.2 Futōkō-inspired discourse in the FS editorials.
Chapter Six
The Outcomes of the Futōkō Movement

6.1 Classification of outcomes

As discussed in Chapter 2, the extent to which a movement attends to its core framing tasks, that is diagnostic and prognostic framing, is crucial to the attainment of desired outcomes (Cress & Snow 2000:1071). This chapter discusses the outcomes of the Futōkō movement, and suggests that framing has been an important factor accounting for the success of the Futōkō movement. The analysis of outcomes suggests that framing does play an important part in reflecting the broader cultural and institutional changes which movements can bring about.

Two types of outcome based on the typology by Gamson (1975, 1990) are adapted. The first type reflects acceptance of the Futōkō movement group by MoE as a valid spokesperson for a legitimate set of interests for Futōkō children. As discussed in section 6.2 below, acceptance is measured in terms of changes in MoE policies and attitudes towards Futōkō and Futōkō children. These are what Gamson (1990) called organizational outcomes that indicate informal or formal recognition of a movement group and the contribution of its activism. This chapter will also discuss issues of counter-framing by movement opponents who challenges movement framing activities. Counter-framing refers to attempts to ‘rebut, undermine, or neutralize a person’s or group’s myths, versions of reality, or interpretive framework’ (Benford 1987:75), and counter-frames of opponents often engender reframing activity by the movement (Benford & Hunt 1994). In the context of the Futōkō movement, counter-framing elements in MoE policy change will be taken into account in assessing policy changes (see Section 6.2.3).

The second type of outcome adopted from Gamson (1990) is called beneficiary outcomes, which refer to new advantages gained by the movement’s beneficiaries as
a result of movement action and demands (as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2). They are outcomes that reflect the cultural and ideational changes that the futōkō movement has brought about. There are four sets of beneficiary outcomes/new advantages:

1. a shift in the focus of the futōkō discourse (as discussed in Section 1.4);
2. the creation of a futōkō culture achieved through the development of futōkō social movement organizations (SMOs) (as discussed in Chapter 4);
3. change in media representation of futōkō (Section 6.3.1);
4. biographical changes – this includes the creation of career activists (Section 6.3.2).

This Chapter will focus on a discussion of the third and fourth sets of new advantages: changes in media representation of futōkō and biographical changes experienced by activists.

6.2 Changes in MoE understanding of and measures towards futōkō

While Chapter 1 has given an overview of the general trend of policy changes in relation to futōkō, this section will provide details of changes and discuss the influence of futōkō activism over policy changes. Vigorous changes in MoE measures against futōkō have occurred since the end of 1983 when the Kibō no kai published a book on futōkō (Table 6.1). Before that, and as listed in Table 6.1, futōkō was first and briefly addressed in the MoE document called ‘Information for Student Guidance, issue no.7 – Points of View Concerning Counselling in Secondary Schools’ published in 1971. At that time, MoE’s ‘method of treatment’ for futōkō consisted of more ‘forceful’ or ‘authoritative’ instructions to students to stay at school, along with ‘counselling’ which also told students to stay at school (Asakura 1995:55-6). It was not until 1983 that MoE started to take the issue more seriously and issued a separate handbook to address futōkō.

In the 1980s, when the number of futōkō students started to climb, futōkō, as illustrated in Chapter 1, was still officially known as tōkōkyohi, and was understood
as a personality problem experienced by individual students. For instance, the Information for Student Guidance published in 1984 describes tōkōkyohi as follows:

A number of intertwined factors and backgrounds could account for tōkōkyohi. In general, it is believed that some students have a predisposition for tōkōkyohi. Under certain circumstances, this predisposition could be triggered and manifested as tōkōkyohi.

(MoE1984, quoted in Asakura 1995:77)

Expressions in Student Guidance which refer to tōkōkyohi as a personality problem also use phrases such as ‘a strong inclination to feel insecure’, ‘indecisive’, ‘lack of adaptability’, ‘lack of flexibility’, ‘socially and emotionally immature’, and ‘a strong tendency towards nervousness’. At the same time, family (katei) was assigned responsibility in terms of their ‘manner of raising children’. Parents were criticized for being ‘too protective’, ‘at [a child’s] beck and call’, and for ‘intervening too much’.

However, there was a change in understanding tōkōkyohi in the 21st issue of the Information on the Guidance of Students published in 1990; school factors and social factors were included in addition to personality and family factors. The document explains the causes and triggers of tōkōkyohi as follows:

Causes of tōkōkyohi include personality inclination, family factors, school factors, and social factors [emphasis added]. There are numerous examples indicating that these are the preliminary factors (keiseiyōin) conditioning the formation of tōkōkyohi. For instance, in the face of a deteriorating relationship with the teacher, problems with friends, and a drastic decline in academic achievements, tōkōkyohi will be triggered in students whose personality inclines them towards tōkōkyohi.

(MoE 1990, quoted in Asakura 1995:78)

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99 (MoE) Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of MoE (1990) 21 Gakkō ni Okeru Kyōiku Sōdan no Kangaekata Susumekata Sei to Shiryō Dai 21 Shū [Student Guidance Information for the Promotion of Educational Consultation in School, Issue No. 21], MoE.
This was the first time that school and social factors were officially incorporated to explain *tōkōkyohi*, though individual personality and family factors are still described as direct causes of the problem. It was not until the 1990s that a significant shift in understanding *futōkō* occurred. In an official survey published in November 1990, the issue of *tōkōkyohi* was discussed as follows:

> Until now, it has been generally understood that *tōkōkyohi* is a personality problem. However, in many cases, individual personality is not the cause of *tōkōkyohi*. It is reported that in many cases, *tōkōkyohi* children are very ordinary children whose personality does not exhibit any particular problem.  

(MoE 1990a)

MoE maintained the same understanding of *tōkōkyohi* in the Final Report released in March 1992.100 This means that MoE had finally moved beyond its earlier insistence that *tōkōkyohi* is a kind of ‘abnormality in character’ (*seikaku ijō*). The 1992 Final Report also noted that

> in order to tackle the issue of *tōkōkyohi*, it is necessary to understand that *tōkōkyohi* can happen to any child.  

(MoE 1992)

This implies that MoE has stopped blaming only the individual child. Accordingly, MoE approach towards *tōkōkyohi* began to shift from speaking of the need ‘to cure’ *tōkōkyohi* to the need ‘to understand’ (MoE 1990) - a change indicating that MoE no longer saw *tōkōkyohi* only as a symptom of non-adaptability (Asakura 1995).

Concurrent with the changes in MoE understanding was the steady development of the *futōkō* movement as explored in previous chapters. Although a direct relationship cannot be drawn between the *futōkō* movement and changes in MoE measures, it is likely that, in the face of the efficient development of the movement, the government started to feel the pressure to change. Asakura (1995) ascribes MoE change in the understanding of *tōkōkyohi* to the success of the work by the

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100 There are two Final Reports which are of importance in the development of MoE *futōkō* measures. In this thesis, the one released in 1992 is called 1992 Final Report, and the one in 2003 the 2003 Final Report.
Kangaerukai and various ibasho outside schools. The change in the understanding of tōkōkyohi was accompanied by changes in MoE measures.

From 1992 onwards, MoE started making more vigorous efforts to keep futōkō under control. The setting up of tekiō shidō kyōshitsu in 1992 was the first major policy change. Tekiō shidō kyōshitsu literally means ‘adjustment guidance class’ and is sometimes translated as adaptation assistance centre, but is officially translated as ‘education support centres’. It is a special facility set up by local boards of education for futōkō students. Students who go to a tekiō shidō kyōshitsu receive learning support from public school teachers or retired teachers, and are counted as students who attend school. Psychiatrists or clinical psychologists are assigned to see the students there. By providing all these supports to futōkō students through the tekiō shidō kyōshitsu, the local boards of education aim to help students to go back to their own schools in a year’s time. However, many futōkō students do not like tekiō shidō kyōshitsu, and eventually move on to free schools and free spaces set up outside the educational administration (more discussion in Section 6.2.3). While activists are generally sceptical about the function of tekiō shidō kyōshitsu, they regarded it as a softening of the government’s stance towards futōkō students. In the following years, as the number of futōkō students continued to increase (see Table 1.1), more vigorous policy changes were pursued by MoE as discussed later. At the same time, the futōkō movement continued to develop and enlarge its scope of activism (as outlined in Table 1.2 in Chapter 1).

Table 6.1 below shows the relationship between MoE and the futōkō movement during the period 1971 to 2004 when the movement newspaper, the FS, changed its name to Fonte. Entries in the table chronicle major developments in MoE measures and futōkō activists’ response to the issue of futōkō. The table is compiled by using data collected from websites and publications of MoE and those of the futōkō movement, including the Futōkō Shim bun. The table indicates that MoE and the futōkō movement have been competing for control of the interpretative frame and significance of influence of futōkō. To highlight the development of events and the relationship between MoE and the futōkō movement, related and corresponding events are underlined, and key MoE futōkō measures are indicated in bold. The table shows that over time futōkō activists have become included in MoE process of policy
making (e.g. the Collaborators’ Meeting) and have won other small victories such as the granting of commuting passes for students. All these indicate a measure of recognition for the futōkō movement.

