

## **Critical Ratings on Goal Attainment: From the Survey on “The Role of Government 2006”**

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While a government is required to implement policies desired by citizens, it is not easy to decide what policies should be implemented. Debate continues over the shape and role of government and policies, including such issues as “big” versus “small” government and “expansionism” versus “restructuring” in fiscal policy. The 2006 theme of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), an international comparative survey group in which the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute participates, was the role of government, a topic that seems to be of high interest among researchers in the participating countries.

Altogether 42 countries and regions take part in the ISSP today and each participating country/region translates the common questionnaire for the yearly survey, jointly produced by the members each year, into their respective mother tongues. In the “Role of Government,” questions were asked on such themes as degree of interest in politics, evaluation of government responses, and desirable policies to be implemented.

While international comparison of the survey data must await submission of findings by all the countries in a few years’ time, this paper reports on the summary of findings from the survey conducted in Japan in November 2006. Part one shows that Japanese are quite critical of their government, judging from responses to questions on the evaluation of government and level of trust in politicians and government officials. In part two, given the much-discussed issue of the “disparities” in Japanese society today, an attempt is made to analyze the relation between self-perceptions of one’s own social stratum, on the one hand, and evaluation of government and policies sought from the government, on the other.

### **CRITICAL VIEW OF GOVERNMENT AND POLITICIANS**

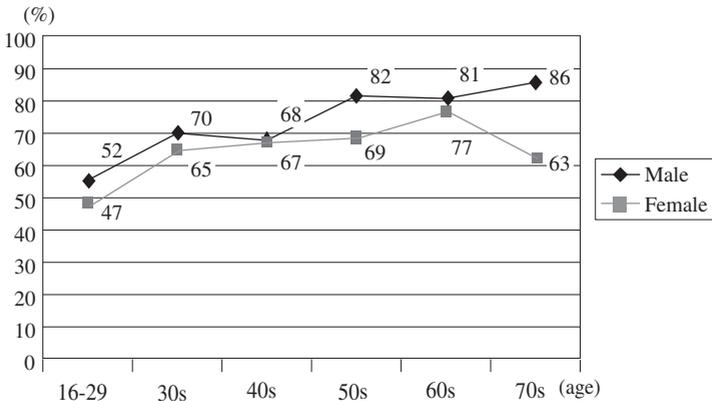
Forty-nine percent of respondents to the survey indicated they were “somewhat interested” in politics (from five choices: “very interested,” “fairly inter-

ested,” “somewhat interested,” “not very interested,” and “not at all interested”). Those who were more-or-less interested in politics (“somewhat interested” plus “very interested” and “fairly interested”) make up 69 percent of respondents, surpassing by far the 27 percent who showed little or no interest. In other words, there is interest in politics, but it is not particularly strong interest.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of those who showed interest in politics (very + fairly + somewhat) by age and gender. It shows that more than 80 percent of men over 50 years old responded positively, signifying their high interest in politics. While it has long been said that the younger generation has little interest in politics, Figure 1 indicates that there is a sharp rise in interest in politics among Japanese men between those in their 40s and those over 50 years old as well as between those aged 16–29 and those in their 30s. By gender, while interest in politics was found lower among women overall than men, little difference was found between men and women in the percentage of those interested in politics in the age groups of 30s, 40s, and 60s. These results seem to contradict the conventional wisdom that younger people are less interested in politics and that women are less interested in politics than men.

In response to a question asking how often respondents use television, newspapers, and the Internet to learn about politics, 86 percent of all respondents indicated that they often or sometimes watch TV news and other programs on politics. Seventy percent replied that they read political articles in the newspapers, while 20 percent obtained information on politics through the

**Figure 1. Interest in Politics**



Internet. While television was found to be frequently watched for all ages and for both men and women, newspapers tended to be used more frequently by those over 40 years old. On the other hand, those between 20 and 40 years were found to use the Internet more frequently than the overall trend. Thus, the media used to obtain political information was found to differ from one age group to another.

When asked whether they talked about politics among themselves, 54 percent of respondents answered affirmatively (including “often” and “sometimes”), exceeding the 45 percent who responded negatively (including “not very often” and “hardly”). The ratio of those who talked about politics was found to be higher among men and women in their 40s and 50s as well as among men older than 60 years than the overall trend. These figures show that there is some overlap between those with high interest in politics, on the one hand, and those who talked about politics among themselves, on the other.

