The growing number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is fundamentally reshaping the balance of power and the roles of NGOs in democratic governance in Japanese and Korean politics, but in distinctive ways. Korean advocacy NGOs influence policymaking by focusing on politics at the center, while Japanese NGOs achieve influence by focusing on local politics. Whereas Korean NGOs tend to be contentious and politicized, Japanese NGOs adopt more pragmatic and cooperative stances. What factors explain these significant differences in the character of NGOs and the patterns of their participation in democratic politics in Japan and Korea? This paper argues that the effects of the historical development of civil society are essential components to any explanation of the patterns of NGOs’ relations with the government and the public and their organizational structure and strategies. Civic associations in both countries have both exploited and been empowered by developments in party politics, the public’s receptiveness to NGOs, and state actors’ attitudes toward NGOs. By comparing NGOs in Japan and Korea, this paper aims to enhance our understanding of the similarities and differences in both countries’ civil societies, as well as of the factors that have led to these distinctive patterns of NGO politics.

Key words: civil society; advocacy politics; political process; non-governmental organizations; Japan; Republic of Korea (ROK).
Introduction

Although they have historically been called strong or developmental states, today both South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Japan have become pluralist polities with vibrant civil societies to which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are contributing in significant but distinctive ways. Korean NGOs seem more contentious and politically polarized, whereas Japanese NGOs appear more docile and cooperative. In fact, NGOs in both countries have been empowered as political forces in the past two decades, but NGOs tend to operate at different levels of politics, employ distinctive strategies and organizational structures, and adopt different stances toward their governments. Korean NGOs are particularly visible in national politics, monitoring legislators’ performance, women’s rights, the environment, democratic reforms, and corporate governance practices. In Japan NGOs generally play a quieter yet still influential role in politics, engaging with the state at the local level, usually concerning quality of life issues, and operating in a more constituent-oriented manner than their state-oriented Korean counterparts. What factors explain the similarities and significant differences in the character of NGOs and the patterns of their participation in politics in Japan and Korea?

We argue that these distinctive features are primarily a result of the unique paths of development that civil society followed in each country. We analyze the consequences that civil society’s evolutionary trajectory has had in each country for NGOs’ relationships with the government and for NGOs’ organizational structures and strategies.

As non-western societies, Japan and Korea present particularly interesting lenses through which to study the role of civil society in democratic politics and to help alleviate the western bias in much of the civil society published reports. Domestic politics in Japan and Korea have undergone many similarly wrenching changes since the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lost power in Japan in 1993–1994, and since democratization in Korea in 1987 and Kim Dae-Jung’s election as the first opposition party president.


2. See Chalmers Johnson, M I T I and the Japanese Miracle (Stanford University Press, 1982); Alice Amsden, Asia’s Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization (Oxford University Press, 1989).

3. Japanese use the term non-profit organizations (NPO) for domestically active groups and the term NGO for internationally active NGOs. In this paper we use the more general term NGO or civil society organization (CSO), except in the few cases that require the NPO specification.

4. One excellent recent study of Japan’s civil society only compares Japan with western countries. See Robert Pekkanen, Japan’s Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates (Stanford University Press, 2006).
in 1997. The end of the Cold War led to the questioning of each country’s alliance with the USA and the effects these alliances had had on domestic politics. Both societies have faced economic changes as high growth waned, after the bubble burst in Japan in 1990 and after the Asian Financial Crisis hit Korea in 1997. These crises undermined the assumed economic efficiency and wisdom of bureaucrats. Particularly in Korea, public trust in government institutions has fallen in response to these shocks and numerous political scandals. Additionally, the looming challenge of ageing populations and increasing internationalism are realigning traditional patterns of state-society interaction. In the past decade of changes, national unease, and crises, we ask how have state-society relations evolved in Japan and Korea?

One change is that numerous NGOs are emerging, albeit with different characteristics in Korea and Japan. Caricatures of NGOs in Japan usually note that the political opportunity structure has created a pattern of localized, apolitical, volunteer-based, and small groups. An unreceptive state and a constraining regulatory environment in Japan tended to inhibit the formation of groups with professional staffs, which many observers consider essential for sustained and informed lobbying. Of course, the image of a strong and capable Japanese state has not gone unchallenged. McKean, for instance, rightly notes that consumers, environmentalists, and other groups have proven to the LDP that Japanese civic groups can “get mad enough to mobilize and to hurt the LDP at the polls.” We can conclude that Japanese civil society organizations (CSOs), though not usually particularly contentious or visible, do still affect politics in Japan.

