***Hito-zukuri* (Human Resources Development)**

**—Educating without Education—**

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Those who demand that others keep the social order should, if they are grateful for this order, aspire to improve and develop it.

(Watanabe 1993:198; emphasis added by the author)

*Hito-zukuri* (human resources development): Fostering people useful for society.

(Matsumura et al. ed. 1992:1090)

**1. The concept of *hito-zukuri***

It is unclear to what degree *hito-zukuri* (human resources development) has entered the Japanese vernacular, but it is often used in the context of international development. The term itself conveys a sense of action aimed at bringing about some form of change in people. Some people may perceive *hito-zukuri* as desirable, with its implied associations with *mono-zukuri* (manufacturing) and *machi-zukuri* (urban development). However, if we stop and think for a moment about what *hito-zukuri* actually means, we realize that the term does not necessarily have a clear definition. It is therefore far from certain whether *hito-zukuri* can actually be translated directly into English as “human resources development,” even though these terms are generally assumed to be equivalent. In this paper, I aim to examine and clarify the meaning and structure of the *hito-zukuri* concept.(1)

This effort to reveal the reality of the *hito-zukuri* concept implies a focus on the Japanese government’s basic approach to international assistance and cooperation. This is because *hito-zukuri*, together with concepts such as “self-help,” the “on-request principle,” and “human security,” is an ideal pursued by the Japanese government in its assistance and cooperation efforts. Japan’s 1992 Official Development Assistance Charter sets forth a policy of “extensive *hito-zukuri*” founded on the basic approach of “supporting self-help efforts by developing countries to achieve development.” Even among the Charter’s “Key Issues,” a “focus on support in the *hito-zukuri* field, the foundation for *kuni-zukuri* (national development)” is cited as the “most important element of self-help.” Likewise, under the 2003 Official Development Assistance Charter, “support for the self-help efforts of developing countries (...) by extending cooperation for their human resource development, (...) which constitute the basis for these countries’ development” is described as “the most important philosophy of Japan's ODA.” This focus on “*hito-zukuri* (human resources)” is reemphasized as one of the “foundations of self-help efforts and self-reliant development”under the 2015 Development Cooperation Charter. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japanese government’s international assistance and cooperation implementation agency, concentrating on technical cooperation, has also characterized its own stance in terms of “*kuni-zukuri* (national development), *hito-zukuri* (human resources development), and interpersonal connections” (JICA 1994). When the Japanese government seeks to verify the appropriateness of assistance and cooperation ideals and the mutual compatibility of these ideals, “an emphasis on ‘*hito-zukuri*’ is the only element shared with the dominant trend in international assistance” (Shimomura 2018:502). This championing of *hito-zukuri* seems to indicate that it will continue to be an ideal in the future.

Perhaps the ideal of *hito-zukuri* itself is attractive. However, the brightness of an ideal does not guarantee the consistency of its underlying concept. If anything, the two are inversely proportional. Sometimes a dazzling ideal can obscure the substance of the concept. Even JICA, which characterizes its own initiatives as *hito-zukuri*, has pointed out the ambiguity of the term and has persistently engaged in efforts to clarify the *hito-zukuri* concept, focusing on aspects such as its relationship with human resources development (JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1987, 1989, 1999; JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1997). However, this fails to shed light on some aspects of *hito-zukuri*. Moreover, while these aspects have been highlighted elsewhere, as this paper describes, their exposition has not been supported by sufficient evidence. In other words, efforts to define *hito-zukuri* in the existing literature have been far from systematic. In this paper, I will pursue the meaning of *hito-zukuri*, not only in the context of international development but also that of domestic development, more firmly structured in Japanese, and illuminate the unique characteristics of this concept.

**2. The dispersion of *hito-zukuri***

The first official use of *hito-zukuri* by the Japanese government in foreign affairs is said to have been at the 5th meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in May 1979 (Yamada et al. 2019:169), when then Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) advocated the need for “international cooperation for the purpose of *‘hito-zukuri*,’” as follows.