### **Anxiety about Security**

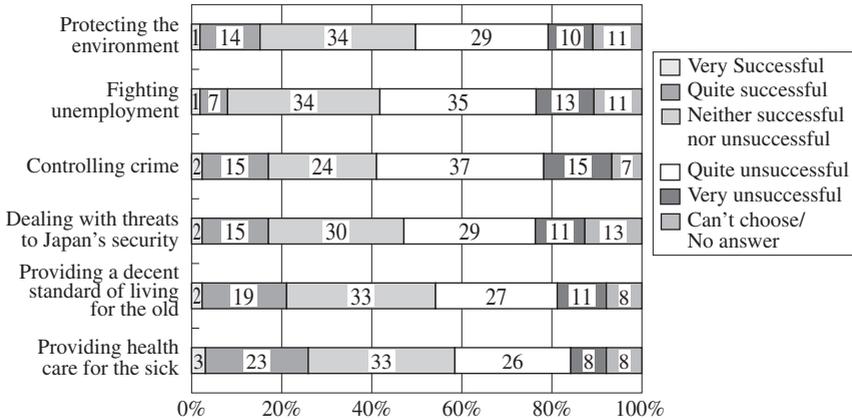
How do Japanese citizens evaluate their government’s policies? In actual content, the role of government ranges widely, from guarantees of a sustainable lifestyle for individuals and maintenance of public safety to diplomatic relations with other countries. In the current survey, respondents were requested to evaluate the effectiveness of the Japanese government in six areas: “Providing health care for the sick,” “Providing a decent standard of living for the old,” “Dealing with threats to Japan’s security,” “Controlling crime,” “Fighting unemployment,” and “Protecting the environment.” Respondents were given five choices, from “very successful” to “very unsuccessful.”

As shown in Figure 2, in all of these six areas those who evaluated government’s policies as “not successful” (including “quite unsuccessful” and “very unsuccessful”) exceeded those who evaluated its policies positively (including “very successful” and “quite successful”). Overall, people’s evaluation of government’s policies was found to be critical.

Of the six items, respondents were most critical in the area of controlling crime. Fifty-two percent of respondents evaluated government’s policy as not successful and a quarter of men in their 30s and women in their 20s found it “very unsuccessful.”

In the Public Opinion Poll on Social Awareness conducted annually by the Cabinet Office of the Japanese government, respondents are asked, from 24 items, to choose areas in which they judge conditions in Japan are worsening (multiple answers permitted). In the 2005 poll, as many as 48 percent of the respondents chose “public order” for the first time as the top issue, replacing

**Figure 2. Evaluation of Government Policies**



such issues as “government finance” and “employment and working conditions.” While its percentage went down to 38 percent in the 2006 poll, “public order” was still on top of the list and the percentage of those who chose “public safety measures” actually increased among men and women in their 30s.<sup>1</sup>

In the past few years, Japan witnessed a chain of heinous crimes victimizing young children, which were widely reported by media. Elementary schools all over Japan have adopted various measures to protect children from crime, including having them walk to and from school in groups accompanied by teachers and/or parents and setting up patrols by local residents. Whether or not the number of heinous crimes is actually on the rise, the survey results seem to indicate that anxiety has been spreading among people about worsening conditions of public safety.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. *Shakai ishiki ni kansuru chosa* [Public Opinion Poll on Social Awareness 2006]. The 24 areas are: foreign relations, national defense, government finance, consumer prices, economic conditions, economic power, employment and working conditions, medical care and social welfare, education, culture, science and technology, natural resources and energy, food, natural environment, living environment, disaster prevention, public order, land and housing, communication and transportation, traffic order, national character, social trends, regional disparities, and internationalization.

<sup>2</sup> Some have pointed out that the increase in number of incidence of heinous crime does not necessarily mean that public security in Japan has deteriorated. See Hamai Koichi and Serizawa Kazuya, *Hanzai fuan shakai* [Society Anxious about Crime] (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2006).

### **Health Care Relatively Appreciated**

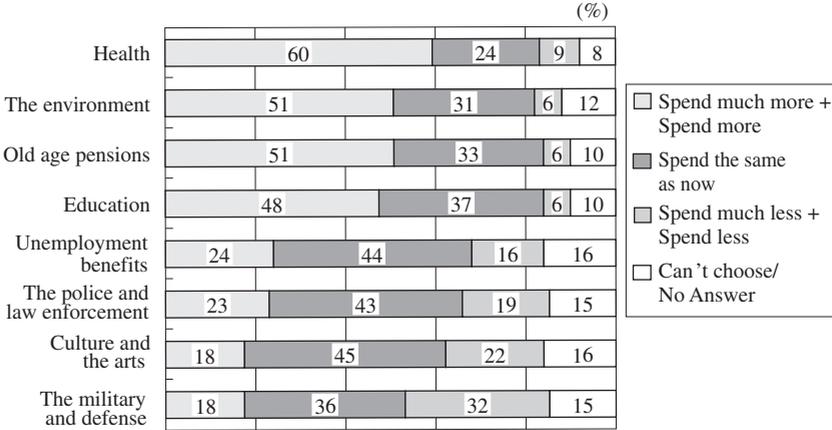
While respondents appeared generally critical of government policies, health care was one area, compared to others, that was relatively highly rated. Respondents who found Japan's health care "not successful" (negative) and those who chose "neither successful nor unsuccessful" (neutral) respectively accounted for about 30 percent of the total, while those who chose "successful" (positive) accounted for 26 percent, showing a roughly even division of evaluations. The aforementioned Public Opinion Poll on Social Awareness also asked respondents to choose areas in which they think conditions are improving in Japan among the same 24 areas. In the 2006 poll, the area that was most frequently chosen (23 percent of the total) was that of "medical and social welfare." In fact, this area has continued to be the number one choice for eight years since the poll was changed to its current form in 1999. These findings coincide also with the results of the current survey, indicating that, among government policies, medical care is relatively highly evaluated.

