

Civil Society Groups and Policy-Making in Contemporary Japan

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Paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies,
Chicago, IL, USA, March-April 2005

I. Introduction

This paper presents a broad analysis of the influence of civil society groups on public policy and policy-making in Japan. We provide a macro-level overview based on statistical analysis of the JIGS survey of Japanese interest groups. Such an approach naturally has its strengths and limitations. As we discuss the particular methodology employed, we will comment specifically on the limitations to our study. In general, however, a survey such as this one can complement more detailed studies of particular policy areas. Moreover, a survey of a very broad range of civil society actors across issues can provide perspective that is not available through case studies—even excellent and thorough ones—limited to a particular issue area or type of group. Our aim in this paper is to provide such a comprehensive survey of the involvement of civil society groups in policy-making in Japan.

A more detailed description of our methodology follows this introduction. After this, we plunge into the substantive analysis of the paper. We focus on three main aspects. First, we distinguish among the types of group that involve themselves in policy-making. These groups are broken down in the JIGS survey by their predominant activity (e.g. agricultural groups or sports groups, etc.) and their legal status. Second, we investigate the policy areas that interest the JIGS organizations. We spend the bulk of our efforts, however, in probing *how* civil society groups seek to influence. This includes the concrete activities and steps taken to influence policy, and the political actors targeted for influence. We also include in this category specific information such as whether the groups offered electoral support or provided post-retirement jobs to bureaucrats, or whether they focused their efforts on politicians or bureaucrats. In the

conclusion, we investigate the success the groups have in influencing policy-making and politics.

II. Methodology: A note on the JIGS survey

The evidence is drawn from the JIGS survey of interest groups conducted by Yutaka Tsujinaka. JIGS is an extensive survey of more than 1600 associations in Tokyo and also in Ibaraki Prefecture, involving 36 questions and 260 sub-questions. The survey utilized random sampling of telephone book directories (the NTT telephone book). Not all groups necessarily have their own telephone line, but this method of sampling allows the research to include groups that have not obtained legal status or do not even have their own office—in this way, the JIGS data is more comprehensive than government data and catches many groups that would otherwise be uncounted. The population of the JIGS survey is 23, 128 organizations listed in the “unions and associations” section of the Nippon Telephone and Telecommunications Town Page (*shokugyoubetsu denwachou*), Tokyo 1997 edition and Ibaraki 1997 edition. There were 21,366 organizations in Tokyo and 1,762 in Ibaraki Prefecture.

The JIGS team employed random sampling, and used the postal service to send out questionnaires. Mailed questionnaires hold several advantages. For one thing, the cost is relatively low compared to other forms of gathering data from organizations. In addition, using such a method allows us to broaden the sample size far beyond what we could do with detailed case studies, or even interviews; using these questionnaires, we are able to conduct large-N research. One of the prime disadvantages to mailing survey questionnaires is that the rate of response can be so low as to call the results into question. However, the JIGS survey enjoyed a

very high return rate (40 percent average) and a very high response rate (more than 70 percent). In this survey, the team sent questionnaires to 4,247 organizations (3,866 in Tokyo and 381 in Ibaraki) and had 1,638 returns (1,438 from Tokyo and 197 from Ibaraki). The head of the organization or the person in charge of administrative matters usually answered the questionnaire. The valid return rate was 37.2 percent in Tokyo and 51.7 percent in Ibaraki. We received responses from groups that make up 6.7 percent of all groups listed in telephone directory in Tokyo and 11.2 percent in Ibaraki. These are quite large samples.¹

The JIGS survey questions included questions specifically designed to reveal policy influence and interest of the target groups. We will discuss precisely these results below. Moreover, we can investigate these data along with a fairly detailed profile of the group, including the type of group, its legal status, the size of group, etc.

Given the methodology just described, we feel confident that the JIGS results are fair and representative of civil society groups in Japan—at least as defined by the parameters of the survey. What kind of groups responded to the JIGS survey? In other words, who are the civil society organizations whose influence on policy we are studying in this paper? We will address these questions in the following section.