From the major changes in futōkō measures illustrated in Table 6.1, ‘acceptance’ of the movement by its antagonist, MoE, is manifested in two aspects. First, MoE started taking futōkō seriously, especially from 1989, after the Emergency Meeting took place and the futōkō movement became organized and increasingly active. The change in major futōkō measures indicates an adaptation of the futōkō movement frame. The second aspect reflects a change in the relationship between the movement and MoE from a hostile to a more positive one.
Table 6.1 Major changes in MoE measures in response to futōkō and concurrent developments of the futōkō movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MoE</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>Futōkō activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>‘treatment’ for tōkōkyōhi mentioned in Information for Student Guidance.</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>First separate handbook on tōkōkyōhi published.</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Inauguration of the ‘Collaborators’ Meetings for the Investigation of Measures Against School Non-Adjustment.</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Change in attitude: ‘Tōkōkyōhi can happen to any child’. Futōkō students who put their feet in schools counted as ‘present’. establishment of ‘education support centres’ (tekiō shidō kyōshitsu) to help students to go back to school.</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Commuting pass issued to futōkō students.</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>School counsellor scheme started (sent to 154 schools)</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>counselors for moral education assigned (kokorō no kyōshitsu sōdanin) to students who go to school but cannot enter classrooms.</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1973 |
- Kibō no kai (Meeting of Hope) was set up. 
- Life is Possible Without School by the Kibō no kai published. 
1983 |
- Tōkōkyōhi o Kangaerukai [The Association to Think About Tōkōkyōhi] (the Kangaerukai) was set up. 
1984 |
- Tōkyō Shūre was set up. 
1988 |
- Emergency Meeting held in protest against Asahi Shimbun article on futōkō. 
1990 |
- Tōkōkyohi o Kangaerukai Zengoku Nettowaku ([the National Network to Think About Tōkōkyohi]) (the Kangaerukai Network) was set up. 
1992 |
1993 |
- Futōkō activists claimed credit over issue of Commuting Pass. 
- Home Shūre activities launched. 
1994 |
- Tōkyō Shūre Ōta branch opened. 
1995 |
- Tōkyō Shūre Shinjuku branch opened. 
1997 |
- Cyber Shūre established 
1998 |
- First issue of the Futōkō Shimbun published.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • **School Support Program (SSP)** set up to provide financial support to *tekiō shidō kyōshitsu* and free schools.  
| • counseling videos distributed to school staff.  
| • Learning hours and curriculum reduced to lessen study loads.  
| • Change in high school entrance examination qualification to allow free school students to sit for the examination.  
| • Education Minister visited Child Line Support Centre set up by *futōkō* citizens.  
| 2000 |  
| • Plan to introduce new type of schools catering for the need of *futōkō* students.  
| 2001 |  
| • Machimura, Minister of Education criticized *futōkō* students for using the idea of individuality as an excuse not to go to school.  
| • First meeting of the **Collaborators’ Meetings** for the Study of *Futōkō* Issues. Free schools including *Tōkyō Shūre* and grassroots organizations were invited to participate.  
| • Special Zones for Structural Reform set up.  
| 2002 |  
| • Inauguration of **School Support Network (SSN)**.  
| • Recognition of schools established and run by NPOs and corporations.  
| • Recognition of home-based learning facilities.  
| • Plan to set up new ‘support system’ in the form of independent support centres (*jiritsu shien kyōshitsu*).  
| • **Final Report of Collaborators’ Meetings** released: more vigorous measures to put pressure on students to go back to school, e.g. expansion of SSN, school counselor system, ‘*kokorō no kyōiku*’.  
| 2003 |  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre Nagareyama* branch opened.  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre* was awarded the *Asahi Nobinobi* Education Award, the *Bell Mark Education Support Foundation* Award, and the *Yoshikawa Eiji* Cultural Award.  
| • *Futōkō* activists met with MoE and voiced concern over measures announced in Final Report.  
| 2004 |  
| • 20th anniversary of *Kangaerukai*.  
| • *FS* renamed *Fonte*.  
| 1999 |  
| • *Shūre* University opened.  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre* and *FS* attested NPO status.  
| 2000 |  
| • Child Line Support Centre was set up and visited by Education Minister.  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre* hosted the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC).  
| 2001 |  
| • An emergency meeting was called in response to Machimura’s comments.  
| • Setting up of Free School National Network.  
| 2002 |  
| • *FS* sent representatives to all 14 meetings.  
| • *Futōkō* citizens formed their own Liaison Meeting to critique outcomes of Collaborators’ Meetings.  
| • Child Line Support Centre started to offer free dial-up service.  
| 2003 |  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre Nagareyama* branch opened.  
| • *Tōkyō Shūre* was awarded the *Asahi Nobinobi* Education Award, the *Bell Mark Education Support Foundation* Award, and the *Yoshikawa Eiji* Cultural Award.  
| 2004 |  
| • 20th anniversary of *Kangaerukai*.  
| • *FS* renamed *Fonte*.  

‘Child Line’, a telephone helpline for children was set up by the *futōkō* movement.
6.2.1 Policy change – new advantages

Before 1989 major futōkō measures were limited to a few ‘instructions’ outlined in the 1983 Handbook for teaching staff. It was not until the end of the 1990s that a significant amount of manpower and financial resources were invested in futōkō measures. In addition, as mentioned in Section 6.2, there was a significant change in understanding the problems of futōkō due to its continued increase (see Chapter one). Overall, futōkō measures in the 1990s have changed to incorporate the concerns of the futōkō movement – to address the feelings and rights of students instead of just giving ‘instructions’ to teachers. There are four major areas of policy change which occurred. These involve the establishment of

1) a commuting pass (1993);
2) a more relaxed curriculum and flexible school system;
3) a school counselling system; and
4) a support network and programme for futōkō students, parents and teachers.

6.2.1.1 Commuting Pass

The first and one of the biggest achievements claimed by the movement was the granting of commuting passes to futōkō children in 1993 (MoE 1993). The commuting pass is a concession pass for travelling that is granted to students attending schools and education institutes approved by major public transport providers in Japan. When applying for commuting passes, students are required to submit proof of attendance issued by mainstream schools and some tutorial colleges for university entrance exams (yobikō). The issue of a commuting pass is subject to the applicant having met attendance requirements stipulated by a recognized institute or school. The agreement to issue commuting passes to futōkō students in 1993 is regarded by futōkō activists a significant achievement of the futōkō movement because it symbolized MoE acceptance of the interests and rights of futōkō children whom the movement claimed to represent. The futōkō movement also perceived this as a recognition of the status of free schools as legitimate education providers for futōkō children, though it should be noted that not all students going to free schools are granted commuter pass, and the FS was also aware of the situation (FS 18, 15/01/1999). FS pointed out that
(f)rom April 1993, children attending free schools and places of the like can be granted commuting passes. It is an achievement for children who go to free schools and their parents.

(FS 95, 01/04/2002)

In the two consecutive years following the year MoE granted the commuting pass to free school students, Tōkyō Shūre opened two more branches – the Ōta branch in 1994 and the Shinjuku branch in 1995. In addition, the Shūre university was set up in 1999 and a fourth branch of Tōkyō Shūre in Nagareyama opened in 2003 (Table 6.1). The new advantage gained for futōkō children in 1993 may have contributed in part to the expansion of Tōkyō Shūre in the following years.

6.2.1.2 More relaxed curriculum and flexible school system

The second major change is that measures were instituted to alleviate the pressure of learning on students and reframe schools as more stress-free and caring places. At the same time, more flexible examination and selection criteria were introduced to allow futōkō students to sit for high school and higher education entrance examinations - chances which were otherwise inaccessible to them.

For instance, as Table 6.1 shows, from 1992 onwards futōkō students could be counted as ‘present’ if

1) they received counselling or guidance either from public (e.g. the education support centre) or private facilities outside of schools, fulfilled certain criteria stipulated by the school, and obtained the endorsement of the school principal;

2) they participated in school activities, even if they did not enter the classroom.

Moreover, since 2005, MoE started providing IT support to stay-at-home futōkō primary and junior high school students. Futōkō students who use IT learning support and fulfil conditions stipulated by the principal could be considered satisfactory in attendance.

With regard to the school curriculum, important policy changes published in the latest curriculum revision in 1998 and implemented in 2002 include: the number of
compulsory subjects in high schools and the content of school curriculum was reduced; a period of integrated study was added to the curriculum in 1998 to expand and to enhance students’ learning experiences; primary and secondary schools were given permission to design special curriculum for futōkō students; qualifications for sitting for the final examination of final year junior high school and high school entrance examination were changed so as to allow futōkō students to sit for both examinations; and admission of futōkō students to senior high schools would no longer be determined solely on the basis of a student’s reports at school (MoE 1998, Cave 2003:87-102). All these measures greatly improved opportunities of futōkō students to pursue further studies.

Moreover, while Tōkyō Shūre worked on promoting the idea of a free school, MoE also announced a plan to experiment with new types of school for futōkō students in 2000. The new type of schools would be modelled on the charter schools in the United States. In 2002, Special Zones for Structural Reform was set up to promote reforms in education and other areas, and as a result of structural changes like this in school system, Tōkyō Shūre was able to expand further and set up a secondary school in April 2007 (more details in Chapter 7).

