Civil Society in Japan

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses civil society in contemporary Japan, shedding light on two major actors—NPOs and social movements. Since the launch of the first NPO (nonprofit organization) in 1998, the number has increased dramatically. The analysis focuses on co-production, a policy collaboration technique between NPOs and the Japanese government under the framework of New Public Governance. Social movements are also examined, focusing on anti-nuclear activism—one of the most consistent activisms in Japan, which has been reignited since the nuclear disaster of March 11, 2011. In particular, this chapter presents a brief reflective account of the No Nukes Asia Forum, a pan-Asian transnational activism that originated in Japan.

Keywords: civil society, NPO, nonprofit organizations, co-production, New Public Governance, anti-nuclear activism, No Nukes Asia Forum, Japan

Civil society is one of the most rapidly expanding sectors in contemporary Japan. It can be defined as a public sphere that broadly refers to nonstate institutions and associations that are critical to sustaining modern democratic participation. Over the past three decades, civil society has gained significant attention internationally, not limited to the academic circle but also among policymakers. Inspired by democratic movements in Eastern Europe and the fall of the Berlin Wall, the concept of civil society has experienced a theoretical rebirth (Arato 1993; Hann and Dunn 1996). To describe such grassroots dynamism, Lester Salamon (1994) coined the term “global associational revolution”—referring to the massive upsurge of organized private voluntary activity and of structured citizen action outside the boundaries of the market and the state. Salamon further argued that “the appropriate paradigm for the 21st century is one of partnership and a politics of collaboration—i.e., a ‘new governance’ that emphasizes collaboration,… by the different sectors as the best hope for achieving meaningful progress” (Salamon 2001, 37).

In relation to this view, Japan is no exception. Originally a product of Western thinking and socioeconomic development, civil society, or *shimin shakai*, is now deeply rooted in Japan. The dynamism and hybridity of Japan’s civil society (see Figure 1) have been well researched and documented, and our contemporary understanding relies on interdiscipli-

nary social science literature. Many scholars have contributed to the current discussions on varieties of civic actors and practices (e.g., Aldrich 2010; Carver et al. 2000; Chan 2008; Chan-Tiberghien 2004; Hasegawa 2004; Haddad 2007; Hirata 2002; Kingston 2004; Nakano 2005; Ogawa 2009; Pekkanen 2006; Reimann 2010; Shipper 2008; see also Ogawa 2011 and Ogawa 2019 for an overview).

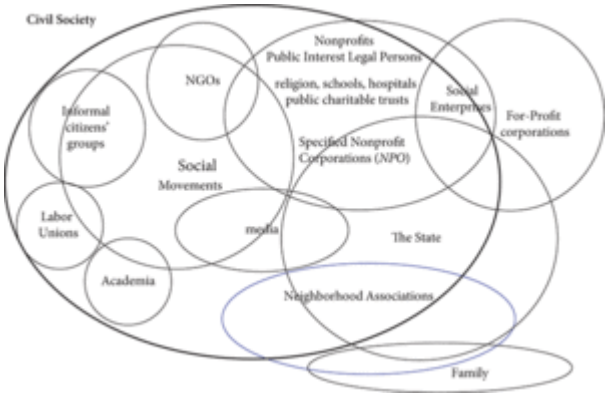

Figure 1. Macro landscape of Japanese Society.

Theoretically, the scholarship on Japanese civil society was triggered following two important publications in the early 2000s. One was *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, edited by Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr (2003), and the other was *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia*, edited by Muthiah Alagappa (2004). In the former book, Susan Pharr proposes a powerful explanatory model called the "activist state" (Pharr 2003, 324) to understand the relationship between the state and civil society in Japan. She claims that the Japanese state has successfully institutionalized specific kinds of civil society groups to promote state ideology through funding and tax incentives. Meanwhile, Alagappa argues for the importance of freeing Japan from the Eurocentric framework of civil society: "Throughout much of Asia, organizations and individuals, self-consciously identifying themselves as belonging to civil society, seek to affect the identity and structure of their respective states, as well as government policy on such matters of political and civil rights, minority and women's rights, the environment and socioeconomic conditions… [C]ivil society's meaning, nature, and composition will vary with circumstances, not only across countries, but also over time in a country" (Alagappa 2004, 150).