### **Areas More Government Expenditure Sought**

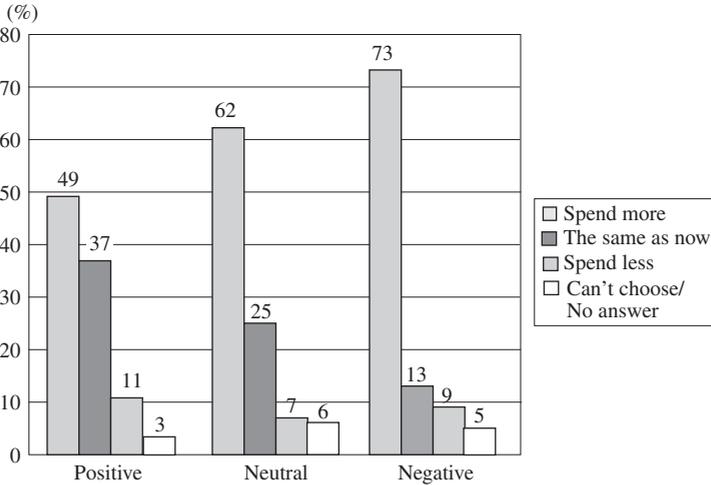
Respondents were asked to indicate whether they wished to "see *more or less* in government spending" in the following eight areas: health, the environment, the police and law enforcement, education, the military and defense, old age pensions, unemployment benefits, and culture and the arts. The area supported by the highest percentage of respondents was health (by 60 percent of respondents including those who were mildly supportive). Except for those over 70 years old, more than half of men and women respondents desired the expansion of health-related expenditures. While such areas as the environment, old age pensions, and education also attracted support of close to half of the respondents, their percentages were lower than that for health (Figure 3).

Although health, the environment, old age pensions, and education are all areas that seriously affect people's day-to-day lives, degree of interest varies by age group in the case of old age pensions and by presence/absence of children in the case of education. Health, in contrast, is a common concern for a large number of people regardless of age, gender, or other groupings. As introduced earlier, respondents' evaluation of government's health care policy was divided into three groups, i.e., negative, neutral, and positive. Interfacing this division with the responses to the question on government spending on health, 73 percent of those who took a negative position and 62 percent of those with a neutral position voted for the expansion of the health care-related budget (Figure 4). It can be inferred that discontentment with the current policy on health led those respondents to demand further expansion of the

**Figure 3. Areas Where Government Should Expand Expenditure**



**Figure 4. Should the Budget for Health Be Increased?**



budget. At the same time, however, 49 percent of those who took a positive position also wished for the expansion of the government budget for health, exceeding both those who opted for the status quo and those who called for reduction of that particular budget. This demonstrates that people continue to

demand that the government expand and improve policies even when these policies are already quite positively evaluated.

### **Distrust of Politicians and Government Officials**

Thus far, we have presented results of the survey showing responses to politics and government policies as being quite critical. How, then, do people see the individual politicians and public officials who actually move politics? In order to gauge people's trust of those who are entrusted with governing, we included in the current survey a question asking, "In your opinion, about how many politicians [public officials] in Japan are involved in corruption." The replies of nearly one-tenth (11 percent) of respondents indicated their impression that almost everyone in politics engaged in corruption. In fact, some 77 percent of all respondents replied that they believe some, quite a lot, or almost all politicians engage in corruption. On the other hand, 61 percent of the respondents also believed that some, quite a lot, or almost all public officials are involved in corruption, indicating people's distrust of public servants, although to a degree slightly lower than in the case of politicians.

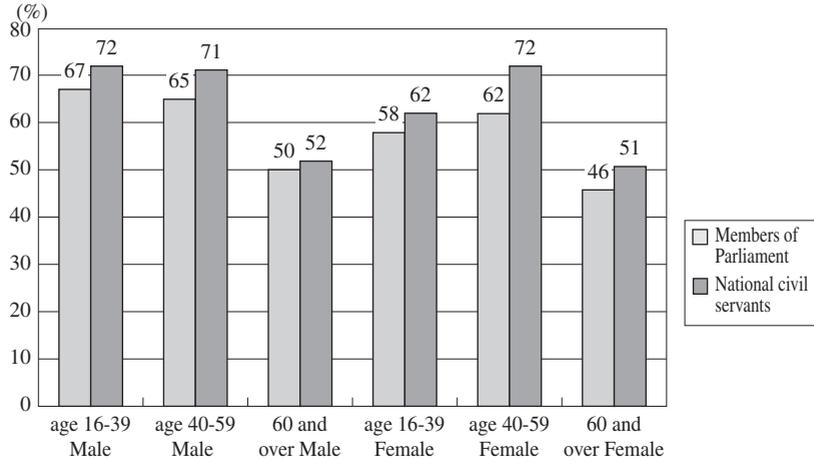
In response to questions asking if they think "MPs [members of Parliament] try to keep the promises they have made during the election" and "most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country," about 60 percent of the respondents answered negatively ("Disagree" and "Strongly disagree") to both questions. Looking into the breakdown by gender and age, men between 16 and 39 years old, men in their 40s and 50s, and middle-aged women showed particularly strong distrust of members of the Diet (Parliament) and national civil servants (Figure 5).