Contrariwise, most Korean NGOs are nationalized, politicized, and distant from the grassroots. Authoritarian rule, a powerful anti-communist and conservative coalition, and strict institutions like the National Security Law limited the ability of citizen groups to challenge the Korean state. But since successfully toppling the authoritarian regime in 1987, Korean CSOs have consistently and effectively contested political processes in the fields of economic justice, welfare policy, women’s rights, and others. Consequently, many political institutions are distrusted in Korea, but NGOs

5. According to a Keio University survey, 75.7% of Korean respondents expressed “not much” or “little” trust in their government, while only 41.8% of Japanese respondents fell into those two categories. With regards to political parties, 84.2% of Koreans and 68.7% of Japanese respondents noted similarly low degrees of trust. See Keio University 21COE-CCC Program, Research Survey of Political Society in a Multi-Cultural and Pluri-Generational World (August 2007), pp. 412, 447, <http://www.coe-ccc.keio.ac.jp/data_archive_en/data_archive_csw_en.html> (searched date: November 5, 2007).
6. Robert Pekkanen, Japan’s Dual Civil Society, op. cit.
enjoy high public trust. Since the mid-1990s Korean presidents have sought to involve NGOs in government as a way to legitimize their democratic reform agendas. Thus, though the number of CSOs has grown rapidly since the 1990s in both countries, Korean organizations seem more contentious and politicized than their counterparts in Japan.

As in many industrialized countries, the growing number of NGOs is fundamentally reshaping the balance of power and influence in Japanese and Korean politics. In spite of the obvious importance of this trend and although several scholars have compared CSOs in both countries, few have conducted systematic comparisons of the politics of NGOs in Japan and Korea or traced the consequences for NGOs of the history of civil society in each country. Thus, our central research questions are: In what ways is the increasing prominence of NGOs transforming politics? Since the patterns of advocacy and influence differ between these two countries, how and why?

Scholarship on civil society in Northeast Asia tends to fall into two camps: the institutionalist-statist approach and the societal-pluralist approach. The statist perspective, which sees a strong state intervening in or regulating civil society or a state subtly molding the civic mind, is still influential and instructive for scholars of associational life in Japan and Korea. Yet, considering the variety of NGOs and the breadth of their activities, the statist model seems anachronistic and simplistic. The societal-pluralist approach offers an antidote to state-centered studies because it highlights the emergence and occasional victories of citizen groups. But this approach neglects the persistent importance of the state in NGO politics in both countries. Consequently, we argue that a full understanding of the dynamics of NGOs in democratic governance in Japan and Korea requires examining the developmental paths of civil society from the perspectives of the state, society, and the groups themselves.

After comparing the evolutionary paths of CSOs in Japan and in Korea, we analyze the implications these trajectories have had for civic associations’ relations with the government, their strategies, and their organizational

10. Among Korean respondents to a Keio University survey in 2006, 72.2% said they “greatly” or “somewhat” trusted NGOs, which was much higher than the 22.1% expressing the same levels of trust for the Korean government. Keio University, op. cit., pp. 412, 447.


13. For a similar approach, see Tsujinaka Yutaka, “From Developmentalism to Maturity,” op. cit., pp. 83–86.
characteristics. Though these effects have played out somewhat differently across time and issue area, they paint a picture of the general character of associational life and the patterns of political influence in Japan and in Korea.

The Developmental Paths of NGOs in Korea and in Japan

This section investigates the development of NGOs in Korea from pro-democracy groups to politically polarized advocacy groups, and in Japan from loose groups of concerned citizens to localized self-help and service organizations. In tracing how NGOs achieved their current character, we identify three sets of influential factors, including i) the state of party politics, ii) popular perceptions of democracy, and iii) the composition of the civil society leadership.

From Pro-Democracy Struggle to Advocacy: The Politicization of Korean Civil Society

A quarter century of authoritarian rule in Korea had spawned a broad-based popular struggle for democratization by the mid-1980s. Many post-1987 NGOs, however, distanced themselves from the leftist ideology of the democratization movement and promoted gradual reforms and pragmatism, as well as “post-materialist” values. Korean civil society, which toppled the authoritarian regime from outside the existing political system in 1987, now entered institutionalized politics as a key participant in vibrant democratic politics.

With public aspirations for democratic reforms and with political parties still under-institutionalized, many new NGOs promoted institutional reforms and alternative policies, as evident in the case of the “Big 3.” First of the Big 3, the Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), established with 500 members in July 1989, had grown to 8,500 members by 1993. The Korean Anti-Pollution Association and other environmental groups joined forces to form the Korean Federation for the Environment Movement.

(KFEM) in 1993. It started with about 500 members but grew to 4,500 by 2001. Finally, the People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) was formed in 1994 with 200 members and reached 13,000 in December 2004. The Big 3 illustrate the tendency of Korean NGOs to focus on politics at the center and on politically charged issues.

While some Korean NGOs promoted the minorities’ rights and pursued neglected social values, the Big 3 focused on economic and political reforms. Since trust in political parties and the National Assembly is quite low in Korea many NGOs have sought to expose corruption among National Assembly members and scrutinize legislative processes. For instance, 38 NGOs launched the Citizens’ Coalition to Monitor the 2000 Legislative Activities and formalized their activities by forming the Civil Society Reform Coalition the following year. Annually, this coalition ranks Assembly members based on their attendance records and on their legislative initiatives. NGOs also petitioned the Assembly for a stricter Anti-Corruption Law in 1996, and corruption became a major agenda item during the 1997 presidential election campaign. Though submitted to the Assembly several times under the Kim Dae-Jung government, it failed to pass until after the election of the new Assembly in 2000.

