Civil Society in Japan

Yutaka TSUJINAKA

Head of International and Advanced Japanese Studies

Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Tsukuba

Abstract

In considering civil society and social capital in Japan, we cannot neglect the traditions from pre-modern times which have given Japan its thick layer of voluntary associational activities and a history of human relationships with society based on trust. However, the concept of civil society proper was quite alien in Japan until the 1990s, when civil society began to play a major role in fiscal concerns and the globalization of society. The social capital of present-day Japan is quite difficult to measure in a concrete, comparative manner. However, Japan continues to aim at a high degree of publicness and social capital in civil society. As a whole, social capital, with its potential in neighborhood associations and NPOs as well as rich developmental associations, can presumably maintain its status. In the future, we can expect to see new policies and new associations that follow and maintain this path even under the new progressive regime of 2009[1].

Keywords: civil society, social capital, citizen, NGO, NPO, interest group, participation

要旨

日本の市民社会や社会関係資本を考える時、前近代からの長い伝統を無視して考えることはできない。日本には様々に絡み合った自発的な集団活動があり、社会と人間が信頼とともに紬合う歴史がある。しかし市民社会という概念は１９９０年代まで日本に根づくことはなかった。ネットワーク、信頼、互酬性で把握される社会関係資本を、日本において、比較社会的に具体的に把握するのも容易ではない。しかし、自治会や NPO に見

られる社会関係資本は相当のレベルを維持している。日本の市民社会は公共性の高いレベルと社会関係資本を維持し、またそのことで政府への負荷を減らしている。これからの社会を展望すれば、確かに、２００９年夏の総選挙によって誕生した革新政権によって、その力点は変わり、また新しい政策や集団が生まれると予想できるが、市民社会のこうした性格自体は不変であると予想できる。

キーワード：市民社会、社会関係資本、市民、ＮＧＯ、ＮＰＯ、利益集団、参加

Introduction

The term civil society (*shimin shakai*) and related words such as NGO (non-governmental organization), and NPO (non-profit organization), generally came into common use in the Japanese media after the 1990s[2], particularly after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995. However, the substance of civil society (indicating here simply social organizations independent from the modern state) has a longer history in Japan, while its nature has been problematic in academia (Garon 2003; Pekkanen 2003; Gordon 2003; Tsujinaka 2003). Although this may be similar to the situation in other Asian countries, in daily life as well as in academia, the context in which these phrases have been used differs from that of Western societies (Alagappa 2004).

According to Fukuda (2006), there is a great deal of historical evidence concerning associational development in pre-modern Japan. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, what we consider modern associations rapidly formed; apart from the critical factor that the basic concept of such associations was imported from Western countries. It is impossible, however, to relate Japan's civil society experience with that of other countries without taking into consideration the organizational experiences and the accumulation of social capital that took place before Japan's modern period.

Since the modern revolution, Japan experienced several waves of democratization. Firstly, during The Movement for Freedom and People's Civil Rights (Jiyu-minken) from the 1870s into the 1880s, over 2000 associations were recorded as being formed. Furthermore, together with the start of Japan's constitutional government in 1889 (imperial sovereignty), focus on the

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[2] In a keyword search of the *Asahi Shimbun* (*Asahi Newspaper*) Digital News Archives (available since 1985), the phrase "civil society" (in Japanese, *shimin shakai*) appeared approximately 40 to 100 times annually in newspaper articles published in the 1990s. Prior to that (since 1985), it appeared less than 20 times. The phrases "citizen association" (*shimin dantai*) and "citizen movement" (*shimin undo*) appeared approximately 100 times in the 1990s, and at times more than 500 occurrences have been noted. Occurrences of the phrase "NGO" (since the 1990s) and the phrase "NPO" (since the end of the 1990s) have also greatly increased, from 300 to 1000 occurrences.

taxation system that came into being with increases in land taxes prompted close to 4,000 petitions in one year. Various groups such as agricultural associations, chambers of commerce, business associations, and industrial associations were rapidly formed. Particularly, during the development of party politics from 1918 to 1937, in the years of the Taisho-Showa Democracy, the wave of association establishment included labor unions and social movements (Tsujinaka 1988, 2004; Garon 2003). However, by the end of the 1930s, all the associations that were formed in the pre-war period were either absorbed within war mobilization efforts or, for those who resisted, coerced and ultimately realigned into the state corporatist structure (Pempel and Tsunekawa 1978). This meticulous systematization throughout almost all association sectors would directly affect Japan's civil society after the war.