These questions were asked to find out people's general perceptions of politicians and government officials, not of any particular politician or specific ministry. While there was much polemic about "less costly elections," "transparency in political funding," and "accountability in politics" in the endeavor to combat corruption and fraud, there seems to be no end to cases of corruption involving politicians and bureaucrats, and the problem is not going to be eliminated. Immediately before the current survey, too, charges of corruption were leveled at the governors of Fukushima and Wakayama prefectures. It cannot be denied that these incidents have an adverse affect on people's perceptions of politicians and bureaucrats.

Prof. Susan Pharr of Harvard University, in her study on political ethics in advanced countries, writes that dissatisfaction with governments and national leaders is a phenomenon widely shared in advanced nations today. In her analysis of the special feature of distrust of politics observed among the

**Figure 5. Distrust of MPs and National Civil Servants**

Percentage of negative responses to “Members of Parliament try to keep the promises they have made during the election” and “Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country”



Japanese, she points out that such distrust has persisted throughout the post-World War II era despite various attempts at political reform.<sup>3</sup> The current survey indicates anew that Japanese people’s trust is low not only in the government and its policies but also in politicians and the officials who run the government.

### DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL AWARENESS BY SOCIAL STRATUM

In the past few years in Japan, there is much discussion of “disparities in society” (*kakusa shakai*). This issue originally came into debate in the late 1980s in the context of the widening gap between those with high incomes and others caused by changes in the structure of the economy.<sup>4</sup> Recently, however, it is no longer confined to the matter of economic disparities but is used to critique the various kinds of inequities in Japanese society, including opportunities to attend good schools, to find employment, even to find a compatible mate in marriage, as well as the balance of opportunities for good medical

<sup>3</sup> Susan Pharr. “Public Trust and Democracy in Japan” in Joseph Nye, Jr. ed. *Why People Don’t Trust Government* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Tachibanaki Toshiaki, *Kakusa shakai* [The Disparity Society] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006).

care and employment available in provincial areas vis-à-vis urban areas. Reflecting the deepened concern among citizens about disparities in society, how to properly perceive and respond to this issue became one of the focal points of the ordinary session of the Diet convened in January 2007. The government proposed a “strategy for raising the level of growth potential” which aimed to prevent the disparities from becoming permanently fixed by raising income levels and living standards of workers as a whole. On the other hand, the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), the leading opposition party—taking a distinct position from that of the cabinet and the governing coalition—submitted a bill proposing such remedies as elimination of wage disparities between regular employees and the part-time workers.

What follows here is an analysis of the results of the survey on the role of government from the viewpoint of these issues of disparity. Respondents to the survey were asked to rank themselves in the strata of Japanese society on a scale of one to ten. Grouping those in strata seven to ten as the upper class, five and six as the middle class, and one to four as the lower class, 12 percent of the respondents judged they belonged to the upper class, 41 percent to the middle class, and 44 percent to the lower class. A similar question was also asked in the ISSP survey on citizenship in 2004 and, compared to the outcomes obtained in the same survey two years ago, the percentage of those who identified themselves with the upper class slightly declined from 17 percent to 12 percent, while the percentage for the lower class increased from 35 percent to 44 percent. There was no marked change as far as the middle class was concerned. In the debates on social disparity, it is income that is ordinarily used as the yardstick for discriminating social class. It is difficult to imagine, however, that there has been such a marked widening of income gaps in a matter of two years. The change in perceptions over these two years seems to be attributable more to the spread of the debate on social disparities, which must have affected people’s perceptions of their own social strata.

The findings of the current survey are essentially the subjective self-perceptions of the respondents. Looking into the differences in attributes along the lines of the three social strata, however, we can see that, while those with an annual income of 2 to 4 million yen occupied 22 percent of total respondents, 29 percent of those who categorized themselves as belonging to the lower class claimed that they belonged to this income group. In terms of educational background, while 39 percent of all respondents were high school graduates, 45 percent of those who categorized themselves as members of the lower class claimed to be high school graduates. Similarly, workman/skilled laborers occupied 15 percent of all respondents, but 21 percent of those who identified themselves as belonging to the lower class claimed to fall into this

category. It can thus be conjectured that self-perception of one's social stratum is not only affected by income but also by educational background and occupation.