III. Who? What kind of civil society organizations influence policy?

In this section, we provide an overview of these civil society organizations. This analysis alone has great value for the study of civil society in Japan. However, we are

¹ Tsujinaka has led surveys similar to JIGS in several other countries: Korea, US, Germany, China, Russia, Turkey, and the Philippines during the 1997-2005 period. Occasionally, these will be referenced below. For maximum comparability, the surveys are all similar in format and methodology to the JIGS survey. Naturally, where necessary the surveys have also been tailored somewhat to local conditions and response rates and patterns varied across countries. We will forebear going into detail on the surveys of other countries, however, in the interests of space and also because they are not central to our arguments below.

interested in using it here as a base for a more sophisticated analysis of which groups attempt to influence policy and how.

Although the JIGS data is rich enough to profile the groups in a variety of detailed manners, we will limit this section to an overview of the distribution of types of groups. In other words, the data are broken down here by the predominant activity or area of the groups, as self-reported. The definition of civil society, and the delineation of which groups are “in” and which groups are “out”, is contested. Accordingly, we must also note that we included and excluded some types of groups from the JIGS survey. School legal persons, social welfare legal persons, and medical legal persons are excluded from the survey. Religious groups such as churches and temples are also excluded, although associations that represent religious groups are included, as are religious groups not involved in a religious mission (e.g. YMCA). Cooperatives are also included in the survey.

There are two ways we used to classify organizations. The first way is by asking the respondents to the JIGS survey (Q1) to pick up one of the 10 classifications created by the survey team. Respondent are asked to identify themselves from the following: 1) agricultural, 2) economic/business², 3) labor, 4) educational, 5) administrative, 6) welfare, 7) professional, 8) political, 9) civil/citizens' (*shimin*) and 10) other. The second method is to use the NTT phonebook classification. This classification scheme also has 10 types, but they are slightly different from the JIGS (Q1) classifications. The NTT classifications are 1) Unions and associations (in general), 2) academic and cultural, 3) fishermen's cooperatives, 4) economic (business, trade), 5) social welfare, 6) religious, 7) political, 8) agricultural cooperatives, 9) forestry and fishery, 10) labor.

² The reader should understand that “economic” organizations for NTT and the JIGS survey include also business groups, trade associations, and the like.

Table 1 and Figures 1 to 4 present this information below. Each shows the main activity of a group, which we can consider as the "type" of group. Figure 1 is the most comprehensive. Figure 1 reports the breakdown of the distribution of JIGS groups in Japan.³ It also places this breakdown in comparative perspective, by providing similar figures for the Russia, Korea, the US, and Germany. For Japan, the reader will note a large "other" section. Figure 2 below breaks down the "other" section by activity area as reported by the groups in the JIGS survey. Figures 3 and 4 use the NTT classification.

³ Organizations that self-reported "other" in Q1 of the JIGS survey were further asked to write specifically what type of organization they are in the space provided in the questionnaire. The results are reflected in Figure 2 with other types of organizations that did not fit within the 9 JIGS categories.