The Japanese Constitution was enacted in 1947, under the Occupation after the war, and societies and petitions were liberalized and became fully legitimized. In line with the democratic constitution, various new laws were enacted relating to associations and Japan's civil society was virtually reborn. Japan's defeat and postwar reforms caused a remarkable breakdown in civil society. A particularly reflective example is that of labor unions which recorded an unprecedented high unionization rate of 55.8% in 1949, as opposed to no unions under the war-system (Tsujinaka 1988). Similarly striking figures were also seen in the case of cooperative associations, as consumer groups and citizens' organizations such as the Japan Housewives' Association came into being. In 1952, after the end of the Occupation, further legislation was enacted, particularly with regard to industrial associations, providing the initial structure for Japan's civil society that would continue on through Japan's high-growth period of the 1960s and into the early 1970s.

As will be described later on, a rich substance of civil society in Japan appeared at the latest from around the 1970s. Yet, puzzlingly the concept of civil society did not acquire legitimacy until the 1990s.

On the other hand, a cross-national comparative survey of civil society from the perspective of the nonprofit sector conducted in over 30 countries by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (Salamon et al., 2004) ranked Japan in the middle between Western developed nations and non-Western developing nations. When considering civil society as an idealized alternative of Western societies, the Western-type advocacy groups such as NGOs and NPOs have garnered a certain amount of attention, and it has been pointed out that Japan's civil society is comparatively weak and underdeveloped. If the term social capital is used to refer to relationships between fellow human beings, public and private networks, trust, and reciprocity norms, then it can be argued that Japan's economically-oriented society, with its traditionally

broad and multiple grass-roots structure, corporations and industry, demonstrates evidence of a wealth of social capital (Fukuyama 1995). In fact, there has been a great deal of debate regarding the nature of Japan's civil society as being "rich" in social capital yet "poor" in terms of civic or advocate-mindedness (Pekkanen 2006; Schwartz and Pharr 2003).

These puzzles are clues to an understanding of Japan's civil society and social capital. There is a clear need for the issue of civil society to be approached from a broad perspective in order to answer these problems[3].

1. Concept of civil society in Japan

It is generally thought that the development of civil society in many Western countries accompanied the appearance and features of *modern societies and modern states* (Schwartz 2003). Yet, in Japan, modern society and civil society were *not* considered to be corresponding. In fact, it was not until the 1990s that the two concepts became equivalent.

In Japan, the term *shimin*, often translated as citizen, dates back to the Meiji era (1870s) when it first started to appear in translations by Yukichi Fukuzawa[4], who used it to refer to residents of urban areas. Fukuzawa himself had a great interest in voluntary participation by the public at large as well as in Western-style civil society and associations (Yamaguchi 2004). At the beginning of the 20th century up to the 1930s, with the rise of the middle class in Japan, authentic portrayals of citizen life such as those depicted in the movie genre *Shoshimin* (*Small Citizen*) (Shochiku Film Company) received popular acclaim. Positive conceptions of *shimin* appeared in the years prior to the Second World War with popular phrases based on "civil" or "citizen", such as the Japanese word *sebiro* (originated from civilian) for the business suit and the famous manufacturing company Citizen (producer of watches established in 1918), coming into vogue.

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[3] Research in Japan, particularly with reference to Yutaka Tsujinaka's comprehensive surveys of the structure of Japanese civil society based on the experience of comparative surveys in 11 countries, advances the study of the features and reality of Japanese civil society and social capital through robust empirical comparison with other countries. From 1997 to 2004, structurally identical surveys were conducted in Japan, South Korea, the U.S., Germany, China, Turkey, Russia, the Philippines, Brazil, and Bangladesh using the JIGS 1 [Japan Interest Group Survey 1] survey instrument. Each survey was targeted at interest groups and civil society organizations in a capital city area as well as one local area. See Tsujinaka 2002, 2003, 2007. In 2006-2007, a further comprehensive national survey of neighborhood associations, social organizations based on telephone directory entries, and registered NPOs was conducted in Japan (see Tsujinaka 2007, 2008). The term JIGS 2 (Japan Interest Group Survey 2) refers to the accumulated data concerning social organizations and NPOs from this later survey. As of 2006, further surveys are being conducted in Uzbekistan, Poland and Estonia.

[4] One of the most important enlightenment intellectuals of the Meiji era, whose group developed into the Keio-Gijyuku University, the most prestigious non-profit educational organization in Japan.

In the democratization period following the war, residents' divisions named citizen divisions were established in local municipalities throughout Japan, and civil society was debated as a new basis for democracy. Detailed academic studies related to the concept of civil society appeared in the social sciences (Yamaguchi 2003). While a small number of early pioneering historians such as Goro Hani investigated the concept of civil society prior to the war, civil society in itself became an important phrase mainly during Japan's democratization period following the war. Advancing the concept even further were the modernists, a collective term used to describe the liberal left-wing leaders in post-war social sciences. Their theorizations overlapped with an awareness of the problems facing the world in the post-socialist era, and the academic work pioneered by these thinkers following the war, started to bear fruit in the 1970s[5]. With this reality continuing through Japan's period of high economic growth, citizens' movements and residents' movements became widespread from 1960 to 1970s. Such movements involving support for the Constitution, peace, anti-war demonstrations, opposition to environmental destruction, advocacy for consumer protection and citizen-led politics, as well as appeals for citizen participation contributed to the birth of many reform-minded local governments.