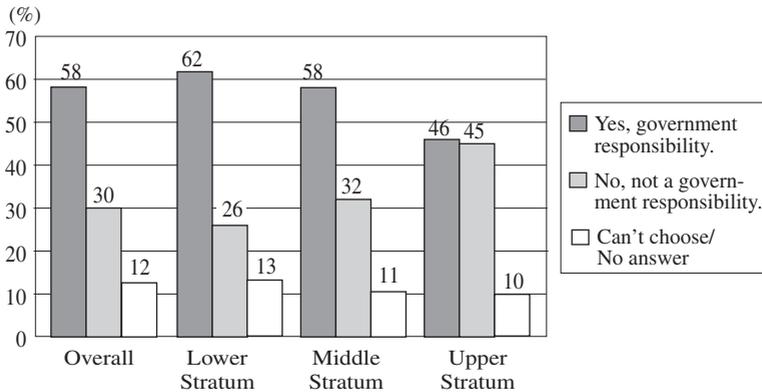
### **Dissatisfactions in Daily Life**

To the question "How satisfied are you with Japanese society today," 65 percent of respondents were found to be dissatisfied, including those who were rather dissatisfied, far exceeding 29 percent who were satisfied. Broken down by social strata, these results revealed that a larger percentage of respondents were satisfied among those in the upper and middle classes. Among those who classified themselves in the upper class, the choice was split equally between "satisfied" and "dissatisfied." Among lower class respondents, on the other hand, 72 percent were dissatisfied as compared to 20 percent satisfied, indicating stronger dissatisfaction with society among people in this social stratum compared to people in the upper and middle classes.

What do people seek from the government? Is there any difference in perceptions of the role of government according to different social strata? In the current survey, respondents were asked about the government's responsibility for the following ten tasks:

- To provide a job for everyone who wants one
- To keep prices under control
- To provide health care for the sick
- To provide a decent standard of living for the old
- To provide industry with the help it needs to grow
- To provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed
- To reduce income differences between the rich and the poor
- To give financial help to university students from low-income families
- To provide decent housing for those who can't afford it
- To impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment

Of these ten, 58 percent of respondents agreed that it was government responsibility to reduce income differences between the rich and the poor, including those who thought it "probably should be" against 30 percent who did not think it a governmental responsibility, including those who thought it "probably should not be." Among respondents who regarded themselves as members of the lower class, 62 percent considered it government responsibility, which was higher than the overall response. Those in the middle class showed the identical trend to the overall pattern, while those in the upper class were split almost equally between agreement and disagreement, each one taking up about 40 percent (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Is It a Government Responsibility to Reduce the Income Differences?**

Vis-à-vis four additional tasks (to provide health care for the sick; to provide a decent standard of living for the old; to give financial help to university students from low-income families; and to provide decent housing for those who can't afford it), the percentage of those who considered them government responsibility was higher among respondents of the lower stratum than for the overall pattern. These four, plus reduction of the income differences, are all tasks that are closely associated with daily life. From these results, we can observe a tendency among people in the lower stratum of society to expect the government to secure a livelihood for themselves and their families. On the other hand, tasks such as stability in consumer prices, regulation of industry to protect the environment, and assistance for industrial growth are related to improvement and development of the society as a whole, and as far as attitudes toward these tasks were concerned, no difference was found between lower-stratum respondents and respondents as a whole.

### **Low Sense of Political Participation**

People in the lower stratum seem to be strongly dissatisfied with society today and to tend to expect a more responsible government, particularly in areas of livelihood protection. These findings suggest that these people hope to rely on politics to find ways to resolve their dissatisfactions.

Observing respondents' interest in politics by social strata, over 70 percent claimed they were interested in politics among people of the upper and middle strata, while the ratio was a slightly lower 60 percent for people in the lower stratum. In response to the question asking if respondents actually voted in the 44th Election for the House of Representatives in September 2005

Figure 7. Support of a Particular Political Party?

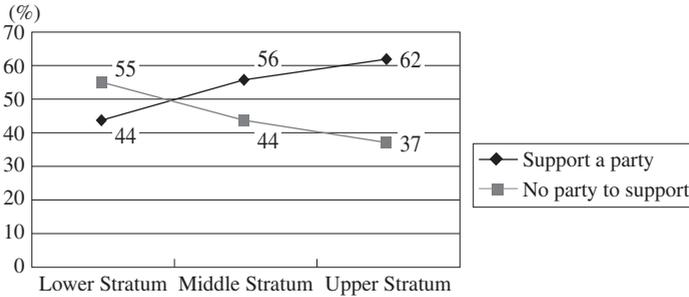
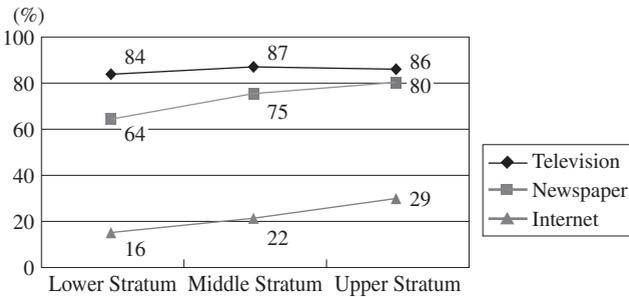


Figure 8. Where Do You Obtain Information about Politics and Government?