In line with the key arguments made by Pharr and Alagappa, this chapter aims to capture the dynamism of civil society in contemporary Japan. Firstly, it focuses on nonprofit organizations (NPOs)—a new civic sector, addressing Pharr's activist state argument. NPOs were strategically generated as a political project to deregulate the public space and thus to galvanize civil society in Japan. The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of January 17, 1995, triggered disaster volunteerism, with approximately 1.3 million volunteers acting to aid disaster victims. The government bureaucracy's ineffective efforts to deal with the tragic situation paled in comparison to the impressive work of volunteers, whose contributions dramatized the need for a social structure that would bolster a voluntary third sector, resulting in the passage of the NPO Law (formally, the Law to Promote Specified

Nonprofit Activities) in 1998. This was a momentous Japanese civil society project that gave rise to nearly 70,000 NPOs over the past two decades (as of September 2019) (Cabinet Office 2019). These NPOs have increasingly taken on major responsibility for local communities' social welfare delivery, including elderly care and lifelong learning, which was traditionally regarded as a task for the state.

Secondly, this chapter examines social movements, particularly anti-nuclear social movements—a continuing form of activism in Japanese society that was reignited following the March 11 Fukushima Daiichi disaster. Social movements are change-orientated political formations, often using tactics such as direct action, with loose and informal organizational structures. They are organized around ideas, which give the individuals who adhere to the movement new forms of social and political identity. Throughout post–World War II history, there was a seamless continuity in Japanese social movements (see Chiavacci et al. 2018), with people adopting new strategies, repertoires, and organizational forms and presentations to effect changes in social and political life. Through anti-nuclear activism, Japanese people have explored new ways of peaceful and sustainable life and are generating a new political culture, with new ideologies and strategies. Such activism has also been expanding to Asian countries beyond the national border, and has led to the establishment of a transnational civil society with the aim of a nuclear-free Asia. This reflects Alagappa's vision of civil society cited earlier.

NPOs

Japanese NPOs are one of the major actors in Japanese civil society, and the number of NPOs being incorporated has been increasing over the past two decades. Here I provide a brief overview of the major scholarship with an updated account from my own research.

Two Studies

Both Pekkanen (2006) and Ogawa (2009) examined NPOs in the early 2000s, but each employed a different approach. In his *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members without Advocates*, Pekkanen examines NPOs through the lens of political institutions, while in *The Failure of Civil Society? The Third Sector and the State in Contemporary Japan*, Ogawa applies an ethnographic gaze to his argument that micro-level relations developed between NPOs and the state. As a starting point, both Pekkanen and Ogawa employ an "activist state" model—as espoused by Susan Pharr in *The State of Civil Society in Japan* (Schwartz and Pharr 2003). Pharr's argument is that a sharp distinction between the state and society contributes to a misunderstanding of Japanese civil society. Instead, Pharr proposes the activist state model, and both Pekkanen and Ogawa begin with the same assumption: that the state shapes civil society. Thus, as Pekkanen notes, what is necessary is "an 'unpacking' of civil society" (Pekkanen 2006, 7), which, he argues, "would allow us to fine-tune our analysis of the relationship between the state and civil society… we could look at the patterns that the state creates in civil society and the patterns of state-civil society relations that emerge" (7). Meanwhile, Ogawa claims to "docu-

ment in detail the transition that Japanese society has undergone since the epoch-making NPO Law was implemented," which he does by analyzing "the dynamic micro-politics of everyday interactions between the state and ordinary individuals in the creation and ongoing activities of an NPO," particularly with regard to how "different levels of the Japanese government try to shape the NPO or 'civil society,' into an existing social and political structure that actually supports the state's specific goals" (Ogawa 2009, 6). Ogawa also claims that his book has "important policy implications… for any state seeking to mold its society in a specific way" (7). In fact, these two projects were complementary in their analysis of Japanese NPOs, together providing a comprehensive understanding of civil society in contemporary Japan.