The most influential and well-publicized watchdog activity to date was the “Blacklist Movement.” Led by the Citizens’ Coalition for General Elections, in which about 460 NGOs participated, activists attempted to prevent allegedly corrupt politicians from getting nominated as candidates and from being elected if nominated in 2000. The blacklisting movement was criticized because boycotting specific candidates violates Korea’s elections law. Participating NGOs justified their civil disobedience by arguing that the elections law inappropriately protected corrupt politicians. Despite its illegality, popular mistrust of politicians was so deep at that time that blacklisting appealed to the majority of voters and most candidates on the lists failed to get elected.

Korean NGOs’ activities in the economic realm have been similarly influential calling for distributional justice and pressing Korean conglomerates for more transparency and accountability. The CCEJ advocates economic

17. In 2006, 84.2% and 86.8% of Korean respondents expressed low levels of trust in their political parties and the National Assembly respectively. Keio University, op. cit., p. 447.

18. The legislative process behind the passage of the Anti-Corruption Law was complicated by the fact that the final section of the law was based on the stipulations of the judicial committee of the National Assembly, which argued that corruption cases among public officials be handled under a separate law dealing with the ethics of public officials. NGOs responded to this move by pressing for a stronger Law on the Ethics of Public Officials. See Sook-Jong Lee, *Hanguk Simin Danche ui Jeongchaek Jeeon Hwaldoing* [Policy Advocacy Activities of Korean NGOs] (Seoul: Sejong Research Institute, 2002), pp. 29–40.


reforms related to housing and taxation. Meanwhile, the PSPD has exposed the illicit and “non-democratic” business practices of Korea’s chaebol (conglomerates in diversified businesses) and attacked the massive economic and political might of the founding families who still control whole business groups using their position as dominant shareholders and impenetrable inter-corporate ownership structures. Since 1997 the PSPD’s Movement for Small Shareholders has striven to protect citizens’ rights as investors from the unfair business practices of dominant shareholders. To this end, the PSPD has petitioned legislation to protect small shareholders, filed lawsuits, and monitored companies’ business transactions.\textsuperscript{21} As the movement gained momentum, the PSPD and other progressive NGOs also successfully pushed for the revision of the commerce law so that minority shareholders could conduct group votes and sue on behalf of all small shareholders.

As one can see from these examples, post-democratization NGOs have been particularly effective in advocating for political and economic reforms at the national level. Several factors have contributed to the empowerment and political polarization of Korean NGOs. First, NGOs have benefited from the institutional weakness of political parties, which have historically been formed and dissolved by political leaders whose support was based on regional and often personal loyalties. Korea’s legislative body is generally regarded as too weak vis-à-vis a strong presidency and too partisan to be truly representative. Reform-oriented administrations and NGOs have therefore accepted participatory democracy as an alternative to ineffective representative democracy.

Second, democratization increased the public’s desire to curtail the entrenched power of the state and chaebol, and these desires bolstered NGOs promoting democratic ideals in all sectors of politics and society. Though initially bolstered by favorable public opinions, Korean NGOs must justify their continued importance for democratic consolidation and employ high-visibility tactics to remain relevant in “politics at the center,” where entrenched and undemocratic state and business powers operated. Ideologically sympathetic news media help publicize the NGOs’ activities and bolster public support because Korean NGOs lack broad grassroots bases.

Third, many political and NGO elites share strong interpersonal networks thanks to their common experiences during the struggle for democracy in the mid-1980s. Since the Kim Young-Sam administration, presidents have recruited former democratization activists and NGO leaders into the public service to legitimize major reforms and jointly fight against vested interests or for women’s rights. President Roh Moo-Hyun called his government a “participatory government,” emphasizing the participation of ordinary citizens in the administration. Some critics have argued that greater involvement of civil society leaders in policymaking should not be equated


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with citizen participation because NGOs have evolved into authority-focused organizations with little direct participation. NGOs also risk being co-opted politically or losing public backing when support for an administration wanes.

Thus, in tracing Korean civil society’s development from a pro-democracy popular movement to varied and politically polarized advocacy NGOs, we emphasize that the under-institutionalization of party politics, the popular demand for democratic deepening, and the elite and politically well-connected nature of civil society leaders have all tended to empower NGOs in Korean politics.

From Grassroots Advocacy to Self-Help and Service: The Local Bases of Japanese Civil Society

For comparison, this section investigates the historical development of Japanese civil society and the effects of party politics, popular perceptions of democracy, and the makeup of civil society leadership. The Japanese government and NGOs have also emphasized citizen participation during the last quarter century in Japan, but they approached citizen participation more as a means of ensuring effective administration than as a way to bolster democracy. To ordinary Japanese citizens, appealing to democratic ideals is not a particularly effective tactic for NGOs since most people believe that Japan is already a mature democracy.