(which immediately preceded the current survey), over 80 percent of those in the upper and middle strata responded affirmatively, while only about 70 percent of the lower class responded that they voted in the election.<sup>5</sup>

Among respondents of the upper and middle strata, more respondents supported a specific political party than those who did not. Among voters of the lower stratum, on the other hand, more than 50 percent supported no specific political party (so-called “independent voters”), exceeding those who supported a particular party (Figure 7). In terms of media to obtain political information, more than 80 percent of respondents of the lower stratum indicated that they either often or sometimes watched news and politics-related programs on the television. The percentages of lower-stratum respondents who used newspaper or the Internet to obtain political information were found to be somewhat lower than those of the upper and middle strata (Figure 8).

<sup>5</sup> The actual voter turnout at the 44th Lower House Election was 67.51 percent (for single-seat electoral districts.) With the privatization of postal services proposed by the Koizumi Jun’ichiro government as the clear point of contention, this election attracted a lot of voters’ attention, gaining about 7 percent point in voter turnout over the 43rd Election in 2003.

To the question asking whether respondents “have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing our country,” the percentage of affirmative responses declined, the lower the status of the respondents. In other words, “yes” was the response of 31 percent of those in the upper stratum, 21 percent in the middle stratum, and 14 percent in the lower stratum. Similarly, to the statement, “The average citizen has considerable influence on politics,” 43 percent of lower strata respondents replied negatively, which was higher than the overall percentage (38 percent) of the negative replies. These results suggest that people of the lower social strata tend to have a low sense of political efficacy.

Those who perceived themselves as belonging to the lower strata of society had a strong inclination to seek governmental responsibility for tasks closely related to daily life, such as reduction of the income gap and provision of health care for the sick. It may be only natural for people who have harder lives to wish for improvement of their living conditions. On the other hand, however, lower-stratum respondents showed a weak sense of political participation which is needed for them to communicate their expectations of the government, making it difficult, consequently, for their voices to be heard.

## CONCLUSION

The characteristics of Japanese awareness about politics, revealed in the current survey, may be summarized as follows. First, in numerous areas more people were highly critical than approving of government policies. From this finding, it appears that Japanese citizens have a critical view of their government. Furthermore, there were many who believe that politicians and bureaucrats are involved in corruption cases, revealing their deep-rooted distrust of legislators and administrators. Looking into the difference in awareness according to social strata, dissatisfaction with society was shown to be stronger among those who perceived themselves as belonging to the lower stratum, and these people tended to expect more from the government. Their dissatisfactions, however, are not necessarily linked to greater participation in politics, and the sense of powerlessness vis-à-vis politics and government is strong among them.

While the current essay only introduces the outcome of the survey within Japan, when the results of the other country surveys become available, this study will be expanded. It will be of particular interest to learn whether the perceptions about the role of politics and government reported here are peculiarly Japanese or widely shared by people in other countries in the world.

*(Translated by Noda Makito)*

## ISSP 2006 Role of Government Questionnaire

—Simple tabulation of survey results—

1. Period: 18–26 November 2006 (Sat.–Sun.)
2. Method: Self-completion
3. Target population: National population 16 years and over
4. Respondents: 1,800 people (12 people × 150 spots) (stratified two-stage random sampling from the Basic Resident Register)
5. Valid responses: 1,231 (68.4%)

**Question 1.** How satisfied are you with Japanese society today? Circle one closest to your answer from the five options given below. (%)

1. Very Satisfied	1.4
2. Fairly Satisfied	27.4
3. Rather Dissatisfied	51.5
4. Very Dissatisfied	13.4
5. Can't choose	6.2
No Answer	0.2

**Question 2.** In general, would you say that people should obey the law without exception, or are there exceptional occasions on which people should follow their consciences even if it means breaking the law? (%)

1. Obey the law without exception	21.1
2. Follow conscience on occasions	65.8
3. Can't choose	12.9
No Answer	0.2

**Question 3.** There are many ways people or organizations can protest against a government action they strongly oppose. Please show which you think should be allowed and which should not be allowed by ticking a box on each line. (%)

	1. Definitely	2. Probably	3. Probably not	4. Definitely not	5. Can't choose	No answer
a. Organizing public meetings to protest against the government	39.1	35.0	8.3	1.8	15.0	0.8
b. Organizing protest marches and demonstrations	28.7	36.4	13.7	3.0	17.1	1.1
c. Organizing a nationwide strike of all workers against the government	15.5	24.7	25.9	9.9	23.1	0.9