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102 In a MoE on-line document titled ‘Promotion of the reform of upper secondary school education’, it is stated that:

In order to meet the diverse situations of students and ensure their individual growth, MoE has been advancing the reform of upper secondary school education by, for example, establishing new types of upper secondary schools such as those with integrated courses or credit systems, and by organizing diverse courses with a wide variety of optional subjects. MoE is also addressing the improvement of the selection system for students advancing to upper secondary schools by implementing diverse elective methods.


103 Charter schools are publicly funded elementary or secondary schools in the United States that are freed from some of the rules, regulations and statutes that apply to other public schools. The charter school movement in the United States began in 1988. The originally conceived idea of a charter school is to establish schools that are accountable more for student outcomes rather than for processes or inputs, such as teacher certification requirements. For more about charter schools, see Lori A. Mulholland, Charter Schools: The Reform and the Research, Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Policy Brief, March 1996, p.1.
6.2.1.3 School counselling system

Instituted in 1995 (as indicated in Table 6.1), the use of a school counsellor was regarded by MoE as one of the most effective futōkō measures. Clinical psychotherapists, or ‘emotion specialists’, or literally, an ‘expert of the heart’ (kokorō no senmonka) were assigned as school counsellors to provide counselling to students and advice to school staff and parents or guardian (hogosha).104 School counsellors were assigned with a specific purpose of preventing, identifying and finding solutions to student problems in schools. In year 2001, ¥6 billion was set aside for the allocation of school counsellors. In 2004, counsellors were allocated to 8,500 schools, and ¥4,850 million was requested from the government by MoE to expand the plan so that by the year 2005, all elementary and secondary schools were to be allocated counsellors. In 2006, ¥4,217 million was set aside for sending school counsellors to 10,000 schools, which included all public secondary schools.

Besides school counsellors who work with various parties to control student problems, from 1998 onwards futōkō children were assigned counsellors called ‘kokorō no kyōshitsu sōdanin’, that is, counsellors for the moral education of students who go to school but cannot enter classrooms. In 2003, ¥1,080 million was allocated for the scheme and moral instructors were sent to 3,600 public secondary schools. The system was gradually extended to parents and to elementary schools. In 2006, ¥500 million was invested in sending moral education counsellors to 910 public elementary schools.

School counsellors and counsellors for futōkō students are part of the MoE policy to reframe schools as kokoro no ibasho. While the concept of kokoro, which encompasses the emotional and personal core of a human being, is difficult to render into English, it means something like ‘heart and mind’. Ibasho, meaning ‘a place’, has been a synonym for free schools and free spaces set up by citizens groups for futōkō children, hence ‘Kokoro no ibasho’ could roughly be rendered as ‘a place for

hearts and minds’. This is an example of the adaptation of movement themes (also discussed in Chapter 5) that reflects the salience of the futōkō movement. At the same time, the adaptation of movement themes is observed as one of the counter-framing techniques MoE uses against the futōkō movement’s framing (more discussions in Section 6.2.3).

6.2.1.4 Support network and program for futōkō students, parents and teachers

Complementary with the counsellors’ system, MoE also invested heavily in a support network and program for futōkō students, parents and teachers. In 1992, MoE announced a plan to establish ‘education support centres’, also called ‘adjusted guidance classes’ (tekiō shidō kyōshitsu), to help students to go back to school as discussed in Section 6.2. In 1999, MoE established the School Support Program (SSP) to provide financial support to tekiō shidō kyōshitsu and free schools. By 2001, there were 991 tekiō shidō kyōshitsu in Japan. From 1999 to 2003, more than ¥700 million was spent on SSP research on futōkō measures conducted by non-government organizations appointed by MoE. In 2000, the number of tekiō shidō kyōshitsu was 928, and a total of 2914 instructors (shidōin) were employed. By 2002, the number of tekiō shidō kyōshitsu was 959, which outnumbered free schools and free spaces that amounted to 947 in the same year.

In 2003, MoE extended the SSP to set up the School Support Network (SSN). The purpose of the SSN is ‘to identify and thus handle futōkō at an early stage’. In 2003, ¥851 million was allocated for the scheme, with a total of 447 ‘schooling support centres’ set up at both the local and the wider regional level. These support centres serve as hubs to link schools, families and collaborative organizations to tackle the issue of futōkō. Centres at the wider regional level are involved in conducting seminars, undertaking fundamental studies and research programs.


handling information with regard to non-government facilities, and developing a ‘model program’. Local level support centres are involved in visiting families and offering them guidance, providing counselling for guardians, and providing and gathering information from non-governmental facilities with regard to futōkō.

In addition to the SSN, MoE also announced plans to set up the ‘independence support centres’ (jiritsu shien kyōshitsu) in each prefecture to handle the ‘fun, delinquent type’ of futōkō and other problematic behaviours. Under this new support scheme, support teams are formed, and counselling offices and activity venues are constructed, as are youth centres and facilities supporting the independence of children. Non-profit organizations are involved to support children in areas such as learning, work experience, sports etc (MoE 2004b).

Like the futōkō movement, which involves parents and guardians in helping children, and educates them on issues of futōkō, MoE also perceives the importance of educating both school staff and the public, and the forming of strategic partnerships with citizen organizations, as crucial for the success of their futōkō measures. For example, from 1999 MoE started distributing counselling videos to organize training on counselling for school staff. Like the futōkō movement, MoE has also ventured into providing a home-based learning service for futōkō students through the internet. The plan was announced in 2000, six to seven years after the futōkō movement launched its Home Shure service for stay-at-home futōkō children in 1993, and three years after Cyber Shure provided learning support through the internet in 1997. The IT learning support service was finally launched in 2005.

Vigorous changes in futōkō policies discussed in this sub-section reflect, to a certain extent, adaptation of the prognostic and action frame of the futōkō movement – one type of acceptance from MoE gained by the movement. Proactive response of MoE to the futōkō issue since 1992 also indicates a second type of acceptance – relational change between MoE and the futōkō citizens.
6.2.2 Relational change – collaboration and recognition

According to Gamson (1975), ‘acceptance’ as a measure of outcome reflects ‘a change from hostility or indifference to a more positive relationship’ between the movement group and its antagonists (Gamson 1975:31, see also discussion in Chapter two, Section 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). It focuses on acceptance of the group itself as a legitimate social actor on behalf of its claimants rather than acceptance of their claims. Evidence of relational change between MoE and the futōkō movement includes, for instance, visit to the Child Line Support Centre by the Education Minister in 1999; MoE participation in round table meetings on the development of charter schools organized by citizen groups in 2002; and inclusion of representatives from various grassroots groups, including Okuchi Keiko, in the ‘Collaborators’ Meeting for the Study of futōkō Issues’ organized by MoE (FS 112, 15/12/2002). Inclusion of Okuchi in meetings attended by MoE representatives and parliamentary members implies that MoE is ‘dealing with the challenging group’s negotiators as representative of a constituency’ (Gamson 1975:32). When futōkō activists expressed their disappointment with the outcome of Collaborators’ Meetings in the October 2003 round table meetings (FS 132, 15/10/2003) in November, the Collaborators’ Meetings met again with representatives from non-government free schools to listen to their concerns about the renewed tōkō pressure (pressure to go to school) on students. Interaction between MoE and the futōkō movement group reflects what researchers have observed in the study of social movement in general, namely that although contacts with government ministries and the public bureaucracy may not be seen on their own as particularly effective in influencing policy, they are considered useful for information-gathering and for countering the influence of pressure groups … Social movements increase the possibilities of access to the political system, both through ad hoc channels relating to certain issues and through institutions that are open to all non-institutional actors.

(della Porta & Diani 2006:233-234)

The creation of the ‘Collaborative Meetings’ and their interaction with the futōkō movement and other grassroots groups is an example of the movement bringing a kind of ‘procedural change’ to the creation of new decision-making arenas.
Furthermore, the futōkō SMOs have earned formal recognition from regional administrations like Tokyo Metropolitan area – Tōkyō Shūre; FSS and the Free School National Network were attested NPOs in 1999, 2000 and 2001 respectively by the metropolitan government of Tokyo. The inclusion of grassroots’ groups in the policy making process and formal recognition of the movement group by regional administrations is a breakthrough both for the movement and government futōkō measures. At the same time, changes in MoE measures also reflect adaptation of movement themes by the government – a sign of acceptance and a means of counter-framing, as elaborated in the following sub-sections.