Figure1: Comparison of Distribution of Groups in Five Countries by Type and %

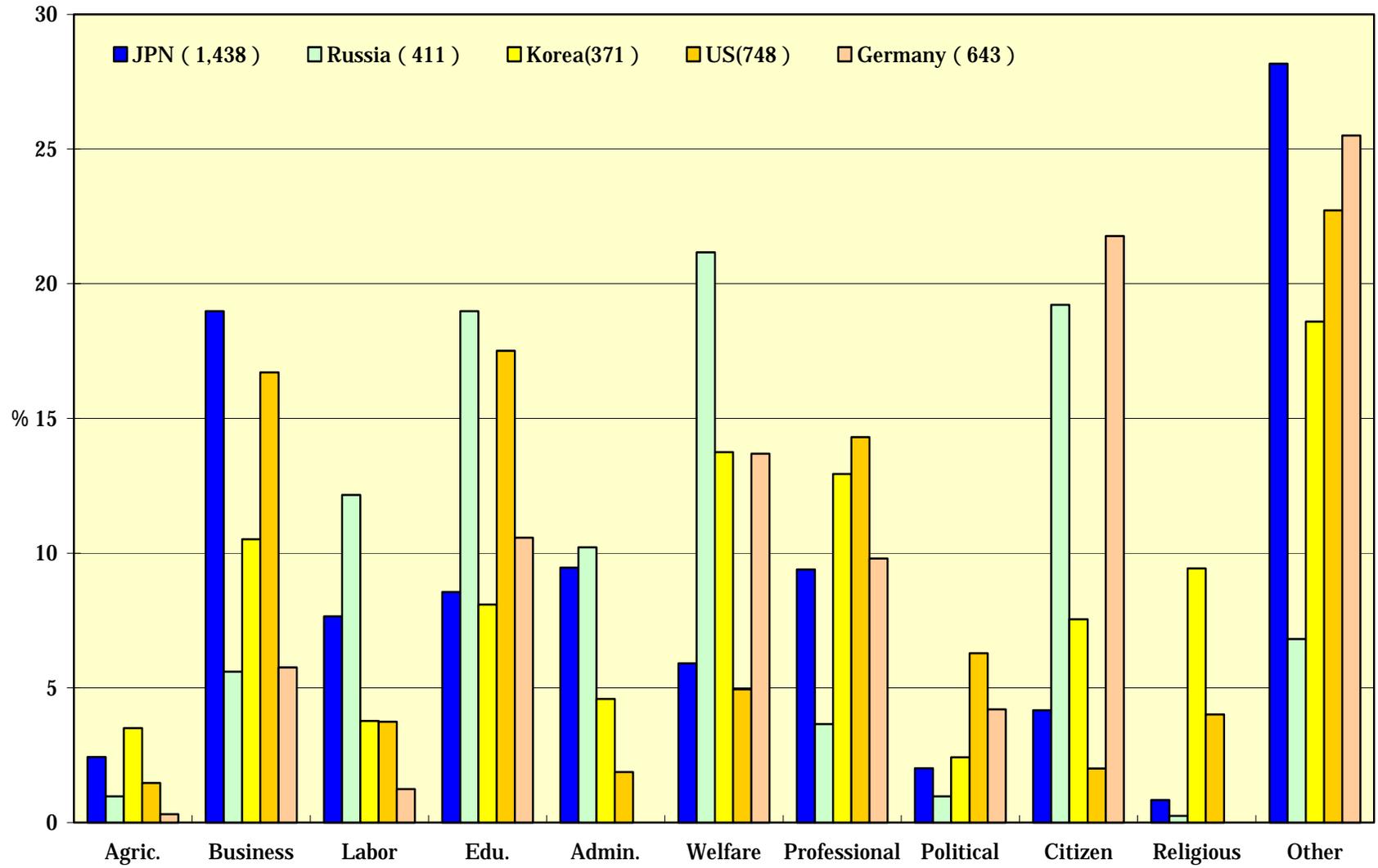
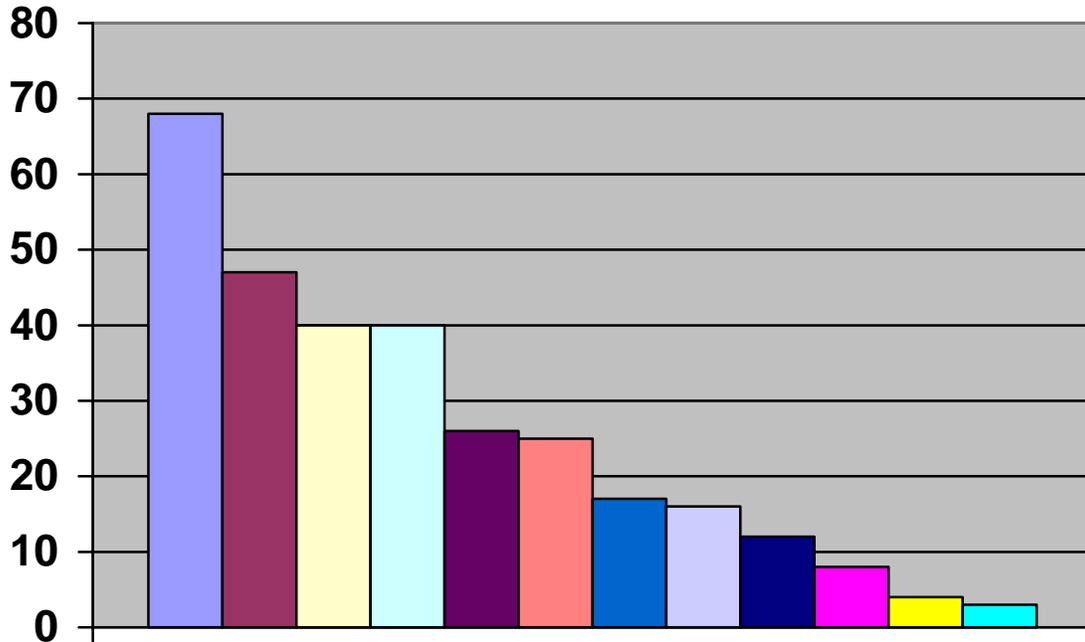