Yet notwithstanding academic interest and public movement, the term civil society did not take hold in mainstream Japanese society until the late-1990s. It became a widespread phrase after the tragedy of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and the "volunteer revolution" that ensued.

Three reasons can be given for the amount of time it has taken for civil society to take root in Japan, even under the post-war democratic constitution. First, for a long time, the phrases citizen and civil society implied participation in urban areas. Until recently, opposition parties were mainly concentrated in urban areas, and the concepts of citizen and civil society came to be associated with such opposition forces. For this reason, many ruling conservative leaders and their supporters resisted using the terms.

As such, the polarity between the concepts of citizen (*shimin*) versus public-minded person (in Japanese, *komin)*, or citizen of the state (*kokumin)*, both of which have more of a nationalist

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[5] Social scientists include Takeyoshi Kawashima, Hisao Ootsuka, Masao Maruyama, Zenya Takashima, Yoshihiko Uchida, Rokuro Hidaka, as well as Keiichi Matsushita, Michitoshi Takabatake, Hiroshi Mizuta, Kiyoaki Hirata, and Hajime Shinohara, and among philosophers, Shunsuke Tsurumi and Osamu Kuno. Research works include *Gendai toshi seisaku koza* (Lectures in modern municipal policy), 12 volumes published in 1972-73, *Hoshakaigaku koza* (Lectures in the sociology of law), journals such as *Shimin* (Citizen) during its first and second periods (March 1971 to May 1974 and September 1975 to August 1976, respectively), and new concepts such as civil society-socialism, participatory democracy, and civil minimum.

connotation, became well-known during the legislative process of the NPO Law enactment. To conservatives, there was a crucial difference between the concepts of citizen and citizen of the state, leading to questions concerning citizens' or civil society's allegiance to the nation-state. Furthermore, there were doubts as to the implications of civil society for the agrarian population that comprised the base of support for the conservative movement. While the conservative government could accept an interpretation of citizen (*shimin*) re-conceptualized as a public-minded person (*komin*), with regards to issues concerning the names of educational subjects, names of community halls, and names and titles in social education, such conceptions remained outside the scope of citizens.

Secondly, it should be added that there were long statist bureaucratic regulations. Laws and especially the Civil Code of 1896 have molded the arrangement of civil society since the Meiji era to the present, and a bureaucratic paternalistic culture against civil society has been influential even in the present post-war period until very recently (Pekkanen 2006, Garon 2003). The state's goals have revolved around modernization stances that have focused on bureaucracy-led "catching-up" processes (for example, "rich nation and strong army" in the Meiji era and Income Doubling Plan in the 1960s).

Third, an additional criticism came from the left, pointing out that citizens (*shimin*), residents (*jumin*), and the populace (*minshu*) did not share the same "public" perspective. With a background of class consciousness, it was thought there was a perceived bias towards urban residents, the educated class and the socially aware middle class, leading to questions as to whether the working class and the general populace were being excluded. According to Yamaguchi (2003), there were also further criticisms from the left that residents' movements were contra-positive to citizens' movements. It should be remembered that until 1996, the major opposition party in Japan was the Socialist party.

Finally, however, at this juncture of the 21st century, there are few definitive ideological differences between the ruling conservative government and the opposition. (The new Democrat regime, a former major opposition party, formed its cabinet in mid September 2009 and expressed more positive perspectives towards civil society and its concept.) During the process of formation of the NPO Law, ruling and opposition parties, as well as labor unions and management groups, were able to cross existing boundaries to combine forces in establishing the law. With the enactment of the name change of the NPO Law, from the Citizen Activities Promotion Law to the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities, in the first section of the same law there is a description of the concept of citizen and this law has assumed the character

of a law to promote civil society. Thus, in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake accompanied by a burst of volunteer activities, expectations for civil society are quite high. Surpassing the boundaries between conservative and reformist, right- and left-wing camps, indigenous and non-indigenous, government and the public, companies and citizens, civil society has become recognized by all sectors. As a result, research concerning the concept of civil society has also dramatically expanded.

According to Yasushi Yamaguchi, the normative civil society concept can be defined as "an aggregate of terms and conditions of the intersecting deliberative arena whose principles are based on the symbiotic coexistence of political, economic, and social paradigms" (2003: 322). Tsujinaka defines civil society as the "function or its space where non-government actors seek a broader sense of public coexistence and public goods, rather than only conducting social activities for their own benefit" (2002b: 18). This definition thus serves as the basis for empirical comparative surveys of the entire social structure of civil society aside from government, profit-oriented organizations, and families.