Though left-wing pacifist, student, and labor movements had challenged the ruling coalition before, widespread citizens’ movements began in Japan in the late 1960s with four lawsuits on behalf of pollution victims. These concerned citizens’ groups of the 1970s, in addition to winning policies to address environmental pollution, defined an agenda for their localities and forced local politicians to decide on policies without input from the central government. Like many subsequent movements, the environmental movement had no formal leaders, members, organizational structures, or strong affiliations with political parties but was based on concerned local citizen mobilization and ad hoc political coalitions at the local levels. Subsequent NGOs have learned from and emulated this movement.

The number of Japanese NGOs grew again in the 1980s, when the resurgent LDP enacted administrative decentralization and “small government” reforms, thereby creating demand for civic associations to serve the public where the government no longer did. NGOs tended to address local issues concerning the environment, safety, consumption, education, and the

24. Margaret McKeown, Environmental Protest, op. cit., p. 245.
quality of life. Indeed, “life politics” became the new catchword. Critics stated that these civic movements were only concerned with the personal comforts, and therefore were responsible for bolstering the conservative hold on power. In reality, these citizen movements were both the product of and helped to engender significant changes in government-society relations at the local levels. Where Japanese NGOs got directly involved in politics, they tended to focus on local questions or on establishing local citizens’ parties or competing with local professional politicians. The evident spirit of “self-help” illustrates that dominant pragmatic and service-related goals have become the norm among Japanese NGOs, in contrast to the overtly political framing that most Korean groups employ.

The Livelihood Club Cooperative (Seikatsu Kurabu Seikyō) was the most prominent participatory consumer movement. It sought to enhance citizens’ awareness of local affairs and involved many women, including in urban areas.26 Local branches have established working partnerships with local governments to provide social services, gained significant access to local policy advisory councils, and organized social welfare committees involving other civic groups.27 Indeed, the Livelihood movement and subsequent “consumer organizations have achieved some of their policy-related goals despite their resource deficiencies, limited presence in national policymaking circles, and idiosyncratic behavior.”28 Like the small shareholders’ movements in Korea, consumer groups have stood up against the entrenched interests of state and market actors. But unlike groups in Korea, Japanese consumer organizations have focused on local politics to achieve more rapid change and to indirectly affect national policies.29

Though typically without party affiliation and operating in an era of rising political apathy, NGOs since the 1980s have also sought political reforms to enhance government accountability and transparency like their counterparts in Korea. Local citizen activists were instrumental in realizing the Product Liability Law in 1994, the Nonprofit Organization (NPO) Law in 1998, and the Information Disclosure Act in 1999, though this pressure came indirectly as a result of local litigation or initial policy changes at the local level. For instance, prior to 1999 and the passage of the Information Disclosure Act, equivalent laws already existed in all 48 prefectures.30 Additionally, the Citizens’ Representative

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29. For a discussion of the “demonstration effects” between local governments and between local governments and the central government, see Michio Muramatsu, Local Power in the Japanese State, translated by Betsey Scheiner and James White (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 47.
30. Laurie Freeman, “Mobilizing and Demobilizing the Japanese Public Sphere: Mass Media and the Internet in Japan,” in Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr, eds., The State of Civil Society, op. cit., p. 245 n. 5.

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(Daerinin) movement aimed to get ordinary citizens elected to local assemblies to represent citizens’ interests. One candidate from an independent citizens’ party first got elected in 1979 to the Metropolitan Tokyo Assembly, and election victories became more frequent after the mid-1990s.31

Since the mid-1980s the number of international development NGOs (IDNGOs) has grown dramatically in Japan. Influenced by the rising international pressure, rather than by the lobbying efforts of Japanese IDNGOs, the Japanese government changed its overseas development aid (ODA) policy with regards to NGOs.32 Many of these governmental schemes to subcontract aid work and technical assistance to NGOs did not require the organizations to gain public interest person (kōeki hōjin) status, though this has changed since the passage of the NPO Law.33 In a new effort to facilitate Japanese NGOs overseas rescue and relief activities, the Foreign Ministry also established the Japan Platform with business groups and development NGOs in 2001. The Japan Platform gained legal status in 2006 so that businesses could obtain tax exemption for their financial contributions to the Platform.34

These examples demonstrate that, despite being small and relatively resource poor, Japanese CSOs have made significant strides toward becoming legitimate political actors and influencing policy processes. Today, many local governments in Japan exercise good governance by cooperating with community-based NGOs in seeking advice on specific policy questions, determining policy, and providing social services.35 Though often in partnership with the state for various projects, Japanese NGOs have earned a more equal footing with other political actors in political circles and therefore have been freed to a greater degree from state interference than their Korean counterparts. Three sets of factors, matching those mentioned above in relation to Korea, explain the enhanced political power of CSOs during the past two decades.

First, the intransigence of party politics at the national level has fostered the emergence of locally targeted advocacy groups that exploit or even encourage divisions in the LDP at the national level. The LDP’s sustained

33. Since 2001 the MOFA is changing this policy because the NPO law has made it easier to gain legal status. Kim Reimann, op. cit., p. 302.
34. For information about the Japan Platform see <http://w3.japanplatform.org> (searched date: October 5, 2007).
dominance in national politics from 1955 to 1993 and its reemergence, albeit in coalition, after 1994 have created a party that encompasses many different views. While challenging the LDP in the politicized manner of Korean NGOs would be fruitless, seeking allies within the factions of the LDP and engendering policy change at the local level has been a more successful strategy for Japanese NGOs.