6.2.3 Adaptation and counter-framing of movement themes – acceptance, containment, and backlash

Adaptation indicates a kind of softening (jiunanka) of MoE’s stance. Most of these adaptations occurred shortly after the futōkō movement started to gain momentum. The major themes, which appeared in some of the key official documents, are as follows:

- *Wakamono Jiritsu* (independence of young people)
- *Inochi o taisetsu ni* (life is precious)
- *Kuni no takara* (children are treasures of the country)
- *Kodomo no ibasu o tsukuru* (space for the child)
- ‘*kokoro no ibasho’* (place for the heart)
- *Kodomo no tachiba ni tatta* (from the standpoint of children)
- *Kojin no sonchō* (respect for the individual)
- *Tayōna kosei ya nōryoku o nobasu koto ga dekiru kyōiku* (education that offers diverse choices based on different individuality and ability)
- *Yutakana jinsei* (a rich life)
- *Mizukara no shinrō o shutaiteki ni toraeru* (take hold of one’s own future)
- *Futōkō ni sekkyokutekina imi o motsu* (futōkō has a positive meaning)
‘Mondai kōdō’ to kimetsukeruka noyōna gokai o sakeru (avoid misunderstandings like labelling [futōkō] as ‘problematic behaviour’)

jiko no sonzaikan ya jiko jitsugen (one’s sense of existence and self-realization)

saizen no rieki (the best interests of children)

shien (to support)

The themes are extracted from two important governmental documents that reflect the latest developments in futōkō measures. One is ‘The Education Reform Plan for the 21st Century – The Rainbow Plan – which included ‘The Seven Priority Strategies’ released in January 2001 when Machimura Nobutaka was the Minister of Education (MoE 2001). The other one is the 2003 Final Report compiled by the Collaborators’ Meetings for the Study of the Issue of Futōkō. The Meetings were hailed by the government as a joint effort between representatives from the public and the government to tackle the ‘problem’ of futōkō. Fourteen meetings were held between September 2002 and March 2003, and a Final Report was released on 10 April 2003 (FS 120, 15/04/2003). Representatives from Futōkō Shimbun attended all 14 meetings and details of the meetings and the Final Report were covered in FS.

The themes highlighted by MoE can be summarized as follows:

1) futōkō can be a positive experience;
2) the value of life is highlighted;
3) the existence of diversity is acknowledged;
4) the best interests of a child have been taken into consideration;
5) the notion of individuality is emphasized.

These are themes central to the futōkō movement as articulated in FS editorials. A comparison between the two sets of themes is made and presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Adaptation of movement themes in MoE futōkō measures and summary of themes in FS editorials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major groups of topics in FS discourse</th>
<th>Main themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FS editorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/Education</td>
<td>1. Futōkō is positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Life is paramount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider social system</td>
<td>3. Diversity should be acknowledged (in terms of ways of learning and personal growth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Rights of the child should be safeguarded (through freedom of futōkō)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centred perspective</td>
<td>5. Individuality should be respected (children choose to participate in activities of their own choice).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Children’s opinions are given voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These ideals are realized through ‘expanded moral education’ to cultivate ‘richness in mind’, ‘promotion of volunteering/social service activities’, ‘enhanced education on traditional culture’, and ‘development of school counselling’ by appointing school counsellors nationwide (MoE 2005b). In addition, emphasis is put on developing ‘academic ability’ through the implementation of new Courses of Study from 2002 (MoE 2002). Academic competence and competition are framed by MoE as part of the processes that make an individual. In a press conference after a Cabinet meeting in 2004, Education Minister Nakayama stated that students should cultivate a ‘sense of rivalry’ (*kyōsō ishiki*) to strive for academic excellence. He reasoned that

[students] will be exposed to fierce competition once they enter society. [They] have to start thinking about this while still at school.

(AS, 11/10/2004)

The emphasis on competitiveness was reiterated again by Nakayama in an online document titled ‘Kodomo wa kuni no takara’ (‘Children Are National Treasures’). Nakayama said:

[We] want to work hard at raising indomitable children who can compete and win in a tough international environment.

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Promoting academic competition counters the movement claim that children should be allowed to learn at their own pace and in a stress-free environment, and the spirit of freedom and individuality emphasized by the futōkō movement. The framing of children as ‘national treasures’, in this sense, is a means to justify measures to enhance competition. A unified test system to rate the ability of students also contests MoE’s education reform principle of ‘emphasis on diversity and choice’, and ‘respect for individuality and ability’. However, it should be noted that the MoE was forced to adopt these changes by a barrage of criticism and concern from scholars, pundits and the media about allegedly falling educational standards (Cave 2007: 19-24).

Furthermore, in June 2003 ministers in charge of education, employment, and industry announced the inauguration of an integrated program called ‘Wakamono jiritsu, chōsen plan’ (Plan to Challenge Young People to be Independent) (MoE 2003b). In this new program, academic competitiveness is reframed as chōsen (challenge) to independence while in the futōkō movement frame, the challenge is to relax and learn at one’s own pace.

The issue of ‘rights’ (point 4 in Table 6.2) has been at the centre of the futōkō movement’s discourse. MoE draws on this very same notion but counter-frames it as one of the roots of educational and youth problems including futōkō. In a document released by MoE in 2001, MoE ascribes to futōkō ‘a growing tendency to overemphasize respect for individual rights’ (MoE 2003). In the same document, the authority also cast aspersions on the link between these elements and the growing phenomenon of hikikomori (reclusion from society), which is believed to have stemmed from, at least partly, the lingering struggle with futōkō children. A second look at the measures in Section 6.2.4 below shows that MoE change in policy is a double-edged sword that mollifies and contains the movement.
6.2.3.1 Commuting pass

As the first major policy change to support futōkō students, commuting passes were granted to free school futōkō students. However, the pass is only applicable to

- students who receive counselling and guidance from government or non-government facilities that aim to help students to return to school;
- facilities which provide ‘effective’ (yūkō) and ‘appropriate’ (tekisetsu) guidance that leads to students’ return to school;
- facilities that are assessed and endorsed by the school principal of the futōkō child as having met the above conditions; and
- students whose attendance to these facilities is regarded as satisfactory by the school principal and their progress recorded in the notebook for guidance. 109

Under such conditions, the issue of a commuting pass is largely subject to the discretion of school principals who in turn administer the scheme according to MoE instructions, and who have the authority to give or refuse to give approval for the application of the pass. As a result, many of the futōkō students who go to free schools that are not commended for their effort in pursuing the back-to-school (gakkō fukki) policy are refused the commuting pass (FS 73, 01/05/2001; FS 95, 01/04/2002).

6.2.3.2 More relaxed curriculum and flexible school system

As discussed in Section 6.2.2, MoE has been trying to establish a more relaxed curriculum to reduce the study load of students, to set up special classes for futōkō students, to make the school system more flexible by changing the attendance mode and criteria for sitting in examinations, to introduce new types of schools, and to carry out structural reform and decentralize the decision-making processes so as to allow local governments freedom in setting up their own schools for children with special needs. However, as a democratic polity, there are debates and divisions within the Japanese public sphere in general and government in particular, including within MoE, about how to look at futōkō and indeed about educational policy in

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109 From MoE notice to the board of education at all levels. See MoE (1993) in bibliography.
For instance, in 2004 the deputy mayor of Fukui city, Yamamoto Masatoshi, implied in a national parent-teacher conference that futōkō children are ‘furyōhin’, that is, ‘faulty’ (AS 2004a). As mentioned in section 6.3.2, MoE was forced to respond to its critics. For example, since 2003, measures were instituted to identify and handle futōkō at the early stage so as to ‘nip futōkō in the bud’ among elementary school students, and many local government officials responded to MoE’s appeal by vowing to bring down the number of futōkō students in their cities. To this end, MoE invested heavily in the school counselling system and support networks and programs for futōkō students, parents and teachers. The support networks and programs, which are supposed to fund free schools and citizens’ groups to support futōkō students, turned out to become a major counter-force to the futōkō movement.

6.2.3.3 The school counselling system and support networks and programs for futōkō students, parents and teachers

The School Support Programme (SSP) and the School Support Network (SSN) are two major schemes that are responsible for the allocation of funding to both government and non-government organizations that support futōkō children and which conducted related projects (mentioned in Section 6.2.1). Despite an increasing budget, the movement and many citizens’ groups benefited little from the enhanced budget. This is because a large proportion of the funding is allocated to government endorsed projects and organizations that vigorously pursue and support a ‘gakkō fukki’ policy. Although SSN highlights its effort to team up with citizens, FS studies shows that only 9 out of hundreds of citizens’ organizations were involved (FS 125, 1/7/2003). The largest amount of funding secured by the SSP project is allocated to the setting up of tekiō shidō kyōshitsu (‘adjusted guidance classes’, or an education support centre) which is run by the government, to the hiring of instructors for these classes, to send counsellors to schools, and to fund government approved projects and research on futōkō measures.

For vivid accounts of some of these conflicts surrounding educational policy and futōkō, see Chapter 1 in Cave (2007:13-51) and Tsuneyoshi, R. (2004).
Moreover, *tekiō shidō kyōshitsu* is a MoE initiative that aims to help students to adjust to school and eventually go back into the classroom. Non-government facilities not pursuing the measure benefit little from the schemes. For instance, in 1999, only 36 of the 633 bodies funded by the SSP were non-government facilities. Out of those who received government money, free schools and free spaces received almost no financial support (*FS* 36, 15/10/1999). However, the usage of *tekiō shidō kyōshitsu* by *futōkō* students was only 10% in 2000. Even Diet questioned the fairness of the SSP fund allocation (*FS* 120, 15/04/2003).