2. Concept of social capital in Japan

There are four elements related to the concept of social capital in Japan.

First, research concerning the concept of socially related capital or Social Capital, (here, the common usage of social capital in terms of the Putnam school meaning trust, reciprocity norms and social networks is written in capital letters and it should be differentiated from social capital in daily life usage in Japan), as it came into currency throughout the world in the 1990s, was originally imported to Japan and developed from the latter half of the 1990s onwards. At the present time, conceptually speaking, it conformed to definitions mainly forwarded by Western authors and international institutions with little or no distinctiveness. In this regard, similar to the situations in other countries, while there has been no conceptual conformity, it has demonstrated diverse evolutions.

Second, one particularly important distinction in the concept of social capital in Japan is its use in an entirely different context; namely, its general relation to economic-related infrastructure. In fact, government statistics and the use of the phrase social capital in daily conversation tend to associate it in this manner. This usage backed the Income Doubling Plan, a comprehensive master plan that would spearhead Japanese high economic growth in the 1960s. The Economic Planning Agency, now the Cabinet Office, has since adopted it as a key concept.

Third, systematic research on civil society organizations, NPOs and the non-profit sector, and NGOs continues to advance. This can be considered as part of the structural research that focuses on Social Capital. And finally, Social Capital has taken on a multifaceted character as a variable incorporating diverse social policy orientations and applications[6].

Even in Japan, there are a number of fascinating episodes with regards to comprehension and trust in cognitive Social Capital. One impressive experience was the International Contextualism Survey. More than a decade ago Hamaguchi (1996) and his associates tried to verify the difference between Japanese society and Western society regarding principles in human relations. Despite their endeavour to test it internationally through eight thousand cases in 25 countries, by asking cognitive questions in a general context, they did not succeed because they only identified norms or preferences of how to answer rather than actual behaviour.

Since the 1990s, particularly after accepting the macro aspect of Putnam's global meaning of social capital, systematic research commenced utilizing subsequent Japanese Cabinet Office surveys that addressed the problems outlined by the OECD.

The 2003 Cabinet Office survey was operated in terms of three basic component areas and data was collected and analyzed from each prefecture in Japan. The first area, titled Informal Networks and Interaction, included assessments of respondents' relationships with their immediate neighbors, the number of people with whom they interacted, the frequency of interaction with friends, acquaintances, and relatives, and the extent to which they participated in sports, hobbies, and/or leisure activities. The second area, given the general title of trust, measured participants' general degree of trust, as well as trust in their neighbors, friends, acquaintances, and relatives. And finally, the third area, Formal Networks and Interaction, included questions relating to activities in their respective areas, participation in volunteer

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[6] Regarding Social Capital, seven main streams in evolving research are identified in Japan. 1) Accepting concerns raised by the OECD (2002) report, the Cabinet Office in Japan (2003) took certain initiatives, adopting the prevalent global context of Social Capital which was basically centered on Putnam's research. Using composite indicators based on surveys and existing statistics, analytical research has progressed on the prefectural and regional levels, particularly with regard to how Social Capital can be coordinated with policy application, NPOs, and the non-profit sector. 2) Research which includes Social Capital in multi-level surveys on the structure of civil society and which is related to regional governance (Tsujinaka et al., 2007). 3) Research on the connection between Social Capital and development policies in developing countries (Sato 1993). 4) Research that analyzes which policy applications would be necessary for policy reforms to enhance performance when Social Capital is identified as an independent variable, and economic and social performance are considered to be dependent variables. 5) Research that emphasizes elements of trust and participation based on surveys examining values (e.g. the Asian Barometer surveys) (Inoguchi 2002). 6) Research that analyzes the correlation between social capital and individual policy applications, including national, community, and health and welfare policies. 7) Research that seeks to comprehend Social Capital in terms of the sense of belonging and trust in individual associations, and the ensuing linkage with political activities (Ikeda 2006).

activities, and donations to community funds. Yamauchi and Ibuki (2005) investigated a further line of inquiry related to networks with particular emphasis on NPOs and the non-profit sectors.

In Japan, while research concerning social capital became quite popular in the early 21st century, conceptually speaking, it has not developed further from the Cabinet Office surveys that drew on Putnam's work as interest dispersed in different areas.

3. Empirical data on civil society in Japan

There has been a wealth of statistics collected concerning the development of civil society in the past half century, spanning from 1950 to the present time[7].