Figure 2 presents a look at the groups which did not fit into the 9 named categories established in the JIGS survey questionnaire and reported themselves as “other” in Tokyo. In this figure, we present a breakdown of these groups which did not report belonging to one of the 9 categories across various categories of interest area. While 100 of the “other” groups out of 417 did not respond, what stands out here is the large number of groups expressing interest in commerce and industry (68), as well as the nearly as large number expressing interest in non-profit activities (47).

Figure 2: Distribution of Interest Areas of Groups (only groups in “other category of JIGS survey Q1 classification) by Reporting Interest—Self-Reported



We turn now to an analysis of the groups that clearly fit into the categories of the NTT phonebook. Table 1 shows the percentage of each type of group found in the population of groups in Tokyo and Ibaraki, as well as the percentage of each type of group surveyed in Tokyo and Ibaraki, and the percentage of each type of group which offered a valid response to the JIGS survey, again separated for Tokyo and Ibaraki. The categorization is based on the telephone classification. In addition, Table 1 shows that the JIGS survey is indeed representative by comparing the distribution of groups that gave a valid response to the population of groups. Figures 3 and 4 present this information graphically.

Table 1: Distribution of Types of Groups—Area of Predominant Interest Based on NTT Phonebook Classification (Chosen by the Phone Number’s Owner)

Type of Group	Population Tokyo	Population Ibaraki	Surveyed Tokyo	Surveyed Ibaraki	Valid Response Tokyo	Valid Res. Ibaraki
Unions and associations	42.8	33.0	42.0	29.4	44.2	27.9
Academic & cultural	14.9	2.4	14.4	3.1	14.1	4.1
Fishermen’s cooperatives	0.3	2.6	0.6	3.1	0.3	3.0
Economic (business, trade)	20.0	15.2	19.5	12.6	19.4	14.7
Social Welfare	3.8	1.9	4.6	2.6	7.0	3.0
Religious	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.1	1.1	1.0
Politics	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.7	1.8	3.0
Agricultural cooperatives	1.0	12.2	1.4	18.6	1.3	15.2
Forestry & fishery	3.1	15.1	3.2	13.1	2.4	17.3
Labor	9.0	10.4	9.5	10.5	8.4	10.7
Real Number	21,366	1,762	3,866	381	1,438	197

Figure 3: Distribution of Main Activity of Group--Tokyo Valid Responses (by Phonebook Classification)