**Question 4.** There are some people whose views are considered extreme by the majority. Consider people who want to overthrow the government by revolution. Do you think such people should be allowed to: (%)

	1. Definitely	2. Probably	3. Probably not	4. Definitely not	5. Can't choose	No answer
a. hold public meetings to express their views?	20.4	34.6	17.8	10.4	15.8	1.0
b. publish books expressing their views?	23.9	38.6	13.2	5.9	17.1	1.2

**Question 5.** All systems of justice make mistakes, but which do you think is worse: (%)

1. to convict an innocent person?	61.6
2. to let a guilty person go free?	23.2
3. Can't choose	14.7
No answer	0.6

**Question 6.** Here are some things the government might do for the economy. Please show which actions you are in favor of and which you are against. (%)

	1. Strongly in favor of	2. In favor of	3. Neither in favor of nor against	4. Against	5. Strongly against	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. Cuts in government spending	50.8	19.9	12.0	3.2	2.7	10.7	0.6
b. Government financing of projects to create new jobs	23.8	30.1	24.1	7.1	3.2	10.6	0.9
c. Less government regulation of business	11.1	21.1	29.3	12.8	7.1	17.3	1.3
d. Support for industry to develop new products and technology	36.7	36.6	14.5	2.0	1.1	8.0	1.1
e. Support for declining industries to protect jobs	21.6	28.7	25.3	8.1	4.5	10.6	1.2
f. Reducing the working week to create more jobs	15.6	18.4	30.8	13.5	8.7	12.3	0.7

**Question 7.** Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see *more* or *less* government spending in each area. Remember that if you say “much more,” it might require a tax increase to pay for it. (%)

	1. Spend much more	2. Spend more	3. Spend the same as now	4. Spend less	5. Spend much less	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. The environment	23.5	27.9	30.7	3.8	2.4	10.1	1.6
b. Health	29.0	30.8	23.9	5.9	2.8	6.3	1.3
c. The police and law enforcement	8.4	14.9	42.6	11.6	7.3	13.2	1.9
d. Education	19.2	28.5	36.7	3.2	2.8	8.2	1.5
e. The military and defence	7.3	10.2	36.1	16.9	14.7	13.6	1.3
f. Old age pensions	22.9	28.1	33.4	3.4	2.7	8.4	1.1
g. Unemployment benefits	8.6	15.0	43.8	9.6	6.8	14.9	1.2
h. Culture and the arts	6.8	11.0	44.6	11.9	9.8	15.0	0.9

**Question 8.** On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to: (%)

	1. Definitely should be	2. Probably should be	3. Probably should not be	4. Definitely should not be	5. Can't choose	No answer
a. provide a job for everyone who wants one	14.5	31.4	27.1	15.6	10.5	1.1
b. keep prices under control	51.3	34.7	5.1	2.1	5.8	1.0
c. provide health care for the sick	38.0	41.9	8.9	3.2	7.0	1.0
d. provide a decent standard of living for the old	41.3	41.3	8.0	2.7	5.7	1.0
e. provide industry with the help it needs to grow	19.4	39.3	22.0	7.4	10.6	1.3
f. provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed	16.0	33.4	26.8	11.3	11.4	1.1
g. reduce income differences between the rich and the poor	30.2	27.9	19.1	10.9	10.9	1.0
h. give financial help to university students from low-income families	18.4	32.8	23.7	13.6	10.6	1.0
i. provide decent housing for those who can't afford it	9.6	23.0	30.9	22.6	13.3	0.6
j. impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment	48.0	32.5	7.1	2.0	9.7	0.6

**Question 9.** How successful do you think the government in Japan is nowadays in each of the following areas? (%)

	1. Very successful	2. Quite successful	3. Neither successful nor unsuccessful	4. Quite unsuccessful	5. Very unsuccessful	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. Providing health care for the sick?	2.7	22.9	32.8	25.6	8.4	7.1	0.5
b. Providing a decent standard of living for the old?	1.9	19.2	32.9	27.4	10.5	7.6	0.6
c. Dealing with threats to Japan's security?	1.9	14.8	29.9	29.4	10.7	11.9	1.3
d. Controlling crime?	1.8	15.3	24.0	37.1	14.9	6.0	0.9
e. Fighting unemployment?	0.9	7.1	33.5	35.3	12.5	10.2	0.5
f. Protecting the environment?	1.4	14.1	34.2	28.8	10.2	10.6	0.7

**Question 10.** Suppose the government suspected that a terrorist act was about to happen. Do you think the authorities should have the right to: (%)

	1. Definitely should have right	2. Probably should have right	3. Probably should not have right	4. Definitely should not have right	5. Can't choose	No answer
a. detain people for as long as they want without putting them on trial?	11.5	24.2	32.6	16.9	14.2	0.6
b. tap people's telephone conversations?	13.2	28.4	26.0	20.8	10.8	0.7
c. stop and search people in the street at random?	9.9	31.6	29.8	17.5	10.6	0.6