Pekkanen's research captures the dual structure of Japanese civil society between "a plethora of small, local groups (such as nearly 300,000 neighborhood associations) and a dearth of large, professionalized, independent organizations (such as Greenpeace)" (Pekkanen 2006, 2). He explains that this dual structure was largely influenced by political institutions, arguing that "[t]he political institutional explanation does not claim that civil society is a product of what state agencies or politicians want to happen, but rather that institutions have effects through structuring action" (16). Pekkanen notes that the dual structure phenomenon can primarily be attributed to the regulatory framework articulated by Article 34 of the Civil Code, which dates back to the Meiji era in 1898 and that hardly changed until 1998. The permitting system, which combines a discretionary screening function, close supervision of operations, and sanctioning power, has "a chilling effect" (17) in shaping Japanese civil society. In line with the activist state model, for example, civic groups whose objectives and styles differ from the permitting ministry face operational difficulties. Thus, this lobby-type of civil society is not active and is less likely to influence public debates or shape public policy. Policymaking techniques on the civil society side therefore remain underdeveloped, while environmental and consumer advocacy and philanthropic groups have received little state support. Meanwhile, bureaucrats, who are major actors in Japanese politics, prefer small-scale civic groups to facilitate efficient governance of low-cost social welfare delivery in local communities. To describe the latter type of civil society, Pekkanen coined the term "members without advocates" by turning on its head Theda Skocpol's terminology of American civic life, "advocates without members" (Skocpol 1999). In Japan, meanwhile, there is participatory contribution but not policy advocacy, which Pekkanen attributes to the Japanese state's desire "to nurture social capital-type civil society groups while discouraging lobby-type civil society groups" (Pekkanen 2006, 10).

The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake destabilized this dual structure, liberalizing nonprofit incorporation requirements and opening up a space for NPOs, a new civic group in Japanese society. Before the 1998 NPO Law, access to legal status as a public interest legal person was extremely restricted under the Civil Code. The NPO Law was indeed regarded as a special case legislation under Article 34 of the Civil Code, and the process of creating this law was distinguished by the very first instance of dialogues catalyzed by the Coalition for Legislation to Support Citizens' Organizations, popularly known as C's, and political parties (see Pekkanen 2000 on the legislation process). The

enactment of the 1998 NPO Law followed by the Intermediary Legal Person Law in 2001, tax reforms in 2001–2002 that authorized tax deduction status or *nintei* for NPO legal persons, and public interest legal person (*kōeki hōjin*) reform (completed in 2008) can all be located as "part of self-perpetuating changes that will alter the regulatory framework in Japan" (Pekkanen 2006, 184). The 1998 NPO Law has indeed made it easier for civic groups to obtain legal status without undergoing bureaucratic screening, and the law thereafter became a stepping stone for civic groups to contribute to dynamic policymaking debates. However, Pekkanen warns, "unless entrenched attitudes regarding the importance of the state in defining the public and the prominence of bureaucrats in the political economy change, administrative guidance and restrictive interpretation of statutes will also continue to be a feature of the regulatory framework" (Pekkanen 2006, 185).

Ogawa examines how states seek to shape their relations with their populations, and how effective those policies are likely to be, documenting "people, places, and meanings as well as the concrete manifestations of civil society" (Ogawa 2009, 15). He illuminates "strong disagreements from below combined with grassroots resistance and frustration regarding the state's deliberate effort to construct such 'civil society'" (15), and argues that the institutionalization of NPOs was implemented by the Japanese neoliberal state to mold its population or the state-individual relationship in a specific manner under the name of civil society. In fact, Ogawa coined the term "volunteer subjectivity" (93)—a Foucauldian, coercive, self-disciplined subjectivity, which is intentionally produced and reproduced under the name of volunteerism. In tandem with the NPO Law in the late 1990s, a national campaign was launched calling for volunteerism, with a television commercial of the time coining the novel phrase—*You can volunteer with a single finger!* (*Yubi ippon de dekiru borantia*). This commercial was made by AC Japan, a public interest corporation that promotes serving the common good through public service campaigns, and the phrase came to permeate the Japanese psyche.

The state was also an agent in mobilizing such volunteer subjectivity. In 2006 the Japanese government revised the Fundamental Law of Education, a basic charter defining the direction of education, to situate *hōshi katsudō* (service activity) in the Japanese school system. For example, since 2007, the Tokyo Metropolitan government has made the subject *hōshi*, or service (1 credit, 35 hours), compulsory in high school. Meanwhile, Ogawa documented how local governments, mostly at municipal levels, invited local residents to volunteer in social service provision under the aegis of NPOs, which replaced the government in providing these services (Ogawa 2008, 2009). NPOs are indeed key forms of agency in neoliberalism, a dominant political ideology in Japan since the 1980s. The institutionalization of NPOs was a calculated reorganization of the Japanese public sphere, designed to establish a small or neoliberal government in the post-welfare state through shared responsibility for social services originally delivered by the state with volunteer-driven NPOs. Thus, Japanese society would probably have NPOs even without the impetus of the great earthquake.