I want to emphasize that “*hito-zukuri* (human resources development)” is the foundation of “*kuni-zukuri* (nation building).” Looking back over the history of Japan, during the past century our efforts to achieve modernization have focused on education amid scarce natural resources. We have made the development of human resources the pillar of Japan’s “*kuni-zukuri*.” (...) When attempting to transfer technologies to developing countries and ensure that they take root there (...) we consider it a priority to enhance basic school education and train specialist technical personnel who can directly undertake development. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs: MOFA 1980; emphasis added by the author)

Three points can be discerned from Ohira’s speech. First, *hito-zukuri* is not a goal in itself, but rather a means to accomplish *kuni-zukuri*. Second, the Japanese government is attempting to rely on Japan’s own experience of development to guide its international cooperation. It could be said that Ohira presents a theory of modernization, of sorts, where Japan’s experience is made the model of development. Third, *hito-zukuri* carries two connotations: “enhancing basic school education” and “training specialist technical personnel who can directly undertake development.”

The first two points formed the baseline for the subsequent development of the *hito-zukuri* concept. In the case of the third point, however, the emphasis on basic school education faded, and *hito-zukuri* became synonymous with the training of specialist technical personnel: in other words, with education in science and technology. In the ASEAN *hito-zukuri* cooperation project proposed by the Japanese government in 1981, for example, the perception that economic development depended on human resources development in fields such as agriculture, industry, and energy was used as a reason to advocate the gratis provision of funding and technical cooperation to promote *hito-zukuri* (MOFA 1981).

According to JICA, *hito-zukuri* was already being implemented in the form of education in science and technology even prior to the speech by Prime Minister Ohira in 1979 (JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1999:23ff). The Japanese government became directly involved in developing technical personnel after joining the Colombo Plan in 1954.(2) It subsequently implemented systematic local personnel development initiatives such as the ASEAN Human Resources Development Center. From around 1990 onward, it became necessary to “diversify” *hito-zukuri* from a concept targeting purely economic development to one that included basic education development(3) and social development, in view of the “worldwide trend towards emphasizing basic education” (JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1999:27). It was as if Ohira’s ideals were reinstated.

Since the 1990s, the profile of the *hito-zukuri* concept has grown and shrunk in accordance with the political standpoint of those who use it. At a social development summit in 1995, for example, then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama of the Japanese Socialist Party called for “social development that prioritizes human beings” over the economy and emphasized “the importance of *hito-zukuri* to develop the abilities of each individual citizen, including the socially disadvantaged such as those with disabilities, in the context of *kuni-zukuri*” (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies and Tokyo University Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia 2022).

In general, Ohira’s political stance is regarded as conservative, and Murayama’s as liberal. They both make use of the *hito-zukuri* concept, but with different connotations. Certainly, both politicians’ use *hito-zukuri* as a means to the greater goal of *kuni-zukuri*. However, Murayama shifts the focus of hito-zukuri onto people themselves, encouraged by the “worldwide movement” towards “human development” advocated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990 (JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1999:32).

In 2001, however, “the advocation of the importance of education in *kuni-zukuri*” at the Genoa Summit by then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of the LDP led to the emergence within the Japanese government of “the perception that investment in education based on self-help was the most effective way to reduce poverty and promote economic growth in developing countries” (MOFA 2002). The Japanese government announced the Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN) in the following year, clarifying its emphasis on basic education from the perspective of “fostering human resources for nation-building” (MOFA 2002).

In the context of BEGIN, “*hito-zukuri* for the sake of *kuni-zukuri*” is contrasted with human development. Here, human development is understood as “the acquisition by each individual member of society of the knowledge and skills needed to live a fitting life for a human and autonomously choose their own future (empowerment)” (MOFA 2002). Human development, which emphasizes people rather than countries, recalls Murayama's concept of “*hito-zukuri* to develop the abilities of each individual citizen,” and suggests that Murayama and Koizumi used *hito-zukuri* with more-or-less opposite connotations. The *hito-zukuri* concept allows for a certain fluidity of meaning.

From 2000 onward, the “human security” perspective, introduced partly through the involvement of the Japanese government, also became a point of reference in the context of *hito-zukuri*. “Japanese aid to the African region increased swiftly from 2010 on, partly as a result of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), with the implementation of vocational training for discharged soldiers in countries that had experienced conflict, and basic vocational training for socially disadvantaged people (Shimazu and Tsujimoto 2021:115).