**Question 11.** How interested would you say you personally are in politics? (%)

1. Very interested	6.7
2. Fairly interested	13.3
3. Somewhat interested	48.9
4. Not very interested	23.6
5. Not at all interested	3.7
6. Can't choose	3.1
No answer	.6

**Question 12.** Please tick one box on each line to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (%)

	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. People like me don't have any say about what the government does	5.4	9.2	10.7	21.5	46.7	5.8	0.6
b. The average citizen has considerable influence on politics	14.3	20.8	19.1	18.4	19.7	7.0	0.6
c. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country	3.2	15.2	32.3	17.5	21.5	9.4	0.9
d. I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am	5.9	12.8	39.1	16.7	11.9	12.8	0.8
e. People we elect as MPs try to keep the promises they have made during the election	2.4	8.5	22.2	21.6	36.4	8.1	0.7
f. Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country	1.4	8.4	19.0	20.6	43.2	6.8	0.6

**Question 13.** Generally, how would you describe taxes in Japan today? (We mean all taxes together, including wage deductions, income tax, taxes on goods and services, and all the rest.) (%)

	1. Much too high	2. Too high	3. About right	4. Too low	5. Much too low	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. People with high incomes	6.9	8.3	16.7	24.9	25.6	16.2	1.4
b. People with middle incomes	14.0	39.6	28.8	3.6	0.9	12.1	1.0
c. People with low incomes	33.4	31.0	14.1	3.8	2.4	14.5	0.9

**Question 14.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%)

	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree nor disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly disagree	6. Can't choose	No answer
a. "There are only a few people I can trust completely"	35.3	25.1	16.2	12.1	7.3	3.7	0.4
b. "If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you"	32.1	30.0	19.8	9.1	4.8	3.8	0.4

**Question 15.** Some people because of their job, position in the community or contacts, are asked by others to help influence important decisions in their favor. What about you? (%)

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a. How often are you asked to help influence important decisions in other people's favor?	
1. Never	37.9
2. Seldom	37.7
3. Occasionally	16.7
4. Often	1.5
5. Can't choose	5.8
No answer	0.4
b. And are there people you could ask to help influence important decisions in your favor?	
1. No, nobody	32.3
2. Yes, a few people	39.0
3. Yes, some people	15.2
4. Yes, a lot of people	1.2
5. Can't choose	12.0
No answer	0.3

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**Question 16.** In your opinion, how often do public officials deal fairly with people like you? (%)

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1. Almost always	1.6
2. Often	18.5
3. Occasionally	19.7
4. Seldom	22.7
5. Almost never	21.2
6. Can't choose	16.2
No answer	0.0

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**Question 17.** Do you think that the treatment people get from public officials in Japan depends on who they know? (%)

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1. Definitely does	13.1
2. Probably does	42.5
3. Probably does not	22.9
4. Definitely does not	5.7
5. Can't choose	15.5
No answer	0.3

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**Question 18.** In your opinion, about how many politicians in Japan are involved in corruption? (%)

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1. Almost none	0.8
2. A few	14.8
3. Some	37.9
4. Quite a lot	28.4
5. Almost all	10.6
6. Can't choose	7.5
No answer	0.0

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**Question 19.** And in your opinion, about how many public officials in Japan are involved in corruption? (%)

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1. Almost none	1.3
2. A few	29.1
3. Some	36.9
4. Quite a lot	20.8
5. Almost all	3.4
6. Can't choose	8.4
No answer	0.1

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**Question 20.** In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favor in return for a service? (%)

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1. Never	76.7
2. Seldom	11.4
3. Occasionally	1.8
4. Quite often	0.8
5. Very often	0.6
6. Can't choose	8.6
No answer	0.2

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**Question 21.** On average, about how many people do you have contact with in a typical week day, including people you live with? We are interested in contact on a one-to-one basis, including everyone with whom you chat, talk, or discuss matters. This can be face-to-face, by telephone, by mail, or on the internet. Please include only people you know. (%)

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1. 0-4 persons	19.6
2. 5-9	29.2
3. 10-19	27.7
4. 20-49	15.9
5. 50 or more	4.6
6. Can't choose	2.9
No answer	0.1

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**Question 22.** How often each day do you refer to the television, newspaper, or the Internet to learn about political developments? Choose one answer from the five options given below for each of the following information sources. (%)

	1. Often	2. Some- times	3. Not very often	4. Rarely	5. Don't know	No answer
a. News and other politics-related programs on the television	59.9	25.8	6.1	6.3	1.4	0.6
b. Articles and commentaries on politics on newspaper	35.3	34.7	13.3	13.8	2.1	0.7
c. Political information on the Internet	7.2	13.0	14.1	57.5	6.4	1.7

**Question 23.** How often do you talk about politics with people around you? Choose one answer from the five options given below. (%)

1. Often	7.3
2. Sometimes	46.1
3. Not very often	23.9
4. Rarely	21.0
5. Don't know	1.5
No answer	0.1