Together with *tekiō shidō kyōshitsu*, the school counselling system has absorbed a large sum of government funding, leaving little for free schools and citizens’ organizations. The purpose of counselling is again to help students to return to school. In 1995, school counsellors were sent to 154 schools. By 2004, the number increased to 8,485. Also, from 2004 counsellors for children and parents are being assigned to elementary schools (MoE 2005). When in 2002 *futōkō* students fell for the first time in 27 years since 1975 to 131,211 (7511 students less than previous year), MoE claimed credit for its school counsellors system. As such, MoE funded facilities and projects have provided a receptacle for *futōkō* students within the official framework of education.

### 6.2.4 Tension and collaboration

In sum, changes in MoE *futōkō* measures since 1992 indicates, on the one hand, greater tolerance of *futōkō* and acceptance of the *futōkō* movement. In fact, NPO *Tōkyō Shūre* has even become one of the 15 collaborative organizations that MoE work with to tackle *futōkō* (MoE 2005a). On the other hand, MoE keeps exerting pressure on *futōkō* students to go back to school, and it directs funding to official facilities and projects that operate in-line with its back-to-school (*gakkō fukki*) policy. This creates tension in their collaborative relationship, and the outcome of the Collaborators’ Meetings is a case in point. After the release of the 2003 Final Report of the Meetings, *futōkō* activists realized that opinions of people like Okuchi were not reflected in the report. They gathered 2,300 signatures and sent a petition to MoE, which MoE refused to receive (*FS* 120, 15/04/2003). As Ozawa Makiko points out, ‘MoE has been using both “high-handed” and “gentle” approaches to tie
down children and pursue its “gakkō fukki” policy’ (FS 107, 01/10/2002). It still addresses futōkō as a ‘problem’, and its funding has been allocated to measures that aim at ‘nipping futōkō in the bud (mizen bōshi)’ (FS 116, 15/02/2003).

Having said that, the futōkō movement still has gained a significant degree of acceptance from its main antagonist – MoE - considering

1) the number of changes in futōkō measures from 1983 to 2004 as illustrated in Table 6.1;
2) the inclusion of citizens’ groups in the decision-making processes regarding futōkō; and
3) the recognition of its contribution to society by attesting futōkō SMOs NPO status.

6.3 Cultural and ideational changes –new advantages gained by movement beneficiaries

Acceptance of the futōkō movement group as a legitimate claimant of the interests of futōkō children has benefited futōkō children not so much in terms of policy as in terms of a change in social perception of futōkō. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the futōkō movement has focused on what Giugni (1998) calls, ‘seek[ing] public support and try[ing] to sensitize the population to their cause’ (p.379). By this measurement, the movement has achieved considerable success. Such cultural and ideational change could be evaluated from the following aspects:

1) the creation of a futōkō culture achieved through the development of futōkō SMOs;
2) a shift in the focus of the futōkō discourse as already discussed in the thesis;
3) a change in media representation of futōkō; and
4) biographical changes of movement activists.

The next section will focus on the last two outcomes.
6.3.1 Change in wider media representation

According to Asakura (1995), the first media article on tōkōkyohifutōkō was published in the AS on 11th June, 1965. In that article, tōkōkyohi was portrayed as an ‘illness’ (byōki) and a ‘neurosis’ (shinkeisho), and the problem was attributed to factors like the child being ‘immature’ or the fact that ‘parents fail(ed) to educate’ their children. This earliest representation reflected the view of clinical psychologists and paediatric psychiatrists (Asakura 1995:53). Kudō maintains that such an image of tōkōkyohi projected through the media was largely a one-sided representation created by psychiatrists (Kudō 1999). The first article that carried a ‘rare’ point of view (mezurashii kenkai) on the issue was believed to be one published in the Asahi Journal dated 12 June 1966:

To force tōkōkyohi child back to school is the same as to force a sick child to go to school. Both actions are equally cruel.

(quoted in Asakura 1995:53)

The article also pointed out the importance of changing the way parents perceive school education. It is pointed out that

the next thing necessary is to change the misunderstanding among parents that education can only occur within school.

(quoted in Asakura 1995:53)

From the mid-1970s, media coverage on tōkōkyohi began to change. During this period, ‘rumours’ (torizata) saying that ‘education is falling apart’ (kyōiku kōhai) spread, and news like ‘tōkōkyohi of a good child’ appeared. Tōkōkyohi began to assume a less negative image in the media (Kudō 1999). At the same time, Oya no Kai that aimed at changing the stigmatised image of tōkōkyohi were formed, and their effort drew media attention (see Chapter 3). According to Kudō (1999), since the 1980s reportages of ijime (bullying) and other social factors which were the causes of many instances of tōkōkyohi, gradually convinced the public that tōkōkyohi children were victims of environmental factors. At the same time, some media seemed to have adopted the human rights frame in reporting tōkōkyohi/futōkō.
According to Asakura (1995), conspicuous changes in media coverage of tōkōkyohi/futōkō have occurred since the second half of 1988 when futōkō activists launched protests against the AS article (see Chapters 1 and 3). In the year that followed the Kangaerukai Emergency Meeting, the number of articles which rebutted the framing of tōkōkyohi as an illness multiplied rapidly, while the number of articles in which tōkōkyohi was represented as an illness decreased dramatically. This change is indicated in Table 6.3.111

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Magazine name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/1982</td>
<td>‘Good mother’ is a cause of tōkōkyohi (「良い母親」が登校拒否の原因に ‘yoi hahoya ga tōkōkyohi no geninin)</td>
<td>Housewives’ Friend (主婦の友 Shufu no Tomo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/11/1982</td>
<td>You can overcome tōkōkyohi by doing this! (こうすれば登校拒否は克服できる！ kore sureba tōkōkyohi wa kōfuku)</td>
<td>Sunday Daily (サンデーニューズ Sande Ma'nichi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/4/1983</td>
<td>Skilled physicians are there to solve tōkōkyohi, family violence, autism! (登校拒否、家庭内暴力、自閉症の解決に名医登場！ Tōkōkyohi, kateinai bōryoku, jiheishō no kaiketsu ni mei'in tōjō)</td>
<td>Women’s Seven (女性セブン Josei Sebun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/2/1985</td>
<td>Tōkōkyohi, anorexia…. How to cure psychological troubles of children (登校拒否、拒食症…子供たちの心の病気を治す Tōkōkyohi, kyoshokushō… Kodomotachi no kokoro ni naosu)</td>
<td>Women’s Seven (女性セブン Josei Sebun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/1987</td>
<td>Science news: tōkōkyohi is hormone abnormality (SCIENCE NEWS: tōkōkyohi wa homoru ijō)</td>
<td>Quark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1988</td>
<td>the Emergency Meeting to Think About Tōkōkyohi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/11/1988</td>
<td>Suffering Children I: tōkōkyohi is not an illness (あえぐ子供たち 第一回 登校拒否は病気じゃない aegu kodomotachi dai ikkai: Tōkōkyohi wa byōki janai)</td>
<td>Asahi Janaru 朝日ジャーナル</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/1989</td>
<td>Tōkōkyohi is not an illness (Tōkōkyohi wa byōki dewanai 登校拒否は病気ではない)</td>
<td>Women’s Forum (婦人参論 Fujin Kōron)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/11/1989</td>
<td>Suffering Children IV: when you turn your back to school, recovery begins (あえぐ子どもたち 第五回 登校拒否という脱出路、学校に背を向けたとき蘇生が始まる aegu kodomotachi dai go kai: Tōkōkyohi toiu dasshutsuro, gakkō ni o muketa toki sosei ga hajimaru)</td>
<td>Asahi Janaru 朝日ジャーナル</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/1989</td>
<td>We don’t need school – the outcry of children from 9 to 16 years of age (集団登校拒否をつづける 9才から16才までの子どもたちの叫び：「学校なんかいらない！ shudan tōkōkyohi o tsuzukeru 9 sai kara 16 sai made no Kodomotachi no sakebi – ‘gakkō nanka iranai!’)</td>
<td>Women Themselves (女性自身 Josei Jishin)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The trend of media discourse was summarized by Asakura (1995) as follows:

111 This is a selected list of titles from Asakura (1995:73). His table includes 37 article titles. Out of these 37 titles listed, only 9 titles which are most representative are included in this list.
Before November 1988, titles suggesting that tōkōkyohi is an illness and has to be treated abounded. For instance, ‘tōkōkyohi syndrome’, ‘to cure tōkōkyohi syndrome’, ‘tōkōkyohi can be overcome’, ‘tōkōkyohi, anorexia … to cure illness of the heart in children’, ‘the doctor’s record (Karte) of “family therapy”’, ‘prescription for tōkōkyohi’, ‘tōkōkyohi as hormonal abnormality’. However, since November 1988, there were more titles suggesting that tōkōkyohi is not an illness. For instance, ‘tōkōkyohi is not an illness’, ‘tōkōkyohi [children] full of vigour’, ‘tōkōkyohi as a way out – turning one’s back on school, turning over a new leaf in life’. There were also titles that acknowledged the positive side of tōkōkyohi.