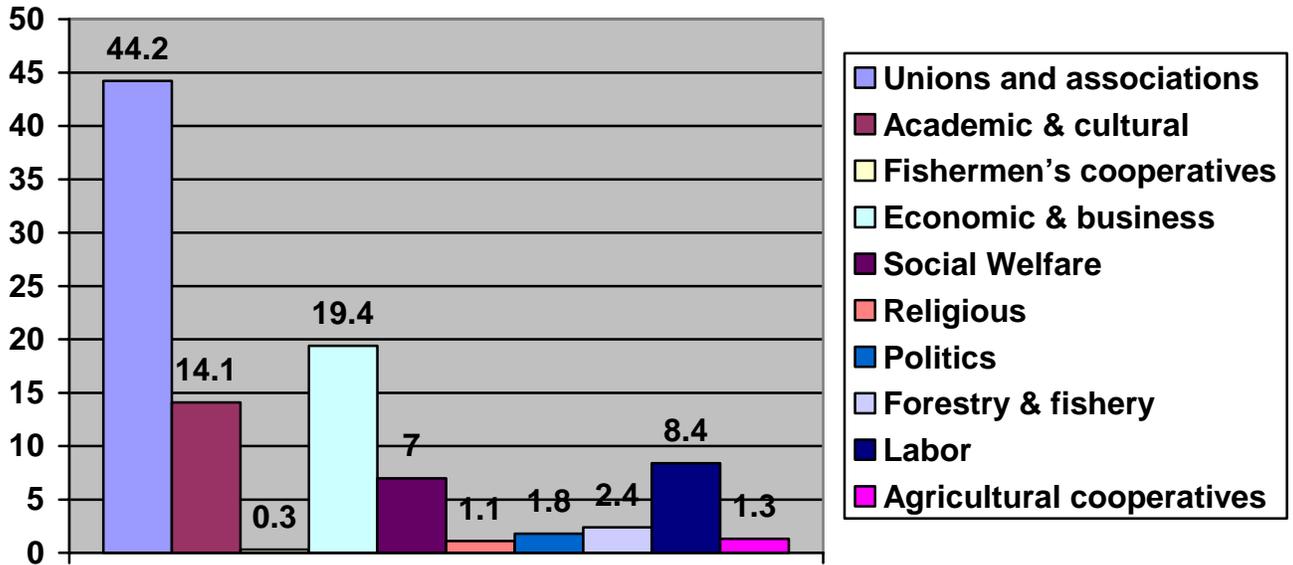
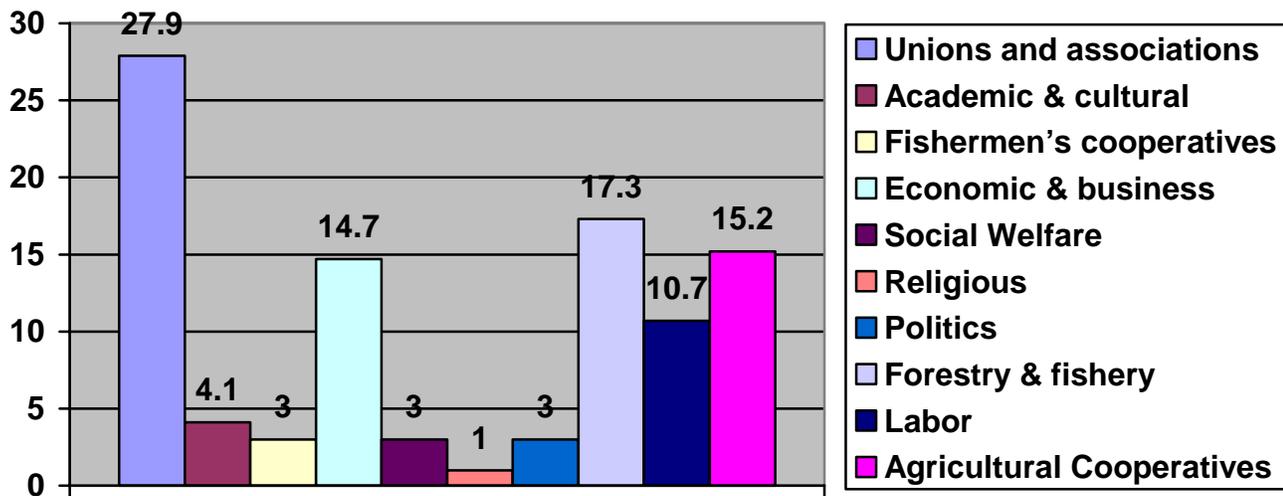