3.1. Four phases of civil society in the postwar period and general trends of association establishments

As for the associational structure of Japan's civil society, the disconnection between its pre-war and post-war formations and the unprecedented rise in the number of associations during the Occupation, up to the middle of the 1990s Japanese civil society maintained an extremely stable development. However, Japan's civil society reached a critical turning point in the latter half of the 1990s, exhibiting marginal increases in the number of associations, stagnating numbers of association staff, and rapidly worsening financial conditions. Furthermore, except for one segment of the advocacy sector, public participation also declined. With the enactment of the NPO Law, systematization in the advocacy sector progressed. Figure 1 illustrates the overall structure of civil society in terms of its establishments (offices).

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[7] Quantitative data, specifically statistics, was produced by the government on legal persons and/or state-recognized institutions, Establishments Census, Non-profit Associations Finance, and NPOs. Also, the national surveys conducted in 2006-07 of unions and associations classified as such in telephone listings, all NPOs, and neighborhood associations (Tsujinaka et al., 2007a; Tsujinaka and Pekkanen 2008, and Tsujinaka et al., 2007b) are available.

Fig.1: Number of associational establishments in Japan, 1951-2006 (per 100,000 people)
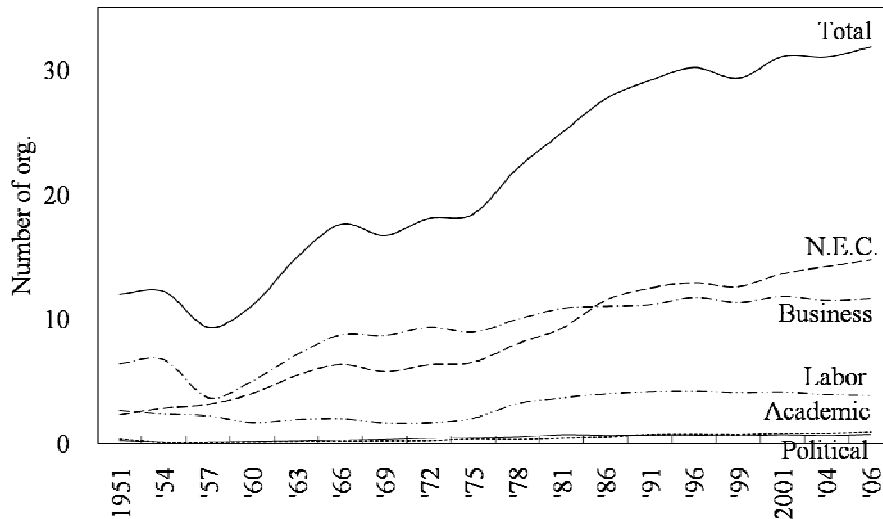
Source: Establishment Census, Statistics Bureau, Cabinet Office, Japan.

As a brief explanation, with regard to association establishment statistics, comparisons with similar statistics from the U.S. and South Korea may be informative. In the 36-year period from 1960 to 1996, the number of association establishments in Japan increased by 3.7 times; comparatively speaking, during the same period of time, there was close to a three-fold increase in the number of American association establishments. In South Korea, there was a sharp increase after liberalization, and thereafter stagnation. With regard to the density of associations as measured per capita (hereinafter referred to as per capita association density), the U.S. figures in 1960 were one-third, which dramatically increased to 85% by 1996. However, after 1996, these figures stagnated, and as of 2006 there were only 32 association establishments per 100,000 people.

In examining the association figures in terms of type, while the predominance of business/economic associations (comprising approximately 40% of the total number of associations) is noteworthy, their figures remained static throughout the 1980s and afterwards. Rather, what is particularly characteristic is the striking rate of growth in the number of "other" associations (N.E.C. or "not elsewhere classified" in Figure 1).

From the above representation, four distinct phases can be seen in the evolution of Japanese civil society.

First phase (1945 until approximately 1957): During the first half of this period, the number of associations sharply increased. In general, rebirth and a new formation of civil society took place during this period with the focal point being the labor unions. In the late 1950s substantial reorganization and retrenchment occurred.

Second phase (1957 to 1975): While during this phase there was an overall movement towards developmentalism, and business/economic associations and labor unions made up a substantial number of total associational formations, social movements such as citizens' and residents' movements also started. In addition, progressive local governments also went through a reform period.

Third phase (1975 to 1996): After the 1970s, a critically dangerous period for the ruling government, and in the 1980s, under the resurgence of the conservative mood, there was a shift from citizens' and residents' movements to citizen participation which coordinated its efforts with the public administration. Awareness of activities, carried out through initiatives led by civil society, expanded beyond the local government level to include the central government as well. International NGOs also developed in parallel to ODA growth over this period.