Co-production in New Public Governance

Neoliberal politics has created a space for civil society organizations to be active in policy processes, and much public management thinking treats “co-production” (Alford 2009) in this fashion. Co-production, first argued in the 1970s by Elinor Ostrom, the 2009 Nobel Laureate for Economics, and her colleagues at Indiana University, is currently attracting renewed academic interest worldwide. Originally, the term “co-production” suggested a relationship between regular producers (policymakers and practitioners) and clients (service users) (Ostrom 1999), specifically where the client acts not only as a consumer of services, but as a co-producer thereof (Ostrom 1999, 1073). This was linked with the idea of using combinations of state and nonstate actors to inform public service delivery.

Co-production can be seen nowadays as a substantive policy tool utilized by governments with a preference for collaborative governance to implement policy goals. Japanese NPOs have increasingly taken on responsibility for local communities’ social welfare delivery, including elderly care and lifelong learning—the two most popular areas of NPO activities registered via “co-production” with local governments. These preferences follow visions of New Public Governance (Pestoff et al. 2012), including enhanced effectiveness, flexibility, and democratic quality of public services. In fact, a neoliberal state employing the practice of co-production offers ordinary citizens new opportunities to participate in various arenas of action, “to resolve the kind of issues hitherto held to be the responsibility of authorized government agencies” (Burchell 1996, 29). For citizens, co-production is a participative tool, actively involving them in public affairs.

New Public Governance indeed provides a promising and relatively well-described alternative to either a continued reliance on New Public Management or a return to Classical Public Bureaucracy (Torfing and Triantafillou 2013). The notion of co-production, with its emphasis on collaborative interaction in networks and partnership, captures core aspects of New Public Governance in Japan, particularly at the local level, where there is an urgent need to mobilize additional resources to offset the cross-pressure between growing problems and expectations and the scarcity of public funds. Such practices have shifted between traditional preferences for hierarchical or government-based governance practices, toward a New Public Management–inspired market-based orientation, and finally, in the present era, toward New Public Governance civil society reforms (see Howlett et al. 2017). After the promulgation of the 1998 NPO Law, along with the Long-Term Care Insurance Program in 2000, the patterns of nonstate provision of welfare services in the Japan changed dramatically. The Japanese government transformed social welfare service delivery through privatization and decentralization policies, thus expanding existing and largely informal organizations and activities, and fostering the rapid development of a more privatized and decentralized nonprofit sector dedicated to the delivery of social welfare services.

SLG (a pseudonym), which Ogawa (2009, 2015) documented as a case NPO, was a leading example of the co-production of social service delivery. Ogawa has been conducting field research in an eastern Tokyo ward since 2001. SLG delivered social services—a

range of lifelong learning opportunities, originally provided by the municipal government. Incorporated as an NPO in 2000, it was one of the largest civil society organizations in terms of membership and budget to promote lifelong learning in Japan. Over nearly two decades, it successfully offered more than one hundred courses per year to the local community in an innovative way. Volunteers created courses for local residents, reflecting the spirit of community development—they decided what the local community wanted to study and which community members would be teachers.

SLG was well tailored to the innovative provision of new social needs; as a result, it created a rich diversity of locally embedded social services. Local volunteers created educational content and mobilized their local knowledge and networks. The state, meanwhile, funded these citizen-based activities. In fact, the municipal government supported this community-oriented lifelong learning project by providing generous funding, injecting a total of 1 billion yen (9 million USD) over the eighteen years (2000–2017) of its existence. Government funding has been a major source of income for many Japanese NPOs that play a significant role in providing social services. This type of NPO is categorized as a "GONGO" (government-organized nongovernmental organization) in the international third-sector scholarship. GONGOs are organizations created by the political process but operate quasi-independently of their establishing agencies, as well as of the organizations that implement government oversight of their economic or professional activity (Salamon and Sokolowski 2016, 1534). Meanwhile, *Asahi Shimbun* (2009), a Japanese daily, was dubbed a "GONPO" (government-organized NPO) in the Japanese context. Because of GONGOs' ability to mobilize local volunteers, the costs of creating lifelong learning courses in the municipality where SLG was located were almost halved, compared to the cost of government provision of the same service.

This development in Japan can be located in the global New Public Governance scholarship. The SLG project appeared successful, with one tangible result being that lifelong learning activities took root in its area of operation and 260,000 local residents studied at SLG from the time of its establishment. Simplistically calculated, this means that in a ward with nearly 260,000 people, each resident enrolled in one course at SLG. SLG changed the traditional style of state-led learning, and provided a model for community-oriented learning. It even contributed to local efforts to delegate power to citizens in a participatory governance structure for a pluralistic democracy. However, in 2018, after eighteen years of operation, SLG finally dissolved.