In this way, the features of *hito-zukuri* have changed in line with global policy movements and political standpoints. It is a very malleable concept that can be adjusted to fit the intentions of the speaker. This adjustment has led to a proliferation of different meanings for the *hito-zukuri* concept. *Hito-zukuri* not only implies basic school education and vocational training but is also used to refer to concepts such as human development and human security. However, the more meanings are attributed to a concept, the weaker the fundamental connections between them become—reduced, in the extreme case, to a common theme of being “related to humans” in the case of *hito-zukuri*—and the more ambiguous the concept becomes.

The increasingly enigmatic nature of the *hito-zukuri* concept is also partially attributable to the fact that it is used to refer not only to the object of assistance and cooperation but also to the method employed. “*Hito-zukuri* as an object” refers to assistance and cooperation directly aimed at developing various human abilities, through education and vocational training, for example. On the other hand, “*hito-zukuri* as a method” refers to the transfer of skills and techniques considered necessary for the purpose of assistance or cooperation, whether it be in the medical field or the media, or elsewhere (Yamada et al. 2019:167-8). From the perspective of “*hito-zukuri* as a method,” all of the Japanese government’s involvement in development implemented with the goal of *hito-zukuri* can be referred to as *hito-zukuri* (Kuroda and Kayashima 2019:401). If everything can be used to refer to as *hito-zukuri*, however, then *hito-zukuri* becomes unserviceable as a concept. Is *hito-zukuri* a floating signifier? Or does it have a fixed meaning?

**3. The structure of *hito-zukuri***

Japan was defeated in World War II in 1945. In 1952, the war finally terminated under international law, and Japan regained sovereignty. In the 1956 Economic White Paper, the Japanese government stated that “the ‘Postwar’ period is over” with the completion of rebuilding and revival after defeat in 1945, and proclaimed the launch of development under the name of “modernization” pivoting on economic growth. Japan was a “developing nation.”

The LDP’s Hayato Ikeda, who became Prime Minister in 1960, initiated a plan aimed at economic growth and referred to as the Income Doubling Plan. To achieve this plan, he also focused on measures such as the training of personnel to undertake industrialization. In August 1962, Prime Minister Ikeda used the word *hito-zukuri* for the first time in an official context, in his general policy speech at the Diet (Ito 1962:119). This was approximately 17 years before Prime Minister Ohira used it in a foreign relations context.

I am determined to strive to promote and renew education, and to make every effort for *hito-zukuri*, which is the foundation of *kuni-zukuri*. (...) I intend to implement education for our children that cultivates moral virtues, fosters a sentiment of love for the motherland, gives them the knowledge necessary for the progress of the times, and builds even finer and more outstanding Japanese citizens, able to contribute to Japan’s prosperity and promote world peace.

(National Diet Library 2022a; emphasis added by the author)

　At the time, *hito-zukuri* became a popular term. While it succeeded as a catch-phrase (Ito 1962:117), it also conveyed a nuance of “molding people into the desired shape” (Nagasu 1962:101), probably associated with the underlined sections in the quote above. People were to be made subject to manipulation for the purpose of nation-building (*kuni-zukuri*).

In his policy speech of January 1963, Ikeda went on to attribute the “success” of Japan’s economic growth to “the ingenuity and innovation of the Japanese people,” arguing that “we have proven that the fate of a nation is determined not by the size of its territory or how much money it possesses but rather by our determination and diligence as citizens.” This, he claimed, “gives clear hope to the emerging countries still at early stages of development.”At the same time, however, he cited issues within Japan such as income inequality and delays in the completion of social infrastructure, as well as a lack of “respect and affection for the Japanese nation, race, and tradition” and a lack of “public spirit,” advocating further efforts not only aimed at “promoting education in science and technology” but also “enhancing moral education” (National Diet Library 2022b). On one hand, Ikeda’s vision demands education in science and technology to provide the knowledge and technology to contribute to economic growth and promote ingenuity and innovation. On the other, it demands moral education to encourage moral virtues such as determination, diligence, public spirit, respect for the nation, etc.