Second, whereas the Korean public favors NGOs calling for more widespread democracy, the Japanese public favors NGOs seeking to promote effective governance and policy administration. NGOs can serve as an alternative welfare system that circumvents the government's bureaucratic intransigence or non-assistance. Where partnership with the government is feasible, these self-help NGOs are generally eager to cooperate with any level of government but usually do so with local authorities.36

Finally, growing acceptance of CSOs as legitimate political actors and the concomitant decline of government interference in some arenas have helped to empower NGOs. Citizen groups today often emphasize their independence from government interference, particularly considering the history of cozy relations between the state and businesses described in the developmental state model and such practices as amakudari or the retirement of officials into positions of leadership over large societal organizations. Thus, compared with Korean NGOs, Japanese NGOs are ironically more independent from political leaders and therefore can form alliances with politicians when needed to achieve their aims rather than being beholden to any set of political goals.

In short, Japanese NGOs have come to target local politics rather than national politics and to adopt more cooperative stances toward each other and political actors. While the rising numbers of NGOs advancing public interests could become a challenge to the strong state, most NGOs still justify their activities in terms of improving the effectiveness of governance rather than in terms of any political challenge. We emphasized that the LDP’s dominance in party politics, public demand for effective governance, and the citizen- and locally-oriented nature of NGO leaders have all empowered Japanese NGOs in distinctive ways in the past two decades.

The Consequences Civil Society’s Historical Trajectory

To analyze the ramifications that the history of civil society has had on NGOs’ relationships with the state, their organizational structures, and their strategies, we employ several data sets. Attempts to quantify the size of the NGO sectors or to analyze types of civic associations often lead to confusion because of the lack of a common conceptualization or definition

36. For a study of state–society partnerships to meet rising demands for social services in Japan and to ensure more effective governance, see Margarita Estévez -Abe, op. cit., pp. 154–172.
among researchers. Thus, the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (CNP) represents a key data source. They employ the International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations (ICNPO), which includes twelve categories of activities to facilitate fine-grained analysis of CSOs. We begin with this data to compare NGO sectors.

Table 1 depicts Japan and Korea’s civil society sectors and civic/advocacy NGOs in comparison to other advanced industrialized countries. According to the CNP, the expenditures of Korean CSOs accounted for 4.8% of gross domestic profit (GDP) in 1997, and Japan’s nonprofit sector comprised

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38. These categories are 1) culture and recreation, 2) education and research, 3) health, 4) social services, 5) environment, 6) development and housing, 7) civic and advocacy, 8) philanthropic intermediaries, 9) international, 10) religious congregations, 11) business and professional, unions, and 12) others.

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Table 1. The Civil Society Sectors of Korea and Japan in Comparative Perspective (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Korea</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>All countries*</th>
<th>Anglo-Saxon†</th>
<th>Nordic Welfare States</th>
<th>European Welfare Partnerships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>– FTE paid</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>– FTE volunteers</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>– FTE total</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<td><strong>Proportion in Civic/Advocacy Field</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– FTE paid</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– FTE volunteers</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– FTE total</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td><strong>Type of Activities‡</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>– Service</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>– Expressive</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>64</td>
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<td>– Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Sources of Revenue</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Fees</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>– Government</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Philanthropy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The category “all countries” includes 35 countries for workforce and 32 countries for the other data.
† Anglo-Saxon countries are Australia, the UK and the USA; Nordic countries are Finland, Norway, and Sweden; European-style welfare partnership countries are Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands and Spain.
‡ Service fields are education, health, housing, social service and economic development. Expressive fields are cultural, spiritual, professional, policy, interests and beliefs. Others are international and foundations. FTE, full-time equivalent.
5.0% of GDP. These figures are close to the average of 5.1% for the 35 countries studied, but the proportions of the Japanese and Korean workforces employed in the sector were smaller than in most other industrialized countries. Japan has just 0.5% of its civil society workforce in civic/advocacy organizations, while Korea has 9.9% of its full-time equivalent (FTE) civil society workforce in the civic/advocacy field. On the other hand, Japan has 13% of its civil society workforce involved in “other” fields, which include IDNGOs, while Korea has 0% in this category. Finally, Table 1 also reveals that Korean NGOs rely more heavily on membership fees for revenue than Japanese NGOs, which rely more on government funding.