Fourth phrase (1996 to the present day): While during this period a great number of social-service and advocacy-oriented NPO associations emerged, as discussed later on, in civil society overall the financial conditions of associations as well as participation figures sharply declined

3.2. "Associational revolution" and the establishment year of civil society organizations

Turning from association establishment statistics, the topic will now shift to comprehensive surveys focusing on the structure of civil society. These surveys named JIGS have covered Japan and four other countries twice, and as of 2008 data is available for a total of 10 countries. Figure 2 illustrates the findings of the JIGS 2 survey conducted in 2006-07. In this survey, data was collected from 6.1% of all neighborhood associations; 17.3% of various social associations listed in the telephone directory, and 21.9% of NPOs registered with the government.

Fig.2: Establishment year of Japanese civil society organizations, 1865- 2006
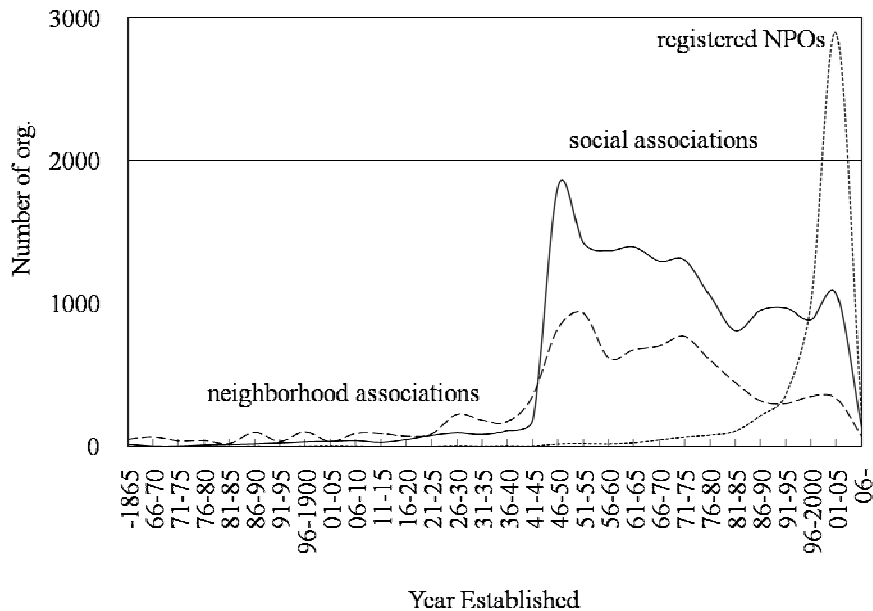
Note： -1865=total number of associations established before 1865

Source: JIGS 2 survey (Tsujinaka et al., 2007b)

Figure 2 illustrates three graphs pertaining to the establishment year of civil society organizations. Drawing on a similar figure illustrating data from 10 different countries (Tsujinaka 2008), as well as what Salamon (1994) defines an "association revolution", it can clearly be seen that from the latter half of the 1980s until 2000 an establishment boom took place in a number of countries. To a certain extent, however, differing from the pattern, establishment was somewhat dispersed in the U.S., Germany, and South Korea. Yet, despite these cases, a similar phenomenon can be seen in many countries.

In comparison, from the post-war period through to the period of high economic growth throughout the 1960s, social associations in Japan, along with neighborhood associations, acquired an ascending and enduring pattern of establishment. While certainly the noticeable outburst of registered NPOs can be described as an "association revolution", as seen earlier, this did not have much of an effect on the number of association establishments and the number of social associations that were listed in the telephone directory. Basically, the phenomenon of

what could be termed as an "association revolution" in Japan only occurred in one segment of civil society which may only be attributable to institutional reform in terms of the NPO Law.

3.3. Present status of civil society in Japan

Japan's incorporation system (legal-person) in general is complicated, and, particularly with regard to the system for public interest legal persons (PILP), it has been pointed out that a number of regulations and restrictions were set forth by the government with respect to civil society (Yamamoto 1998; Pekkanen 2006). With or without incorporation, the government's position towards each group within civil society in terms of the attitude the group displays towards government authorization, sanctions, extent of promotion, is important (Pekkanen 2006). Even aside from incorporated associations and foundations, Japan's corporation law specifies 110 separate categories with special laws for social welfare corporations, educational corporations and religious corporations, and allows them to receive benefits such as prescribed amounts of preferential tax treatment.

Aside from PILP, there are 22 separate categories for corporations that are relatively close to the government such as semi-government corporations and authorized corporations. With agricultural, fishing, and forestry cooperatives as well as their medium and small business counterparts, there are over 30 different types of cooperatives.

Throughout Japan, in the period from 2005 to 2007, there were a total of 440,000 civil society organizations that had obtained corporate status or government registration. In terms of sheer numbers, religious corporations were the most prevalent counting 183,000, followed by 76,000 political organizations, 61,000 labor unions, 38,000 medium and small business cooperatives, 35,000 registered NPOs, 22,000 authorized community based associations, 18,000 social welfare corporations, 13,000 incorporated associations, and 12,000 foundations. According to the findings of the JIGS 2 survey, among the associations listed in the telephone directory, 60% possessed legally incorporated status, of which 49% were incorporated associations and foundations, and 20% were cooperatives.