　This relationship between *hito-zukuri* and education becomes even clearer when Ikeda’s *hito-zukuri* policies are considered in conjunction with his cabinet’s education plan. This education plan is presented in “The Expected Product of Education,” an appendix to the Central Council for Education’s report “Expanding and Enhancing Upper Secondary Education,” dated October 1966. The council bemoans the emergence of “egoism” and “hedonism” among “the Japanese people”—“a situation where only material desire grows without spiritual ideals,” precipitated by economic growth and technological innovation. Compulsory skills development for individuals and the promotion of moral virtues such as “public spirit” and “correct patriotism” are proposed as means to overcome this situation (Central Council for Education 1966). The goal of economic growth itself is left unchanged. Instead, the council prescribes the medicine of moral education to correct its perceived distortions. Let us refer to this morality that aims to “recover” “spiritual ideals” as “Japaneseness.”

The logical structure of *hito-zukuri* becomes clearer when viewed in the context of The Expected Product of Education.” In other words, in order to achieve *kuni-zukuri*, including economic growth and industrialization, more was required of *hito-zukuri* than simply training industrial personnel. Ikeda’s concept of education that “cultivates moral virtues” and “fosters a sentiment of love for the motherland” was also indispensable (cf. Lee 2002). Education in science and technology was an effective way to develop human resources to contribute to the economy and industry in the first case, while moral education was effective to cultivate moral virtues and sentiment—“Japaneseness”—in the second. The structure of the *hito-zukuri* concept can be presented in diagrammatic form, as shown below.

*Kuni-zukuri*

Aims ┌―――――┴―――――┐

Economic growth and technological innovation Cultivating moral Japanese people

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*Hito-zukuri*

　　　　Methods ┌―――――┴―――――┐

 Education in science and technology Moral education

**Figure\*-1 Structure of the concept of *hito-zukuri*** (prepared by the author)

That being said, *hito-zukuri* is still used as a catchphrase even today, without any clear, systematic explanation from those who use it. For example, in the Technical Intern Training Program for foreign nationals launched in 2016 under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), *hito-zukuri* is used in the following way.

The Technical Intern Training Program is aimed at transferring skills, technology, and knowledge to developing countries and cooperating in the *hito-zukuri* of those who will undertake economic development in developing countries, to fulfill Japan’s role as an advanced country and facilitate the harmonious development of international society. (MHLW 2022).

No more explicit explanation of *hito-zukuri* is provided.(5) The Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees, which formed the legal basis for the Technical Intern Training Program, does not use the word *hito-zukuri*. Article 1 states the purpose of the Act as follows: “promoting international cooperation through the transfer of skills, technique, and knowledge (...) to developing countries and other regions through human resource development.”

*Hito-zukuri* could be expected to refer to moral education as well as education in science and technology. However, whether intentionally or otherwise, the Act contains no mention of morality. This phenomenon—the omission of moral education—also occurs in the context of international development. Given Japan’s history as a colonial power, it could be conjectured that Japan is not in a position to openly advocate education in morality for other countries, precisely because of morality’s links with culture and value perceptions.

**4. The distinctiveness of *hito-zukuri***

If *hito-zukuri* were synonymous with personnel development limited to skills, techniques, and knowledge, then it would overlap with the concept of human resources development. Human resources development, with its background in human resources theory, is generally explained as “both the aim and specific methods used to grow human resources, including the development of human abilities, skills, and techniques, and the fostering of leadership” (International Development Journal 2014:165). Human resources development is the same as *hito-zukuri* in terms of its involvement in human skills and techniques, and in the way it perceives humans as resources for development. It is also possible to regard *hito-zukuri* as identical to the concept of capacity development (JICA Institute for International Cooperation, 1995:48). Certainly, recalling the case of the ASEAN Human Resources Development Center (the “ASEAN *Hito-zukuri* Center” in Japanese), both *hito-zukuri* and capacity development share the feature of “including not only personnel development but also the development of organizations and systems” (JICA et al. 2013:2).