(p.74)

Having said that, Asakura noted that in some of these articles, tōkōkyohi was still illustrated in a disapproving manner. For instance, in an article titled ‘Tōkōkyohi is not an illness’ published in Asahi Journal (14/11/1988), tōkōkyohi was said to carry a connotation of ‘darkness’. Later, the student mentioned in the story went to school again, and the author described her action as ‘returning’ (kaifuku). Moreover, at the end of the story, the girl did go back to school after school and the teachers changed their way of teaching and treating students. The author wrote that ‘Keiko now is at peace’. Nevertheless, the author of the article clearly ascribed the cause of tōkōkyohi to school, and not to the children themselves.

Another example can be found in an article published in the magazine Weekly Yomiuri (19/11/1989), in which the author, on the one hand, criticized MoE and the education system. On the other hand, when commenting on the figure of tōkōkyohi, words like ‘the worst’ and ‘national disease’ (kokuminbyō) were used, reflecting that the deep-rooted perception that ‘tōkōkyohi is an illness’ has not yet changed (Asakura 1995:230-1). Nevertheless, the change in media representation of futōkō since November 1988 has indicated wider acceptance of futōkō.

Another aspect of media change towards futōkō is the formal recognition by the media of the contribution of Tōkyō Shūre. Positive reports of the SMO include:

- Tōkyō Shūre is the pioneer of free schools in Japan.
- More than 1,000 children have attended and grown up in Shure.
• Now about 200 children aged from 6 to 20 are attending.
• There are about 30 supporting staff members, among whom are ‘graduates’ of Tōkyō Shūre.
• It is the core of the national free school organizations, and its area of activities has been expanding.\textsuperscript{112}

Also, the contribution of the movement is recognized by the most influential mainstream newspaper, the AS. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Tōkyō Shūre was given a number of awards in 2003, including the 37\textsuperscript{th} Yoshikawa Eiji Cultural Award by prominent Japanese publisher Kōdan Sha, the Asahi Nobinobi Education Award by the AS in recognition of its pioneer effort in effective innovative education, and the Bell Mark Foundation Award. The AS award-giving ceremony was followed by a celebration attended by the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan as well as the Minister of Education (AS online edition, 22/11/2003).

\textbf{6.3.2 Biographical change – creation of career activists}

A salient movement frame often affects personal changes to individual members of society. Futōkō activism has not only brought changes to the lives of futōkō students, but also those of activists and participants. It has also sensitized some individuals to their cause, which has eventually changed their life course because of their involvement in the movement. Some of them have eventually developed a career by being involved in the movement. There are three cases in point, which indicate the magnitude of changes occurred in individual social actors. They are Okuchi Keiko, the leader of the movement, Ishii Shikō, a former futōkō student, and Yamashita Kōhē, an ex-bystander of the movement.

\textbf{6.3.2.1 Okuchi Keiko – teacher/mother-turned activist}

The biographical change of Okuchi Keiko, that is, how she became the leader of the futōkō movement, has been examined in Chapter 4. The focus of discussion in this section is on the nature of her change. Her change characterizes the nature of futōkō

activism initiated by women who are motivated by their role as mother, a highly valued role in Japanese society. However, as studies have shown (e.g. see Walthall 1991:69), Japanese mothers adapt their mothering role in different circumstances to become socially active concerning issues that impact on their performance as mothers (Iwao 1993:133). Such ‘citizen mothers’ have acted as members of consumer groups made up of housewives who warned the public of issues such as industrial pollution sites (Seager 1993:268), that were concerned about food additives in milk (the Seikatsu Club) (Mies 1993:260), and which resisted the negative impact of schooling on children. These traits of Japanese motherhood and feminine quality underlie the biographical change of Okuchi from mother to career activist. It could be suggested that her motherhood has contributed to her influence beyond her family. The futōkō of her son made her become conscious of her true condition, that is her deep-seated belief in the absolute normalcy of attending school, and the fact that such a belief had been at the root of her frustration and helplessness. As Mies maintains:

Only when there is a rupture in the ‘normal’ life of a woman, that is, a crisis such as divorce, the end of a relationship, etc., is there a chance for her to become conscious of her true condition. In the ‘experience of crises’ (Kramert 1977) and rupture with normalcy, women are confronted with the real social relationships in which they had unconsciously been submerged as objects without being able to distance themselves from them. As long as normalcy is not disrupted they are not able to admit, even to themselves, that these relationships are oppressive or exploitative.

(Mies 1993a:40)

The key that moved her from the balcony to the barricade was this rupture in her life of having a futōkōji (futōkō child), something that society had perceived as abnormal and shameful. Okuchi turned from a veteran public school teacher to be the founder of the first free school of its kind, and spokesperson for futōkō children in Japan. Her activism has captured both national and international attention. Her activism was published in the international section of AS online edition (AS 2003a). She helped to bring international attention to the state of futōkō in Japan through joining the International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC), or the World Free School Conference. Involvement in the movement has transformed Okuchi from an
ordinary Japanese mother and teacher to a high profile activist of one of the most important citizens’ movements in Japan. The organizations she set up are featured among the NPOs that have helped to forge a new relationship between individuals and society (Okada et al. 2005). In addition to being an activist, futōkō motherhood has also brought Okuchi into the discursive field of child education. Okuchi is author and co-author of nine books on the topic of futōkō and related issues. She is frequently invited as a guest speaker, and is a guest lecture at Chiba University (see Section 4.4.1). She is also host of seminars and discussions of futōkō and child education issues organized by SMOs.

6.3.2.2 Ishii Shikō – futōkō student-turned activist

The futōkō movement has also turned some of its beneficiaries into activists who, through the process of being helped, reciprocate the movement by giving themselves to its cause. Ishii Shikō is a typical example of futōkō-student-turned activist. Ishii was born in 1980. He became futōkō when he was in the second year in secondary school. He then attended Tōkyō Shūre where he found that finishing school and becoming a sarariman was not the one and only way to live. When the FS came into print, he joined the FS children’s corner called sōdankai. This marked the beginning of his involvement in futōkō activism. In 1998, when he was 16 years old, he became chairman of the executive committee for the annual summer camp held by the Kangaerukai. He joined the children’s editorial meeting, and was given opportunities to conduct interviews with many famous people and write articles for the FS. According to Ishii, the involvement brought him joy and inspiration. He also developed an interest in becoming a journalist. He therefore joined the FS editorial office in April 2001. Ishii committed himself to the FS with a vision of creating a society that does not discriminate against futōkō. He writes that

(there is no difference between people going to school or not going to school. There are different kinds of education: home education, free school education etc. In joining the FS, I would like to see that in the future no one could ever discriminate against children who are not going to school; and therefore there will be no more negative attention given to futōkō. Even the FS will cease to exist because people no longer make any news about futōkō. This is my aspiration.

(FS 72, 15/04/2001)
Since joining the FS editorial group, Ishii has become more outspoken concerning futōkō. Besides writing for FS, he has engaged in panel discussions and symposia to air his views, and sharing his first-hand experience as a futōkō child. He gives talks and has appeared on a television programme featuring futōkō children.111 In Ishii’s case, futōkō activism has offered not only a way out for him in his search of selfhood, but also a new identity as a career activist campaigning to de-stigmatize futōkō. His affiliation with FS in return could enhance the experiential credibility of the diagnostic and prognostic framing of futōkō activism.

6.3.2.3 Yamashita Kōhē – bystander turned activist

Unlike Okuchi and Ishii, Yamashita Kōhē did not have any first-hand futōkō experience. What brought him into futōkō activism was an encounter with Tōkyō Shūre when he was in university. Like many other young people in Japan, Yamashita grew up with the ‘school faith’ and used to believe that school was his whole world, even though school somehow always gave him a sense of emptiness (zutto, dokokade munashi sa o kanji) (FS 89, 01/01/2002). He became more and more bewildered by the sense of incongruence with people around him as he grew up. While unable to see a way out of his predicament, he went on to university and joined the student newspaper. On one occasion he had to visit Tōkyō Shūre to cover stories on futōkō students. The trips to Tōkyō Shūre turned out to be a life-changing experience for him. He was drawn to Tōkyō Shūre and started to question his reasons for going to school. Eventually, he dropped out of university and joined the FS editorial office in Osaka. He recounted that from the moment when he made that decision, he felt as if he had unloaded a life-long burden and at last regained his own life and vitality (FS 89, 01/01/2002).

The activism of Yamashita started after he joined the FS. Being on staff there, he was confronted with the plight of futōkō children, and this inspired him to think of ways he could help them. Yamashita was involved in the FS since its stage of preparation. He is now in charge of the editorial office at Osaka. He also gives talks

111 The program was one of the three-part series featuring the issue of futōkō and futōkō children broadcast on 17 March 2003. Synopsis of programme obtained from http://www.home-tv.co.jp/gekkin/, accessed on 17/02/2005.
on futōkō and related issues. His change is an indication of the cultural resonance of the futōkō movement which caused him as a bystander to become an activist.

In all of the above three cases, association with the futōkō movement had become a turning point in their lives, and a means of self-actualization.