Nevertheless, it is problematic to accurately comprehend the non-legal status groups; among the existing 300,000 neighborhood associations only 7% possess legal status as authorized community-based associations. There are a number of associations (such as residents' groups for recreational activities aimed at senior citizens, housewives and children), which exist side-by-side with registered neighborhood associations, that do not have legal status. Before the NPO Law was enacted, associations in which citizens participated with advocacy individually

found it difficult to acquire legal status. As a consequence, formalizing such organizations and acquiring amenities for operating a business such as a rented place of business, staff and a telephone line, also proved difficult.

Even if an association has obtained legal status, it does not necessarily follow that they have substance in the actual scope of their activities. For this reason, having a business office and a telephone line, can be said to be one measure of a structure composing civil society. It is possible to compare business establishment figures in Japan with those of the U.S. and South Korea. According to the distribution of associations in Japan in 2006, a total of 40,681 associations operate as business establishments. Of these: business/economic associations represent 37%; labor associations 12%; political associations 2%; academic associations 3%; and "other associations" represent 46%. By comparison in the U.S.: business/economic associations represent 16%; labor associations 14%; political associations 3%; civic associations 41%; professional associations 7%; and the remaining "other associations" represent 20%. Whereas in South Korea: business/economic associations represent 19%; labor associations 8%; political associations 3%; civic associations 6%; professional associations 8%; and the remaining "other associations" represent 56%. From this comparison certain distinct features emerge. Statistically speaking, although it may be difficult to accurately compare these figures as there is no category in Japan for "civic associations," it is clear that too much importance is attached to business/economic associations in Japan.

Among the 10 countries surveyed in the JIGS 2 survey above, of the four major categories, Japan has the largest proportion of profit sector (including business and economic associations with direct linkages to producers and markets, labor unions and agricultural associations). The nonprofit sector is somewhat large, and the citizen advocacy sector is the second smallest, coming just above Turkey (Tsujinaka et al., 2007).

Thus, to describe the framework of associations in Japan, based on the characteristics of the development state as originally conceptualized by C. Johnson (Tsujinaka 2003), it can be said that it has its roots in this structural arrangement.

However, Japanese civil society in this type of developmental state, as shown in the chronological distribution, saw a turning point in the latter half of the 1990s. While the large variation in the numbers of association establishments shown in Figure 1 may illustrate nothing more than a static situation; in effect with the economic stagnation of the 1990s the financial conditions of civil society associations, particularly the business/economic and labor

associations, suffered a major shock. Comparing the figures of 1996 and 2006, on the whole, the financial situation of associations decreased 30%, deteriorating to the same level as that of the mid-1980s.

3.4. Citizen participation and social capital

The turning point for associations was not limited to the market-oriented associations of the development state. As shown in Figure 3, citizen participation in all organizations has decreased since the mid-1990s.

Fig.3: Participation rate (neighborhood association only) and non-participation rate (in any CSOs), 1972-2006
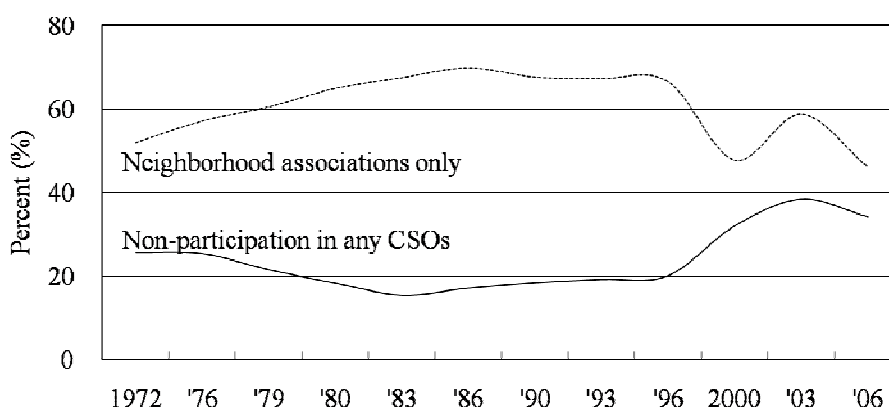
The Association for Promoting Fair Elections, an organization affiliated with the government, conducts public opinion surveys during each general election period in which it measures respondents' attitudes towards participation. Data compiled from 1972 through to 2005 provides a comprehensive overview of citizens' attitudes towards participation. The survey not only asks respondents if they are actually members of a political organization, but also to indicate their level of consciousness regarding participation. The highest rates of participation are found within associations such as those set up through neighborhood associations and block associations. While the level of participation in the mid-1980s reached 70%, in recent years it has dropped to 50%, further slipping to 46% in the latest survey. Despite this decline, the participation level is still much higher in comparison to other countries (Pekkanen 2004).