In terms of Japan’s internal development, however, *hito-zukuri* has a different meaning from terms such as human resources development and capacity development. *Hito-zukuri* contains an element of moral education that is absent from human resources development and capacity development. In fact, this difference has been pointed out before in the context of practice and research on international development. *Hito-zukuri* “cannot necessarily be fully understood in terms of human resources development from an economics standpoint. It is a uniquely Japanese concept, connoting multi-faceted elements.” It emphasizes personal interaction and mutual understanding in assistance and cooperation activities (Kanda and Kuwajima 2005:3-6). Moreover, *hito-zukuri* embodies “Japan’s traditional techniques and spirit” or “the experiences and feeling of pride in history that Japan has fostered” (JICA et al. 2013:163). It is precisely this spirit or feeling that can only be conveyed through personal interaction. *Hito-zukuri* is further characterized as “the integration of practical learning, linked directly to work and life, with moral education as a member of the nation and society.” Its aim is summarized as “the acquisition of practical knowledge and techniques as well as character building” (Yamada et al. 2019:167; emphasis added by the author). *Hito-zukuri* aims to improve the recipients of assistance and cooperation: not only technically but also morally (Yamada 2016:194).

The international development debate was not, in fact, based on the historical background of *hito-zukuri* in the context of Japan’s domestic development. Nevertheless, the two development debates—international and domestic—concur on some points. First, they both emphasize involvement in the internal life of recipients—including spirit, morality, and character—in addition to skills, techniques, and knowledge, and both summarize *hito-zukuri* in terms of education, using Japan’s experience as a model.(6)

Second, in both cases, *hito-zukuri* does not simply target people in general but specifically *undeveloped* people. In the context of domestic development, this term was attached to children, youths, and others who fell below certain criteria. In the context of international development, *hito-zukuri* targets so-called developing countries, not G7 nations. In 1964, *hito-zukuri* was used in the context of policies on foreign students (Saito 2011:7), but in this case, it was students from Asian countries, not the USA, that the policy-makers had in mind. The Technical Intern Training Program, although ostensibly targeting all foreigners, is in fact an international cooperation policy targeting developing regions. French nationals, for example, are not the “foreigners” envisaged by the program’s authors. Yet nobody would suggest that developed countries no longer engage in economic growth and technological innovation. One can only conclude that, in terms of the selection of targets, a class system is at work in *hito-zukuri*.

Recalling the fact that *hito-zukuri* comprises both education in science and technology and moral education, it is therefore implied that the Other at whom *hito-zukuri* is targeted not only has an insufficient level of skills, techniques, and knowledge but is also considered to be morally insufficient. At the same time, *hito-zukuri* is predicated on the assumption that the initiator is able to improve the target, not only in terms of skills, techniques, and knowledge but also in terms of morality. The content of the skills, techniques, and knowledge, and also of the morality—the “Japaneseness”—is derived from Japan’s own experience of development, and it is expected that *hito-zukuri* based on this content will be implemented not only through school education and vocational training but through all aspects of the Japanese government’s assistance and cooperation efforts. If one were to rephrase this in the form of a *hito-zukuri* ideal, then it would be something along the lines of “become like a Japanese person.”

**5. The conditions for *hito-zukuri* — towards an ethics of development**

　The meaning of *hito-zukuri* in Japanese boils down to education in science and technology and education in morality. However, the term “*hito-zukuri*” is not used interchangeably with “education.” Given Japan’s history as a colonial power, education is not something that it feels able to openly promote in other countries. Moreover, *hito-zukuri* also includes moral education rooted in culture and value perceptions. The substance of this morality is “Japaneseness.” This is not something that Japan can advertise as its guiding motivation. It is for this reason that the moral education aspect of *hito-zukuri* is not openly explained in the context of international development and international cooperation. The difficulty in translating the term *hito-zukuri* lies precisely in this enigmatic, two-sided nature: the blending of education in science and technology and education in morality, with the morality aspect obscured. *Hito-zukuri* is not human resources development; nor is it capacity development. Translating *hito-zukuri* as such further obscures its morality aspect. Morality is the semantic condition that defines the term *hito-zukuri*.

The target of *hito-zukuri* could be added as an objective condition. Although *hito-zukuri* contains the word *hito*—people in general—it actually refers specifically to people in developing countries. Those in advanced countries are excluded. A tacit limitation exists on who is eligible to receive *hito-zukuri*. In this paper, I have called this limitation a “class system.” People in developing countries lack not only skills, techniques, and knowledge, but also morality, and the Japanese government can supplement this lack—this is the premise on which *hito-zukuri*, with its morality and class system, is established.

