

【Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S)】

Humanities and Social Sciences (Social sciences)



Title of Project: A Comparative and Empirical Study of the Structural Changes in Politics and Transformations in Pressure Groups, Policy Networks, and Civil Society in Japan since 2009

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Research Area: Political Science

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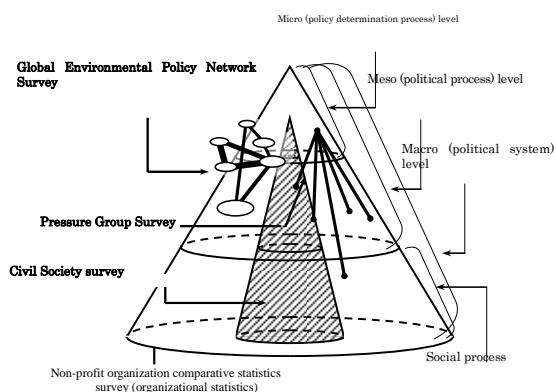
【Purpose and Background of the Research】

This multi-level research investigates how the series of recent political fluctuations in Japan, such as the change in government (2009) and following changes in public policy, impacted the policy process and civil society. Given that the political landscape has shifted, it is expected that changes will initially arise in the attitudes of pressure groups that obtain benefits by using their close ties with the government and parties. Concurrent with such changes are anticipated shifts in the policy networks among actors, and along with decentralization, such transformations will spread to local governments, grass-roots interest groups, and civil society organizations. The purpose of this project is to systematically survey (1) pressure groups, (2) policy networks, and (3) local government and civil society, and from these three levels to identify the fluctuations in the structure of Japanese politics and shifts in the relationship between politics and society. This type of multi-dimensional empirical study that incorporate time-series comparisons from various perspectives is rare. Using modern Japan after 2009 as a case, this project will undertake such a study.

【Research Methods】

Hypotheses will be created based on the study of “post-one-party dominant regimes” around the world and comparisons of civil society in 13 countries, as well as existing data on civil society and local government in Japan that this team has already gained in the last 15 years. Then, surveys on pressure groups, policy networks, four types of civil society organizations, and local governments will be conducted each year. Various hypotheses will be tested through comparison.

3 types of related surveys



【Expected Research Achievements and Scientific Significance】

Our hypotheses and expected results suggest that the following points will likely be significant: (1)The results of the last three pressure group surveys (1980, 1994, 2003-4) suggest that the power balance had mainly shifted the relation between government and civil society. This was a sign for a significant change to come later in 2009. (2)From a comparative standpoint, the last policy network survey of 1997, conducted when the dominant LDP was still in power, reveals that the actors were quite limited in number. It is anticipated that actors will change and become more fluid under the new 2009 system. The expansion of network including the labor, NGOs, and professional sectors is expected. (3)Surveys on civil society organizations and local governments would confirm the extent to which these trends have penetrated to local (grassroots) levels throughout the country. This project allows us to predict future political scenarios and the level of stability.

【Publications Relevant to the Project】

Tsujinaka, Y. and Hiroki Mori eds. (2010) *Political Functions of Social Organizations in Contemporary Japan*, Bokutaku-sha (in Japanese); Tsujinaka, Y. (2009). “Civil Society and Social Capital in Japan,” in Anheier, H. and T. Stefan, eds. *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*. Springer, 252-259; Tsujinaka, Y. (2003). “From Developmentalism to Maturity: Japan's Civil Society Organizations in a Comparative Perspective,” in Schwartz, F. and S. Pharr, eds. *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 83-115; Knoke, D., F.U. P. J. Broadbent, and Y. Tsujinaka (1996). *Comparing Policy Networks: Labor Politics in the U.S., Germany, and Japan*, University of Cambridge Press; Pempel, T.J. ed. (1990). *Uncommon Democracies: The One-Party Dominant Regimes*, Cornell University Press.

【Term of Project】 FY 2010-2014

【Budget Allocation】 116,200 Thousand Yen

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