6.4 Conclusion

In sum, the futōkō movement has achieved a number of desired outcomes and triggered a backlash from MoE, one of its antagonists. The first set of outcomes, that is organizational outcomes, indicate that the movement group has gained acceptance from MoE as the legitimate claimant of a set of interests on behalf of futōkō students. The examination of changes in MoE futōkō measures shows that the movement has brought procedural changes in the administration with the creation of new decision-making arenas at different levels including MoE, municipal governments and local boards of education; futōkō SMO representatives are on these seats. Although not all changes are welcomed by activists and students, policy changes nonetheless reflected that the movement has forced the government to respond to the situation, and to ‘collaborate’ (kyōryoku) with the movement. As della Porta and Diani (2006) maintain, ‘social movements have helped the democratization of authoritarian regimes, but also contributed to more participatory approaches in representative democracies’ (p.249). In a similar sense, the futōkō movement has helped to democratize the decision-making processes with regard to futōkō measures.

Change in futōkō measures also indicates that MoE has adopted themes highlighted by futōkō activists in their framing of futōkō, such as themes on life (inochi), place-to-be (ibasho), and respect for the individual (kojin no sonchō). Such adaptation bespeaks the validity of the diagnostic and prognostic frames of the futōkō movement. The action framing was also adapted by MoE as indicated in measures like the setting up of a telephone help line for children, and the plan of setting up charter schools. In view of these changes, it could be suggested that counter-framing attempts by MoE is also a reflection of the salience of the movement frame.
The second set of outcomes is the number of new advantages gained by the potential beneficiaries of the futōkō movement for whatever reason during the period of time when the movement was active. These are also beneficiary outcomes, and they reflect more of the cultural and ideational changes of a movement (as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2). The movement has acted directly or indirectly on behalf of futōkō students. Other changes that indicate greater tolerance of futōkō were also instituted. Nevertheless, the most conspicuous changes are social. They are reflected in four aspects of cultural and ideational changes. The movement has been successful in creating for its beneficiaries a new cultural environment in which they could gain some kind of knowledge, socialize, foster mutual recognition, and build up a sense of the ‘self’. They have created a movement community made up of a number of SMOs including NPOs. By networking and extending their movement frame to cover the interests of other constituencies like philanthropy and environmental groups, the futōkō movement has helped to de-stigmatize the negative image associated with futōkō.

In addition, the futōkō movement has opened the discursive field of futōkō to the public. This has resulted in a change in the focus of futōkō discourse (as discussed in Chapter 1) and media representation of futōkō (see section 6.3.1). The movement has also successfully sensitized a group of individuals to the cause, resulting in biographical changes in their lives.

Although there are difficulties in establishing a causal link between movements and consequences because there are other factors at play, the outcomes of the futōkō movement suggest that credible diagnostic and prognostic frames are pertinent in bringing broader cultural and institutional changes. The outcomes highlight the awareness of the interdependence of organizational factors, the political context and framing, which has contributed to the sustainability of the movement over two decades. In fact, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the movement organizations have continued to expand and the movement continues to achieve new goals. Outcomes of the movement on the whole indicates that activists have been focusing on attending to the core framing tasks of the movement – diagnostic and prognostic framing (see, e.g. section 2.6.1 in Chapter 2) - and have been social agents of change.
Chapter Seven
There is no ending to futōkō

7.1 Success or crisis?

This thesis attempted to examine futōkō (school non-attendance) in Japan from the perspective that futōkō is a social movement. It analyzed activism in support of futōkō students by futōkō activists over the twenty year period from 1984 when the futōkō activism started. Drawing upon social movement approaches of political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing, the thesis found that futōkō citizens successfully grasped political opportunities to proclaim their diagnosis and prognosis of futōkō, established a network of organizations to mobilize adherents and bystanders, launched a new interpretative frame for futōkō, and challenged the dominant representation of futōkō in society – that ‘futōkō is an illness’.

Through a content analysis of 140 editorials in the movement newspaper – the Futōkō Shimbun (School Non-attendance Newspaper) - the thesis also explored in detail the ideological aspect of the futōkō movement’s framing, and discovered that over the survey period Futōkō Shimbun commenced with a critique of schooling practices that create futōkō, and expanded its analysis to develop a critical appraisal of Japanese society that has broad implications for many different aspects of the everyday life of its citizens. The movement was moulded into a master frame that has a sufficiently broad interpretative scope and is, in Swart’s words, ‘culturally resonant to their historical milieu’ (1995:446).

Drawing on concepts theorizing movement outcomes, the thesis found that the futōkō movement has gained a certain level of acceptance by MoE as a valid spokesperson for the interests of futōkō children. At the same time, the movement has also gained certain advantages for its beneficiaries, and influenced government policies, the

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114 Chapter title is adapted and translated from the title of the book by Kido (2005).
Throughout the thesis, the futōkō movement was examined as a challenge to the institution from the margins of society. However, in the last two years new developments have taken place: on the one hand, Tōkyō Shure successfully obtained endorsement from the central government and opened a middle school in April 2007. This is a ground-breaking achievement – it moved the futōkō movement from the margin a step closer to official recognition. On the other hand, the movement is confronted by critiques from Kido Rie, an ex-student of Tōkyō Shure, whose criticism challenged the fundamental claim of the movement as the voice of futōkō children. This concluding chapter addresses the significance of these forces and what they imply for futōkō as a social movement.

7.2 The Katsushika Middle School – officially endorsed alternative school – positive change or movement becalmed?

Raising the status of free schools has been the goal of Tōkyō Shure, especially since 2002 when they campaigned for high school futōkō students to be granted commuting passes and public funding. Okuchi started meeting different parties, including alternative education providers, Diet members and citizens, and parents and members of Tōkyō Shure, to explore the possibility of establishing an officially-recognized educational institution. Tōkyō Shure started seeking support from local government and looking for a campus for their planned school (Okuchi 2006).

Meanwhile, a number of institutional changes occurred in a way that facilitated the realization of Tōkyō Shure: Japan introduced Special Zones for Structural Reform in 2003 which enabled citizen groups to open a government-accredited school that provides alternative education. The first school founded under the new law was a charter school called Gunma Kokusai Academy set up in 2005, an English immersion school for grades 7 through 12. At the same time, the central government
also passed a bill which allows high schools greater flexibility in the design of their curriculum.

*Tokyo Shure* took advantage of the structural reform and at the same time successfully enlisted the support of the Katsushika ward government in Tokyo. By law, school grounds and buildings have to be owned by a school corporation. However, the ward was very supportive of the plan of *Tokyo Shure* as it believed the plan would help the local government to tackle *futōkō* while putting to use the Shonan Primary School which had been closed for four years. In January, 2005, the ward asked the central government to permit the establishment of a private school in the former public school building rented in a designated structural reform district. In July 2006, Katsushika ward was granted special zone status by the Cabinet Office. These institutional changes paved the way for Okuchi and *futōkō* citizens to realize their dream. On 1 April, 2007, the *Tokyo Shure* Katsushika Middle School, the first alternative secondary school for *futōkō* students, was opened, with Okuchi Keiko as the principal of the new school.

The establishment of the *Tokyo Shure* Katsushika Middle School was a milestone for a free school in Japan. Unlike free schools in Western countries like the United Kingdom, New Zealand and the United States, free schools in Japan do not enjoy equal status with conventional schools, nor do they receive government subsidies. They are regarded as halfway houses for problem students before they return to traditional schools. The official endorsement of the plan for Katsushika Middle School, which will be run in the same way as *Tokyo Shure*, symbolizes a significant rise in the status of free schools to a level comparable with traditional schools.

The *Tokyo Shure* Katsushika Middle School was established under the Special Zones for Structural Reform Experimental Schools System approved by the Prime Minister. The Reform aims to promote and revitalize the regions and the economy of Japan. Under the reform, special measures are set up on the initiative of each region and deliberations are conducted by MoE. As mentioned above, the setting up of the new

school is supported by the local government of Katsushika ward, which has received government permission for a Special Zone Plan. Under the Special Zone Plan, the Katsushika ward government authorizes NPO corporations to provide education for *futōkō* children.\(^{117}\)

For Okuchi, this was the realization of a dream that she had had for many years. Back in 1963, Okuchi started her teaching career in Shonan Primary School. She taught in the School for nine years and still cherishes the memory of those years. She then moved to several other schools before her eldest son became *futōkō*, and eventually she resigned and established *Tōkyō Shure* in 1985 for *futōkō* students. In 2007, she came back to the very same school where she started as a teacher, but this time as the founder of the most famous free school in Japan for *futōkō* students and the founder and principal of a first-of-its-kind free school-based junior high school catering for *futōkō* students.

Success in the form of official endorsement, however, could take *Tōkyō Shure* to the so-called becalmed state. According to the theory of social movement, a successful becalmed movement is one that ‘[has] been able to build and maintain a support base; [has] waged campaigns which have influenced the course of events; and [has] gained some positions of power. In short, [it has] created or found a niche for itself in the organizational world’ and is still able to maintain purposive commitment, that is the commitment to change the values of society (Zald & Ash 1966:334). Such movements can easily succumb to institutionalization as the movement seems to lose its *raison d’être* (see Section 7.4). While an enhanced level of official endorsement from local government and MoE could facilitate the development of the movement organization, primarily *Tōkyō Shure*, it could at the same time endanger the *futōkō* movement frame as it becomes institutionalized. As the *futōkō* movement reached a new level of social and official recognition and acceptance through the establishment of Katsushika School, their own framing was challenged by an ex-student of *Tōkyō Shure*.