Incidentally, respondents indicated relatively high rates of participation in groups such as clubs and hobby groups (approximately 15%). Participation in senior citizens' clubs was close to 9%, while participation in women's and youth associations decreased to 8% in recent years. PTA participation also decreased by half to 8%. Participation in economic and producer-related associations declined as well, to around 3-5%. Overall, it can be concluded that many associations saw their highest participation figures during the 1980s.

The results also recorded that the 1983 figure of 15% of respondents marking "non-participation" had grown to over 30% by the early 2000s[8].

With regards the cognitive aspect towards social capital, while there have been debates concerning general feelings of trust and degree of trust in various systems, comprehending these aspects through quality research and various survey results have resulted in large variances.[9] In fact, trust in itself has a strong bearing on cultural norms and is not readily adaptable to international comparison. The JGSS survey found that in terms of general trust, 20% of respondents gave a positive response, 10% a negative response, and close to 70% claimed that "it depended on the given situation".

3.5. Activities of civil society organizations and political influence

This final section provides characteristics of the civil society based on the JIGS 2 survey (Tsujinaka et al., 2007). There are 300,000 neighborhood associations, approximately 90,000 listings in the telephone directory and 25,000 registered NPOs in the survey frame.

While policy interests and areas of activity overlap, policy fields are, however, segregated. In fact, neighborhood associations are interested in community policies; the social associations' primary policy orientation lies with industrial and developmental policies; and NPOs are mainly concerned with social service policies. From the perspective of policy-effective activities the relationships of neighborhood associations and their policy input and output, strength of

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[8] Conducted in the 2000s, the Japanese General Social Survey (JGSS) also measured other types of participation consciousness and reported on increases in participation in a number of association categories: participation in political associations rose from 3% to 5%; in business/economic associations from 7% to 10%; in volunteer associations from 7% to 9%; in citizen movements or consumer associations from 2% to 3%; in religious associations from 6% to 8%; in sports groups or clubs from 14% to 19%; and membership in hobby groups from 12% to 17%.

[9] Trends of high levels of trust were reported in the Anglo-Saxon cultural spheres, whereas those in Latin countries and Japan were rather low. Levels in northern Europe were also rather low. Even in comparison with other Asian and Western countries, Japan's figures are quite low. However, data regarding actual citizen activities demonstrates different results.

influence, satisfaction, and trust are portrayed as a felicitous cycle. Social associations embed neighborhood associations in the upper echelon of the policy process, leaving the NPOs that came later to the scene in the 1990s with a sense of dissatisfaction. It is clear that in Japan, neighborhood associations, social associations, and NPOs each participate in the operating of the government, and that each makes a contribution from their respective perspectives (Tsujinaka et al., 2007).

Conclusion

As a tradition that has developed since pre-modern times, Japan has a thick layer of voluntary associational activities, with a history of human relationships with society that are based on trust. With the Meiji Restoration and the defeat of World War II, while individual structures may have become disconnected, they also passed on a well-developed sense of organization. Since the Meiji Restoration through the post-war growth era, Japan's goals have revolved around modernization stances that have focused on catching-up processes. Therefore, Japanese civil society has kept a developmentalist structure.

After the war, the concept of civil society was adopted as an ideal type of society. At the same time, a welfare society was created though welfare-oriented companies, autonomous business associations, service-minded neighborhood associations, and a variety of residential and citizen movements. However, due to three different reasons the civil society concept was alien to society until the 1990s.

In Japan, the matured civil society became manifest after the bubble economy. The critical years were the mid 1990s, with the loss of power by the ruling government, the major earthquake in 1995, and the enactment of the NPO Law in 1998.

Civil society played a major role in fiscal concerns with regards the aging of the Japanese population and the globalization of society. Recognition of this fact, which transcended the different political ideologies, became well-known. There was a burst of NPO activity at grassroots level, although at the time there was no fiscal support policy that could accommodate civil society organizations. One particular feature is that, on the whole, civil society organizations entered a period of financial uncertainty. In this sense, the associational boom that occurred in the rest of the world in the 1990s also partially took place in Japan.

Japan's social capital, characterized by networks, trust and reciprocity norms through its traditional structures and relationships, is also quite difficult to measure in a concrete, comparative manner. However, as a whole, social capital, with its potential in neighborhood associations and NPOs as well as rich developmental associations, can presumably maintain its status. While Japan has not passed through a welfare state period, unlike some of its Western counterparts, it continues to aim at a high degree of publicness and social capital in civil society, as well as lessening the burden on the government. From this time onward, we can expect to see new policies and new associations that follow and maintain this path. This is true even after a new progressive regime, although its emphases are rather different, was elected to power in 2009.

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