A Failed Case

More than a decade ago, in his book *The Failure of Civil Society?*, Ogawa noted the possible failure of Japanese civil society due to NPO activity, based on his research in the early 2000s (Ogawa 2009). He observed that NPOs might effectively facilitate the practice of a neoliberal state but were not conducive to encouraging independent, citizen-oriented activities. NPOs were being exploited by the government as an administrative tool to implement public policies.

The year 2018 marked the twentieth anniversary of the NPO Law, and one observable indication of its *failure* is the ever-increasing number of NPO dissolutions. The most recent statistic (as of September 2009) is that 17,000 NPOs have been dissolved, for reasons such as depleted funding, missions completed, and aging of participants. One distinctive case of dissolution was that observed by Ogawa at his field site, SLG, which was dissolved in March 2018 (Ogawa 2020), mainly due to cuts in municipal government's funding. The government's logic for so doing was as follows: The local Lifelong Learning Center, the public building in which SLG was housed, was to commence a renovation in April 2018. During that time, SLG would be unable to continue its work, so the government would withdraw funding from fiscal year 2018. The government announcement was made in a top-down manner, however, without consulting SLG. Some initiatives to continue SLG activities were made by citizens, but they failed to continue the operation, probably because they were not sufficiently empowered to operate a business with costs running to more than 100 million yen per year.

Ogawa (2020) also explains the dissolution by saying that SLG had completed its mission. The promotion of lifelong learning activities in the local municipality was clearly articulated in the government's policy document on lifelong learning in the 1990s (SWG 1999). The aim was to disseminate lifelong learning practices in the local community, and SLG was created as part of this framework. Two decades later, the government had attained one tangible result: the learning style invented by SLG had been recognized as a model, and copied by other public facilities in the local community, such as the library, museum, and women's center, which mobilized local resident-volunteers to create courses on topics such as gender, recycling, and local history. The course offerings became more focused and detailed, reflecting the specific interests of each center. The delivery quality of lifelong learning opportunities was being enhanced.

In April 2019, Ogawa saw a new development. The municipal government took back lifelong learning service delivery, using a public administration technique called *shitei kanrisha seido*, or the designated administration system (DAS). This is a form of concession agreement between a government and private company (the "concessionaire"), in which the government transfers to the company the right to maintain, produce, or provide a good or service for a limited period, but the government retains ultimate ownership of the right (OECD 2007). In Japan, the DAS came to public administration due to a major revision of the administration and management of public facilities, articulated under the revised Local Autonomy Law (2003). Until that point, public facilities were either administered directly or through a local public body, including incorporated foundations, incorporated associations, and NPOs. The DAS stipulates that the local government can choose whether to run public facilities directly or open them up to public tender, a technique that was further promoted in 2011 by the so-called PFI Act (Act on Promotion of Private Finance Initiative) to improve the social infrastructure and ensure the provision of affordable and good services to citizens by taking measures to promote provision, etc., of public facilities using private finance, management abilities, and technical capabilities, and thereby contributing to the healthy development of the national economy.

The local Lifelong Learning Center, the public building in which SLG was originally housed, went to public tender in August 2018. The municipal government prepared a package to manage the center; the designated management business requirements, written up as a twenty-page document (SWG 2018), contains detailed explanations regarding the government requirements. The designated business tasks for the Lifelong Learning Center include, but are not limited to, the building maintenance task (cleaning, inspection work, utilities bill payment, etc.) as well as content operation. This includes offering at least thirty lifelong learning courses per year, which should not overlap with the offerings of private lifelong learning providers: eight courses related to the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics; eight courses created by local volunteers; seven courses on local history and culture, four of which should be offered as a series over a year; seven free courses primarily for students in grades 4 to 6; and a free course for kindergarteners. Furthermore, the tasks include offering presentation opportunities of learning results for four consecutive days, setting up a lifelong learning consultation desk, maintaining a home page, and publishing a four-page B4-size information paper (68,000 copies each time, every other month).

In the tendering process, five legally recognized nonpublic bodies (e.g., profit-making private companies, incorporated associations, NPOs) submitted proposals to run a facility for five years, and one of the entities with DAS experience in other municipalities won the bid. This entity comprised a joint business unit of two private companies—a marketing and advertising company and a major realtor. Obviously, these companies had no experience of community-oriented lifelong learning operation; however, the proposed cost was cheaper than government expectations, primarily because fewer staff members were hired than expected, which contributed to this joint unit being selected. By employing the DAS technique, lifelong learning service delivery came under the direct supervision of the municipal government, and all course offerings had to be identical to what was articulated in the contract. Otherwise, the DAS status would be promptly withdrawn. Citizens' collaborative efforts for social service delivery thus came to be provided by a further cheaper option, and the lifelong learning course offering is now under government control. Local grassroots efforts to build up such innovative community-oriented lifelong learning practices were fading away.