Based on these two conditions, semantic and objective, I would like, in conclusion, to impose one more condition on *hito-zukuri*: an ethical one. If one understands “morality” as a term used by the group to force individuals to adapt to group behavior, and “ethics” as resistance by individuals to group morality (cf. Ebisaka 1997; Tsurumi 1997), then *hito-zukuri* is indeed moral.(7) It is not, however, ethical. Of course, neither development nor education is ethical *per se*: both use the Self as the standard from which to judge the Other, and seek to bring the Other up to that standard (Hashimoto 2018). *Hito-zukuri* is not unique in this sense. However, *hito-zukuri*’s morality and class system make it prone to a heightened attitude of self-righteousness not found in development or education. It is precisely because of this fact that, when targeting others with assistance and cooperation in the name of *hito-zukuri*, it is vital to constantly review the desirability of one’s own standards. We must question the ethics of *hito-zukuri*: not of those who receive but also of those who deliver it. When we discuss *hito-zukuri*, we must do so not only in terms of the actual standards of morality and class but also in terms of the normative standard of ethics.

**Notes**

(1) There is an expression “*hito-zukuri kyoroku*” in Japanese, meaning “*hito-zukuri* cooperation.” This expression suggests indirect involvement in *hito-zukuri* in another place. In this paper, I only refer to *hito-zukuri*, and aim to elucidate the *hito-zukuri* concept. This is because, in order to clarify *hito-zukuri* cooperation, it is first necessary to clarify *hito-zukuri*. There are also other ways to write *hito-zukuri* and *kuni-zukuri* (national development or nation-building) in Japanese, but I have kept to a single way of writing each.

(2) The Japanese government embarked on *hito-zukuri* in an era when human resources theory was becoming a focus of worldwide attention, and when the importance of the role played by education in economic development was gaining recognition.

(3) The Japanese government’s increased focus on “basic education” did not necessarily imply a focus on the human rights of individuals or individuals as the purpose of development. “Education is by no means simply a tool for economic development. Education is concerned with the formation of ‘knowledge, skills, and values,’ and in that sense is deeply entwined with the national culture. Schools are not simply places that teach ‘reading, writing, and arithmetic,’ What is important is to nurture the qualities needed by members of modern society. Training within the school organization—taking part in progressive lessons from the appointed starting time to the appointed finishing time, while remaining attentive to the directions of the teacher and the rest of the class—is largely responsible for teaching students judgment as members of an organization: an understanding of aspects of work such as preparations, planning, and procedure. In other words, schools are places where, in addition to learning reading, writing, and arithmetic, students engage in group training. Schools are irreplaceable as modern organizations in developing countries, where there is a lack of such organizations” (JICA Institute for International Cooperation 1989:2; emphasis added by the author). This passage shows a collectivist understanding of schools. Likewise, it has been pointed out that “human security,” which was subsequently proposed with the aim of respecting individuality, was subject to a collectivist interpretation in Japan, far removed from its original meaning (cf. Kaldor 2011).

(4) Ikeda’s *hito-zukuri* has been assessed as a “duality of economics and spirit” or “a two-horse buggy pulled by education in science and technology on the one hand, and moral education on the other” (Nagasu 1962:101).

(5) The KEIDANREN Japan Business Federation (2013) also uses the term *hito-zukuri* without any explanation.

(6) It is also possible to view *hito-zukuri* as the transmission of case studies in the “failure” of Japanese domestic development. Within Japan, *hito-zukuri* was glorified in hindsight to make up for development “problems.” This was possible because, internationally, it could be proposed to avoid these “problems” before they arose. There is an apparent tendency in the education and development fields to engage in the international transmission of recent ostensible successes of schools, universities, and corporations in one’s own country, and to link this with opening up markets in developing countries. In Japan too, bodies including the Ministry of Education、Culture、Sports、Science and Technology (MEXT) are promoting EDU-Port Japan, a public-private initiative “to proactively introduce Japanese-style education overseas.” There is no clear indication of the criteria for assessing the success of this initiative, however, and its design and operation remain somewhat arbitrary (cf. Hashimoto 2019). In order to learn from *hito-zukuri*, not only its successes but also, equally, its “failures” should be disclosed. Of course, as argued later in this paper, pressuring others to accept these experiences as models, either of success or failure, should be avoided.

(7) *Hito-zukuri* is sometimes characterized as collectivism (cf. Sato 2021:189ff).

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