To understand the relational and organizational structures specific to civic and advocacy NGOs, we employ several data sets compiled by a Korean group and the Japanese government. First, the surveys of the Citizens’ Newspaper offer useful information on Korean NGOs every third year in their Encyclopedia of Korean Associations. The 2006 Encyclopedia, based on the surveys from June to December of the previous year, reports on 5,556 civic associations. For Japan, the most comprehensive data on grassroots NGOs come from the Basic Survey of Citizen Activities, conducted by the Economic Planning Board (EPB) in 1997. The Japanese government regularized this survey into an annual Survey on the Realities of Private Non-Profit Organizations (Minkan Hieiri Dantai Jittai Chōsa) in 1999, and the Cabinet Office has published almost every year since. The most recent survey was carried out among 3,000 civic associations during July and August of 2006 on their activities of the fiscal year 2005. Unlike the 1997 survey, the 2006 report does not distinguish among different types of NGOs, such as the grassroots civic and advocacy NGOs about which we are interested. The Cabinet Office also publishes a Basic Survey on Citizens’ Organizations (Shimin Katsudō Dantai Kihon Chōsa), but it also lacks the extensive information found in the 1997 survey. Though imperfect, these data sources inform our subsequent analysis of the consequences of the historical development of civil society for NGOs’ relations with the government, for their organizations structure, and for their strategies.

40. This was called the Directory of Korean NGOs until 2006, when it was renamed the Hanguk Mingu Danche Chongram 2006 [Encyclopedia of Korean Associations 2006] (Seoul: Citizens’ Newspaper, 2006).
41. The total of 23,017 CSOs (of which 5,556 were NGOs) are classified into 16 areas. The top three areas are education (15.1%), social welfare (14.7%), and academia (12.6%).
42. At the time of the survey, Japan had 85,786 civic NGOs, and the EPB surveyed 10,000 randomly selected NGOs in March 1997. The top three fields were social welfare services for the elderly and handicapped (37.4%), community service (16.9%), and education/culture/sports (16.8%). Economic Planning Bureau, Social Policy Bureau, Shimin Katsudō Repōto: Shimin Katsudō Dantai Kihon Chōsa Hōkokusho [Report on Citizen Activities: Report on a Basic Survey of Citizen Activity Organizations] (Tokyo: Economic Planning Agency, 1997).
43. For the Survey on the Realities of Private Non-Profit Organizations, see <http://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/toukei.html#hieri> (searched date: November 5, 2007).
44. See Basic Survey on Citizens’ Organizations (various years), <http://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/data/index.html> (searched date: November 7, 2007).
Relations with the Government and Legal Status

As this section attempts to do, generalizing about NGO politics in both countries helps us to situate any specific cases in their broader context and observe the effects of history. These structural factors are necessary but not sufficient for explaining the distinctive patterns of advocacy and influence in Japan and Korea. Generally, the history of civil society in Japan has led to legally recognized NGOs being cooperative with the government, often receiving funding from the state, and numerous other civic associations that eschew legal status and the potential to expand in order to retain independence. In Korea, the history of civil society has facilitated nationally organized NGOs that enjoy close ties with politicians and cooperate with the state on an ad hoc basis primarily only for political gain.

Matsushita emphasizes that the character of the relationship varies by type of activity. For instance, local governments and NGOs tend to work independently when they disagree on the nature of a policy issue, such as with illegal immigrants. Cooperation is also difficult without a social consensus, as with the rights of minorities or the issue of nuclear power. Nevertheless, some scholars suggest that government–NGO cooperation is becoming more feasible because the state obviously cannot keep up with the pressures of small government reforms and rising demands for social services. NGO–government interactions can take numerous forms, ranging from information exchange to financial support and close monitoring. When local governments and NGOs engage in the same activities, they can develop one of three types of relationships: i) supplementation/contract, ii) competition/rivalry, and iii) cooperation/partner. In the supplementation/contract type, NGOs depend on government funding and are therefore usually subject to the government’s supervision in a hierarchical fashion. On the other hand, in the cooperation/partnership type, NGOs are usually more independent of the government because they neither receive direct subsidies nor face direct supervision. In the shingikai system in Japan, for example, various levels of government can incorporate

45. See Doug McAdam, John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
49. See Basic Survey on Citizens’ Organizations, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–3.
information and expertise from societal groups, while simultaneously deriving mutually acceptable policy recommendations.\textsuperscript{51} The competition/rivalry type is more common in Korea, where public trust in government institutions is low and NGOs adopt more contentious stances toward the state.

A similar scheme to legalize and encourage NGO activities was introduced in both Japan and Korea within a two-year interval. The Law to Promote Nonprofit Legal Persons Law, or the NPO Law, finally passed after much grassroots pressure in March 1998.\textsuperscript{52} The Korean government enacted similar legislation in 1999 and started supporting NGOs from 2000. There are three conditions to qualify as a nonprofit organization in Japan: i) its activities must be related to public good, ii) its purpose must be nonprofit, and iii) it must get approval (kyōka) from a related government agency. Like their counterparts in Japan, Korean public interest corporations must submit financial and membership reports and annual activity plans to the National Tax Service to receive tax exemption, even if the tax incentives are meager. In Japan, 74\% of public interest legal persons were under the supervision of local governments, while the remaining ones were supervised by the central government. In Korea, 89\% of public interest legal persons were registered under the local governments as of June 2005, and the central government supervises the remaining 11\% of public interest legal persons. These figures mask one of the core differences between Japan, where NGOs are localized, and Korea, where NGOs are nationally organized, because most local Japanese groups do not seek legal status.