Social Movements

Social movements are another major actor in Japanese civil society, and the have a variety of focuses for their actions. Here I discuss anti-nuclear activism, one of the most active social movements in Japanese post World War II history.

Anti-Nuclear Activism

Japan has a rich historical tradition of social movements, which Tilly (1999, 257) defines as "a sustained challenge to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of repeated public displays of that popula-

tions' worthiness, unity, and commitment." These social movements are organized around issues society continues to confront, including ethnicity, the environment, human rights, gender, sexuality, and peace. Social movements may also become laboratories for testing alternative means of socialization, intercultural communication, and reflexive identity formation (Salvatore et al. 2013, 7). Anti-nuclear activism is one of the most important social movements. It has figured strongly since World War II in Japan, mainly in response to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Further, the triple disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake, its related tsunami, and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident on March 11, 2011, reignited anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan.

Japan's anti-nuclear activism engendered a set of theoretical ideas known as the "new social movement" (NSM)—a European tradition of exploring social movements from a cultural turn in social theory in the 1980s, with a framing approach to movements (e.g., Castells 1983; Habermas 1987; Melucci 1996; Offe 1985; Touraine 1981). Instead of just representing the interests of the working class (e.g., Dworking 1997; Thompson [1963] 1991), which is understood as the old paradigm of social movements, NSMs bring together independent individuals in spontaneous, free activities. From the logic of refusals to consensus-building, the formulation of alternative proposals, and the formation of partnerships with public administrations and businesses, NSMs take many forms. In Japan, as Kurihara (1999, 14–15) points out, beginning in the late 1980s, citizens' movements have learned from American NPOs, and have moved to strengthen their organizations while working to have a nonprofit organization law, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, was eventually passed in 1998.

Examining the early postwar history, anti-nuclear weapon movements gained momentum in the wake of the *Lucky Dragon* incident in 1954, where Japanese tuna fishing boat *Lucky Dragon 5* (*Daigo Fukuryū Maru*) was exposed to nuclear fallout by a US hydrogen bomb test on Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific, resulting in the death of one crew member from acute radiation syndrome. More than half a century later, scholars still write about this incident. For example, Yamazaki (2009) argues that even after the incident, the US did not stop nuclear tests, which continued to radioactively contaminate fish and rainwater in Japan. As a result, the petition movement for the banning of nuclear trials spread countrywide. Higuchi (2008) maintains that by the summer of 1955, the number of signatures had grown to more than one-third of Japan's then population. Housewives were at the center of the movement, as radioactive pollution during the Bikini incident triggered a consumerist and materialist turn in the peace movement. Coupled with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki experiences, this anti-nuclear sentiment culminated in the establishment of *Gensuikyō*—the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs—in the same year. This council has federated youth, women, labor, and medical associations.

The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the USSR generated new anti-nuclear activism across Japan. In a retrospective writing on thirty years since Chernobyl, the Citizens' Nuclear Information Centre (2016), a Japanese NGO providing information related to nuclear issues, documented that the Chernobyl disaster spread the anti-nuke movement among urban residents but took approximately two years to become visible or for people

to begin rallies against nuclear energy. One event that triggered the expansion of anti-nuke sentiment was the repeated media coverage of the imported foodstuffs that were sent back due to emissions contamination from Chernobyl. This food had been found to include radioactive cesium in excess of Japan's provisional standards. Another event that helped spread the anti-nuke sentiment was the output adjustment test performed at Unit 2 of the Ikata Nuclear Power Station, located in Ehime Prefecture on Shikoku Island. On February 11 and 12, 1988, a rally demanding the cancellation of the test, organized in front of the Shikoku Electric Power head office, in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture, drew more than three thousand people. Most of the protesters, primarily educated housewives, were unrelated to the conventional anti-nuclear weapons movement like *Gensuikyō*. They were dubbed the "New Wave" (see Nakajima and Sumino 1988). Further, as Ando (2019) documents, some activists concerned with nuclear energy issues actively began exploring alternative lifestyles, as part of anti-nuclear movement history in postwar Japan. They migrated to rural areas to practice self-sufficient lives, and engaged in organic agriculture and renewable energy production.