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7.3 Kido’s criticism – challenge to the futōkō frame or opportunity to reframe?

As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, Kido Rie (2004), who started her PhD study at the University of Tokyo in 2004, challenged the movement’s representation of futōkō from a tōjisha point of view. She argued that anyone can be tōjisha (the person/people directly concerned), despite the fact that everyone can have different perceptions of the reality of school. Debate on futōkō activists’ framing of futōkō raised the question of who most properly represents the school? While the question of what is the discourse of futōkō and for whom was previously raised by Yamada Jun (2002), one of the founders of the Futōkō Shimbun (FS) and an ex-FS editorialist, the same question has now been directed to Okuchi’s group which had claimed to represent the voice of futōkō students. The challenge against the group’s framing raised the question of what is futōkō again. In fact, before Kido’s critique emerged in 2004, Yamada started examining the representation of futōkō and futōkō children in the academic and public discourses of futōkō, including the group’s own discourse (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.4). As such, the resignation of Yamada as board member of the Futōkō Shimbun in 2002 is suggestive of a growing divergence of opinion as to the most appropriate framing of futōkō by the movement. Kido (2004) questions the very foundation of futōkō framing and put the credibility of the movement frame to further tests.

Kido questions a number of key concepts underlying the activities of Tōkyō Shure; these can be summarized under two major headings. One is the objection she expressed to the ‘positionality’ (ichisei) (Kido 2004:18) of futōkō citizens as being representative of futōkō children; the other is her skepticism about the positive framing of futōkō individuals and the claim that they are a ‘futōkō elite’ (p.213) or ‘bright futōkō children’ (p.12). Kido claims that this portrayal of futōkō individuals is too rosy and unrealistic. She argues that futōkō citizens have failed to represent tōjisha’s voice (p.37, 99):

So far, the ‘tōjisha’ perspective does not exist. ‘Tōjisha’ are those who are suffering from the negative consequences of futōkō but at the same time, are faced with the pressure to acknowledge their own futōkō experience as
positive. As such, there is no discourse among the existing ones that represents their futōkō experience.

(Kido 2004:99)

Kido defines tōjisha as ‘futōkō individuals’ (moto futōkōsha) (Kido 2004:101; also see p.21) only, and claims to be a legitimate tōjisha (who has experience of futōkō). She maintains that all other discourse parties, including Tōkyō Shure, analyse this issue from the perspective of non-tōjisha, and thus cannot truly represent futōkō tōjisha. Nevertheless, she claims that her perspective is different.

This book focuses on ‘tōjisha’ … I am one of the tōjisha. At the same time, I am a researcher. My purpose is to find out ‘who I am’ through studying and analyzing my subjects who have the same problem.

(p.35-36)

From an ‘insider’ perspective, Kido conducted her studies through making friends and connections with past and present Tōkyō Shure children, and based on the opinions which she gathered, criticizes Tōkyō Shure’s framing of futōkō as overlooking the difficulties futōkō children are facing in society.

People from ibasho [i.e. Tōkyō Shure, oya no kai, other free schools and free spaces] have been busy telling ‘tōjisha’ what is futōkō but fail to consider its long-term impact on them. Futōkō individuals are disadvantaged under the present social structure, but ‘tōjisha’ are not reminded [by futōkō activists] of the problems they have to face in ‘choosing’ futōkō.

(Kido 2004:108)

Kido (2004) criticizes futōkō citizens for trying to manipulate the futōkō discourse in order to promote their framing of futōkō as a ‘choice’.

In order to ‘assert’ that futōkō is a positive experience, [the ibasho people, meaning futōkō movement members, in particular Tōkyō Shure] did not acknowledge that there are ‘negative consequences of futōkō’ so that their discourse can be immunized from criticism that ‘disapproves’ of futōkō and any logical argument that children should be ‘treated’ or ‘encouraged to attend school’. They have created an extremely controlled discourse environment for
Futōkō: one has to choose either ‘to be treated’ and ‘to be pushed back to school’, or ‘to assert’ futōkō [and turn away from school].

(p.99)

Futōkō is framed as ‘one of life’s choices’ and those who cannot fit into school are said to have asserted their individuality. They are projected as ‘smart futōkō children’.

(p.12)

Kido argues that the ‘choice’ discourse and the projection of the ‘futōkō elite’ (e.g. Kido 2004:73) image is a creation by futōkō citizens for the purpose of promoting their activism. In short, she maintains that futōkō citizens impose on tōjisha the mentality that ‘futōkō is their ‘choice’, and is ‘positive’ (akarui), and that they create a discourse and activity space for their own sake rather than for tōjisha like her. She criticizes Tōkyō Shure for creating an infallible discourse that shields ‘ibasho’ like Tōkyō Shure and ‘kankeisha’ (parents and members of oya no kai) from criticism (p.98-99). Whether Kido, who has already gone through futōkō and thus strictly speaking is no longer a tōjisha, can represent a more authentic futōkō voice is questionable. Her critique nonetheless alerted and prompted the movement leadership to clarify and review their framing.

7.4 The future of the futōkō legacy – rejuvenation of the futōkō spirit or institutionalization of the futōkō movement?

This thesis has proved that futōkō citizens have succeeded in reframing futōkō. As the movement gained the official stamp of MoE and opened the Katsushika middle school, Tōkyō Shure developed into a new style that could jeopardize its ‘alternativeness’ and displace the original movement goal. The newly found success within the institutional structure may paradoxically rock the very foundation of the movement, hence subsuming it under the classical model of the transformation of social movement organizations proposed by Weber118 and Michels.119

Michels maintain that when a movement organization attains an economic and social base in society, a bureaucratic structure emerges and its goals will shift in the direction of greater conservatism to accommodate dominant societal consensus. The primary activity of the organization will become the maintenance of membership, funds and the requirements of organizational existence (Zald & Ash 1966:327).

As Zald and Ash argue, social movement organizations are different from ‘full-blown’ bureaucratic organizations in that they have goals that aim to change the society and its members, and this subjects movement organizations to vicissitudes avoided by many non-movement organizations (1966:329). In the face of the two developments as discussed in Section 7.2 and 7.3, supporters of the movement are also confronted by these two forces that may tear them apart from the movement because of disillusionment: either because the futōkō movement became becalmed and was drawn into the MoE circle, thus losing its purposive incentives or core values; or because they came to believe in Kido’s critique and relinquished both hope and their belief in the movement as being the voice of futōkō children. In such circumstances, leadership commitment to maintain purposive incentives for the futōkō movement becomes pertinent to deter the process of bureaucratization and to secure the movement’s position as the vanguard of alternative education.

Tōkyō Shure reacted strongly to Kido’s claims as unfounded and erroneous, and criticized her research method, data processing and research ethics.

The book discloses the real names of Tōkyō Shure and Okuchi Keiko in many places but talks about them in an untruthful way so as to justify its claims. This presents readers with an erroneous image of the two. In particular, it directs its criticism against Okuchi by name, but the criticism is not based on facts. This is slander.

It looks like the ‘choice’ discourse was a ‘discourse’ created for the sake of the author herself. This book has taken what other people have said and done out of context, and twists facts in order to promote its own idea. This book has

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120 Purposive incentives are one major type of incentives that can be offered by an organization to secure individual commitment to organizational tasks. The notions of incentive structure adopted here is by Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson (1961) ‘Incentive system: a theory of organization,’ Administrative Science Quarterly, 6 (June 1961), pp. 129-166, cited in Zald and Ash (1966:329).
projected to others an erroneous image of the parents, *oya no kai, ibasho, Tōkyō Shure* and Okuchi Keiko, and thus has disadvantaged and caused harm to us, to parents, *oya no kai*, those at *ibasho*, and *tōjisha*.

As we stated before, we still believe that it is important to know that school is not the only place to grow, but there are many other ways and we have the right to choose which way we want to go.

(*Tōkyō Shūre* 2005)

In the face of Kido’s criticism, *Tōkyō Shure* stands firm on their grounds. It issued an open letter, and met with the publisher and Kido, which led to Kido’s revising part of her claims in response to *Tōkyō Shure’s* protest.

Kido’s questioning of the very foundation of the movement frame thus opened the possibility for the *futōkō* movement to establish new goals after their phenomenal success – to reframe its activism in ways that rejuvenate and regenerate the *futōkō* spirit, and to refine their discourse to one that is closer to the *tōjisha* experience. In this way, the two forces in play usher the *futōkō* movement frame into a more theoretically rich and complex domain. This may bring about the death of the movement as a result of institutionalization; but at the same time, a rebirth can take place through revitalizing the movement frame to proffer a more sophisticated one. For movement leaders, the new challenges are to maintain a niche as a social force of change, to establish new goals and resist becoming a ‘full-blown’ bureaucratic organization and, at the same time, to maintain its institutional and fund raising support base after the ‘success’ of Katsushika School. Development of events in the last two years resonate, literally, with the title of Kido’s book – ‘There is No Ending to *Futōkō*’.
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