Unlike in Korea, the Japanese government has made use of the NPO Law and funding incentives to encourage the legalization of NGOs. For example, the NPO Law requires NGOs to obtain “nonprofit legal person” status in order to qualify for government funding. The Korean government makes no such distinction among NGOs in its funding. The number of newly incorporated NGOs in Japan is increasing rapidly and these groups tend to be larger than the traditional grassroots NGOs surveyed by the EPB in 1997. Since the Korean law passed, on the other hand, the number of NGOs receiving government funding has actually decreased from 216 in 2001 to 130 in 2005. Moreover, more than half of Korean NGOs do not have legal status and only one third of them are public interest corporations (sadan beopin).\textsuperscript{53} Both the Korean and the Japanese governments support NGOs financially, though more so in Japan, as Table 1 shows. Korea’s NGO subsidies are concentrated in organizations created during past

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} See Frank Upham, \textit{Law and Social Change}, op. cit. and Frank Schwartz, \textit{Advice and Consent}, op. cit.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Legislators and bureaucrats fought over who would write the law in the initial stages in 1995. The Japanese government set up an interagency group led by the EPB to draft it but after criticisms that a bureaucrat-led study of the law contradicted the movement’s aims, political parties took over the legislation process. See Tadashi Yamamoto, ed., \textit{Deciding the Public Good: Governance and Civil Society in Japan} (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999); Robert Pekkanen, “Japan’s New Politics,” op. cit.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Encyclopedia of Korean Associations, op. cit.
\end{itemize}
authoritarian governments and based on related special laws. Korean local
governments also allocate their NGO support mostly to welfare service
NGOs, like their Japanese counterparts.\textsuperscript{54} Japanese public interest legal
persons receive a more significant amount of government support as
“subsidy money” (hojôkin) or “consignment money” (itakukin).\textsuperscript{55}

As noted above, one major difference between Japanese and Korean
NGO support policies is that the Japanese government places more emphasis
on supporting internationally active Japanese NGOs. The Foreign Minis-
try’s support through the Japan Platform almost equaled that of the NGO
Subsidies Scheme recently, when the Platform and the Subsidies Scheme
received 1.01bn and 1.03bn Yen, respectively, in 2006.\textsuperscript{56} In contrast, the
Korean Foreign Ministry supported just 22 NGOs through the Korea
International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), expending less than 6% of
total government NGO support in 2002. Recently, seeing the importance
of NGO participation in ODA, 26 IDNGOs established the Korea NGO
Council for Overseas Cooperation (KCOC) in 1999 to support NGO work
in developing countries.\textsuperscript{57} Despite some cooperation with KOICA, the
KCOC remains a more independent NGO federation compared to the Japan
Platform.

Comparing government support of NGOs in Korea and Japan demon-
strates that the Japanese government’s support of NGOs is more harmonized
with and central to its policies, as can be clearly seen in the incorporating
of NGOs into its ODA and welfare policies. In contrast, Korean NGOs
tend to be more independent of their government, and the scale and
deliberateness of the Korean government’s support for NGOs remain weak
in comparison. The institutional constraints of NGO-related regulations and
the state’s attitude toward NGOs have fostered the development of civil
society groups with certain organizations features, to which we now turn.

\textit{Organizational Features and Strategies}

In each country, the historical development of CSOs has also created
sociopolitical conditions that are more conducive to NGOs with certain
organizational features and strategies. Analyzing NGO politics from the

\textsuperscript{54} In 2006, there were 26,393 Japanese NGOs incorporated since 1998, and 36% of them were in
the health/medical/welfare area. When combined with the next four areas of environmental conserva-
tion, academics/culture/arts/sports, community building, and nurturing children, these top five areas
make up around 80% of newly incorporated NPOs. See NPO Hiroba [Japanese NPO Center], “NPO
Hôjin Deeta Bunseki [Data Analysis of NPO Legal Persons],” <http://www.npo-hiroba.or.jp/analysis/
index.html> (searched date: November 5, 2007).

\textsuperscript{55} In Japan, 15% of those under central government supervision and 40% of the groups under local
supervision received funding. See Report on Citizen Activities.

\textsuperscript{56} In 2006, 88 NGOs were supported through these two schemes, nearly half of which were
concentrated in Asia. On the other hand, 36 cases of support through the Japan Platform focused
on the countries of internal conflict, including Sudan, Indonesia, Lebanon, East Timor, and Iraq. See
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shimin/oda Ngo/shien/ngo musho_2006.html> (searched date:
November 1, 2007).

\textsuperscript{57} See its website <http://ngokcoc.or.kr> (searched date: October 5, 2007).
groups’ perspectives entail understanding their resources, how they function, and their goals. One school of thought in the social movements literature posits that an organization’s access to economic and political resources explains that group’s choice of strategy and impact.\textsuperscript{58} Thus, this section compares the organizational consequences of the history of civil society.