The March 11 disaster became an important reflecting point. Many Japanese people realized the unsustainable nature of nuclear energy and its incompatibility with human beings. One of the distinctive observations was that youth returned to the forefront of Japanese social movements and became an energizing agent for social change in contemporary Japan. Just one week later, on March 18, 2011, a thirty-year-old man, Ryota Sono, stood in front of the headquarters of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), owner of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, and shouted, "*Genpatsu iranai!*" (No more nuclear plants!) (see Ogawa 2013). Sono's action ignited the anti-nuclear sentiment that has occurred countrywide since then. Demanding a no-nuclear, safer tomorrow, the Friday anti-nuclear demonstration in front of the prime minister's office commenced in March 2012, and is still continuing today (as of November 2020). Scholarly interest in the social movements has also been growing (e.g., Brown 2018; Manabe 2015; Tamura 2018). The anti-nuclear movement has been mobilized by a diverse collection of people, encompassing women and men of all ages from all different social classes and across cultural barriers. No particular type of individual or group has controlled this social movement. Following suit, although not directly related to anti-nuclear activism, another emergence of youth activism occurred in 2015, primarily led by a students' group called SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for Liberal Democracy) in response to the proposed security legislation that would allow Japan to broaden its defense options under Prime Minister Shinzō Abe (see Ogawa 2018). People are continuing to take direct action against the government whenever incendiary issues emerge. In particular, demonstrations in front of the prime minister's residence (Kantei-mae) have been established as a protest style for contemporary social movements in Japan since the March 11 disaster.

No Nukes Asia Forum

Not limited to locals, Japan's anti-nuclear movements have been transnational in nature. One movement is the No Nukes Asia Forum (NNAF), but this did not start suddenly after the March 11 disaster. Following the anti-nuclear or "New Wave" sentiment in the late

1980s, the NNAF was established in 1993 in Japan with the main objective of creating a nuclear-free Asia. It comprises a network of anti-nuclear activists spanning Asian countries. In the field of international relations, the increasingly transnational nature of civil society has led to new interest in the democratic possibilities of transnational public spheres (e.g., Eckersley 2007; Nash 2014;). The social infrastructure of these public spheres is constituted by transnational networks of domestic or local-based civil society organizations. In particular, the NNAF is an important case of Asian transnational efforts informing and even transforming global nuclear politics through "grassroots regionalization," which Avenell (2017) refers to not only as a conglomeration of disparate national civil societies, but also, and more significantly, as an interconnected, networked regional sphere of activity, drawing together Asian activists at the grassroots level (see also Avenell and Ogawa, n.d.).

A year before the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Kim Wong-Shik, a South Korean anti-nuclear activist at the Korea Anti-nuclear Information Center, proposed an anti-nuclear forum in Asia. During the pre–Earth Summit in Yokohama, Kim noted, "There are no national boundaries for nuclear disaster; to survive, we need citizens' solidarity" (NNAF 2015, 5–6). In compliance with Kim's remark, Daisuke Sato, a Japanese anti-nuclear activist and the current NNAF secretariat, led an initiative to organize the conference and procured consent from 1,354 individuals and 177 groups. In 1993 the first conference was held in Osaka, including a series of onsite meetings at nuclear power plants countrywide, with 30 overseas participants, primarily from Asian countries, including South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and India. Since then, the Japan-generated transnational activism, NNAF, has held annual meetings in various countries in Asia.

The year 2018 marked the 15th anniversary of the NNAF. Reflecting upon his actions over the previous decade, Daisuke Sato described nuclear power plants as "a symbol of developmental dictatorship" (author's interview on September 27, 2018). Having seen nuclear power plants develop under authoritarian regimes in South Korea and Taiwan in the 1980s, Japanese manufacturers began looking to Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia and Thailand, in the following decade. The sales continued in the 2000s—India and Vietnam became Japan's target countries for the export of nuclear power plants. In fact, the major agenda for the NNAF is objecting against Japan's export or transfer of knowledge regarding nuclear power generation technology to Asia. Sato told me that the NNAF actually began as an action against the pro-nuclear International Conference for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia, which has since changed its name to the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia (FNCA). Japan's MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) leads this cooperative framework for the peaceful use of nuclear technology in Asia, aiming to promote "cooperation in the field of nuclear energy with neighboring Asian countries more efficiently" (FNCA 2019). This cooperation consists of annual meetings and project activities for participants, including Australia, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. NNAF activists originally raised serious concerns regarding this pro-nuclear group's particular initiative of inviting engineers from Asian countries to Japan to study