Korean NGOs are more likely to be based in Seoul and to be medium sized. Indeed, 55\% had their headquarters in Seoul, with only environmental and poverty-related NGOs more evenly spread across the country.\textsuperscript{59} Contrariwise, more than 80\% of Japanese NGOs surveyed were active in local areas, while just 1.5\% operated at the national level and 2.6\% operated both domestically and overseas.\textsuperscript{60} The average Korean civic NGO is a relative newborn, and though the median membership size for Korean civic associations is 300 persons, 8.8\% have more than 10,000 members.\textsuperscript{61} The Citizens’ Newspaper reports that the heads of 36.7\% of national NGOs and 4.2\% of local NGOs had had prior experience serving NGOs, and that 17\% of NGO leaders are professors.\textsuperscript{62} Membership in Japanese groups tends to be smaller, with 20\% having fewer than 20 members, 25\% between 20 and 50 members, and just 30\% with more than 100 persons. Many Japanese public interest corporations depend on the government not only financially but also administratively due to their participation in government contracts or consignment projects. A quarter of Japanese public interest incorporations had a board director who had worked in a related government office. Government offices also dispatch their staff to divisions of major NGOs. As such, “it is hard for independent groups to grow large and just as hard for large groups to remain independent.”\textsuperscript{63}

Particularly advocacy NGOs in Korea generally have larger professionalized workforces, as Table 1 shows. The median number of full time staff in Korean NGOs is only three persons, but 13\% of civic associations have more than ten staff members. The salaries of paid staff tend to be low so that they usually stay less than two years, preventing them from specializing in policy issues Therefore, NGOs must rely on outside professionals, such as professors or lawyers. The median annual budget is 100m Won but the largest NGOs, about 8.7\% of NGOs surveyed, have annual budgets of more than 1bn Won. Meanwhile in Japan, NGOs average 3.4 employees.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{59} Encyclopedia of Korean Associations, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{60} Report on Citizen Activities, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{61} Encyclopedia of Korean Associations, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{62} Other professional groups are also represented. 8.9\% were religious leaders, 4.6\% were journalists, and 4.9\% served or are serving semi-governmental organizations. Quoted in Ilcheong Yi, “Bowling by the Professionals: Development of Civic Advocacy Groups in Korea,” IPSA Congress, Fukuoka, Japan (2006).

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Annual expenditures of grassroots NGOs also tend to be modest; 78% percent less than 1m Yen and only 4.2% spent more than 10m Yen annually.

Unfortunately, understanding when and why NGOs adopt certain strategies is not a mere function of their resources or organizations structures because these decisions could stem from leaders’ predilections, from considerations of feasibility, or from desires to imitate other organizations. Additionally, the range of possible tactics that NGOs could use or innovate with seems endless. Still, several important differences emerge in the patterns of NGO strategies in Japan and Korea. Korean NGOs employ two types of strategies. They establish links to legislative or judicial institutions on the basis of their expertise rather than their ability to mobilize mass support. For example, the PSPD has filed 194 public litigations and petitioned 110 pieces of legislation since 2004. The second is to form ad hoc coalitions with other NGOs or with reform-oriented state actors. The abovementioned interpersonal networks between NGO and political elites help in establishing such coalitions. But advising the government or cooperating with the state endangers the reputations of NGOs as independent actors. Organizations can be more client or constituent oriented or more authority oriented, and they can operate on the basis of direct participation or not.65 Japanese NGOs, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, promoted the direct participation of citizens rather than delegating citizens’ interests to representatives. They also pursued the public good through the generosity of individuals and, focusing on people’s immediate living environments, sought to transform both individual lives and social systems.66 Japanese advocacy groups tend to be more constituent oriented and willing to cooperate with the state to serve their clients, while Korean groups tend to be more political and target state authorities in their advocacy.

Conclusion

While both Korean and Japanese NGOs have emerged as significant partners as well as challengers to their governments, their interactions appear to take unique forms in each country. Korean NGOs tend to be more visible at the national level and more politicized, whereas Japanese NGOs tend to be more noticeable in local politics and to be more concerned about issues of effective governance related to the daily lives of individuals. From the point of view of state actors, government partnerships with NGOs generally serve the goal of legitimizing democratic aims in Korea, whereas such partnerships in Japan are pursued in order to more efficiently administer public policies. Consequently, the government–NGO relationship in Korea is much more politically charged and less grassroots than that of Japan. In short, Japanese civil society demonstrates “high social capital, low

advocacy.”67 As Korean NGOs continue to develop, they must avoid becoming the opposite, “advocates without members.”68

We argued that the reasons why Korean NGOs are more contentious and politically-charged than their Japanese counterparts and why Japanese NGOs are more active in local political arenas are fundamentally related to the distinctive developmental paths of civil society. Moreover, any full analysis necessitates considering the consequences that these historical trajectories have had for NGOs’ relations with the state, for their activities, and for their organizational characteristics from various perspectives, as we have done. This paper detailed similarities and differences in the broad patterns of NGO politics in Japan and Korea, but further research into sectoral variations within each country will enhance our understanding of how CSOs are transforming state–society relations in Japan and Korea. Further research will also elucidate how NGOs are diversifying, with more and more new non-partisan groups in Korea and more politicized and nationally organized groups in Japan.

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