nuclear technology. In fact, the NNAF has been establishing what Nancy Fraser (1990) calls “counter publics,” who challenge established rules and norms of nuclear energy governance. These are formed in response to the exclusion of the dominant publics and with the view that their existence better promotes the ideal of inclusiveness and “participatory parity” (Fraser 1990, 63). In the interview, Sato actually emphasized the important of grassroots solidarity with ordinary people—mostly non-elite voiceless locals, including farmers, fishermen, factory workers, the elderly, and women, in the export-targeted countries in Asia. Indeed, during the annual meeting, the NNAF always holds a dialogue session with local people and accompanies them to visit the planning sites of nuclear power plants, to understand their reality. The gathering aims to provide a support mechanism for local grassroots campaigns in the different countries involved and a concrete face of the opposition to nuclear power proliferation in the region. In so doing, solidarity would be enhanced as a value and emphasized as a key factor in the process of resource sharing among anti-nuclear activists. This strategy even resonates what Fraser calls “subaltern counter publics” (67), as they represent parallel discursive entities where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, “which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (67).

Several tangible results have been generated through NNAF activism, including a case in the Philippines. The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) was built under the repressive Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship and was the first nuclear power plant to be built in Southeast Asia; however, the plant was never fueled after its establishment in 1984. Its intended operation faced a strong, persistent anti-nuclear sentiment at the grassroots level of local citizens collaborating with NNAF activists. Another tangible case is in Vietnam, where Japan planned to export nuclear power plants under the Democratic Party of Japan administration in the late 2000s. Reuters (2016) reported that Vietnam’s National Assembly voted to abandon plans to build two multibillion-dollar nuclear power plants with Japan as well as Russia, after officials cited lower demand forecasts, rising costs, and safety concerns. According to Michiko Yoshii (2018), Japanese citizens along with local activists were actively lobbying high-ranking Communist officials in Vietnam to change the nuclear policy. These citizens were actually NNAF activists. In Turkey, where Japan actively explored an opportunity to export a nuclear power plant in the early 2010s under Prime Minister Shinzō Abe of the Liberal Democratic Party, *Nikkei* (2018) reported that a Japan-led public-private consortium was set to abandon a Turkish nuclear power project that had been touted as a model for Tokyo’s export of infrastructure. NNAF activists were strongly engaged in anti-nuclear movements with local residents in Sinop, where Japan planned to build a nuclear power plant. Meanwhile, Japanese manufacturers primarily attributed this decision to the unexpected ballooning of financial costs related to nuclear power plant construction. For all of these failed export cases, however, we should remember that NNAF activists were always behind these nuclear politics. Aiming to create a nuclear-free society, they had a solid impact on policy change. The NNAF should be considered a successful case in Japanese social movement history, and their actions are continuing in other targeted countries like India.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an updated account of civil society in contemporary Japan, shedding light on two important actors—NPOs and social movements—both of which demonstrate dynamism at grassroots levels. Since 1998, NPOs have become a major institution in Japanese society; in particular, these new civic organizations play a significant role in the co-production of social service delivery with the local government in the field of elderly care and lifelong learning. NPOs appear to work well within the framework of New Public Governance. The chapter presented a failed case of an NPO, which was documented over the previous two decades (Ogawa 2009, 2015, 2020). There is a need to examine exclusively the cases of failure or dissolution in a more comprehensive manner, and in so doing, Japanese cases will likely provide significant insights into the international literature on the study of civil society and co-production policy. Social movements are also examined, focusing on anti-nuclear activism—one of the most consistent activisms in Japan—which has been reignited since the nuclear disaster of March 11, 2011. Japan has a rich tradition of social movements in the post–World War II period: they include labor movements such as the strike at the Miike Coal Mines; peace movements like the Anpo demonstrations against the US-Japan Security Treaty; protests against the Vietnam War led by Beheiren (Betonamu ni heiwa wo! Shimin rengō, or Peace for Vietnam! Citizens' Committee); and environment movements such as the protests over Minamata disease, which also led to a national awareness about environmental pollution. Following anti-nuclear activism, this chapter concisely introduces a transnational social movement that originated in Japan—a particular feature that is relatively understudied in social movements studies in Japan. Further studies on this type of phenomenon will enrich the scope for Japanese civil society scholarship. The essence of transnational civil society studies will be captured by face-to-face, multisited studies of how individuals in specific localities react to particular forces, how they create transnational connections to those living in other countries, and how grassroots transnationalization enhances their imagination for a better, sustainable future.

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