Figure 4: Distribution of Main Activity of Group--Ibaraki Valid Responses (by Phonebook Classification)



We have presented a breakdown of the types of groups investigated in the JIGS survey. There are other important factors to consider, such as the size of groups, legal status, etc. However, the most germane characteristic of the group for our paper is the overall purpose of the group.

IV. **What? On which policy issues are civil society organizations involved?**

Now that we have an idea who the civil society actors are, we will turn to the question of what their involvement is in a range of issues. However, “involvement” is a broad concept, and it also covers a range of degrees of activity. The JIGS survey has a number of questions and sub-questions that allow us to disaggregate this concept, and quantify involvement at a variety of levels. We investigate this “involvement” in terms of (1) self-reported expression of interest in an issue, (2) different activities engaged in on an issue, (3) and, relationship with various other political actors. We report in this section on interests and in the next section on activities and relationships with other political actors.

Interest in an Issue

One fairly low threshold of involvement is whether or not the organization reports that it has an interest in a particular issue. The survey has a question specifically at this level of involvement. The question breaks down 22 areas of policy and asks the group if it is interested in these policy areas: “Among national and local public policies, which policy or activity areas are you interested in?” And, here we present one of the main findings of our paper: Nearly all of the organizations responded that they are interested in one of the 22 public policy areas.

Recall that the organizations we examined are selected randomly from a phone directory, and that they are by no means necessarily well known. Such a result implies strongly that all of these organizations have an interest in public policy. This is in fact a quite important finding, because it further implies that civil society organizations *in general* have an interest in public policy.

We also were able to investigate the intersection of group type with interest in particular public policy issue areas. One fairly predictable result of this analysis is that organizations are particularly interested in the public policy issues close to their predominant activity. So, 97% of agricultural organizations are interested in agricultural policies, and nearly all labor organizations (95%) are interested in labor policies, and welfare organizations (91%) are interested in welfare policies.

Another result is that there are some issue areas in which most groups express an interest. One example is environmental policy, where most of the organization showed a high interest (political organizations 59%; civil organizations 57%, economic organizations 44%; professional organizations 42%; labor organizations 40%; and agricultural organizations 40%). Generally in Tokyo, many organizations showed interests in new policies related to civic activities such as welfare, environment, education/sports, international, and consumers. Next is policies related to the economy and special interests such as industry, finance, money, international trade and industry, regional development, telecommunication, and construction. Organizations' interests toward traditionally state-related policies such as foreign policy, human rights, security, and public safety were relatively low. We found that there are several layers of policy interests among organizations. The results were quite different in Ibaraki. In Ibaraki, the first group (or layer) includes policies related to economic and special interest.

New, “civic” policies came in next. Traditionally state-related policies came in last.

Organization that showed interests in more than five policy issue areas were political (69%), labor (61%), and economic (56%) organizations. Moreover, 40% of civic, professional, agricultural, and educational organization, and less than 30% of administrative, and welfare organization showed interests in more than five policy areas. There are two types of organization: one that has a wide variety of interests, and the other more focused. However, almost all organizations have policy interests in welfare, environment, and finance. Policy interests in Ibaraki are slightly higher than in Tokyo. Moreover, organizations in Ibaraki are interested in a wider variety of policy issues areas.

Another question on the JIGS survey asked groups about the scale of their activities, meaning the geographic range in which they were active. The answers could be local level (*shichouson*), prefectural level, regional, national, or international. We also found that the scale of the organization’s activities seemed to have a relationship to the types of issues the group expressed an interest in. For example, groups that claimed operation on an international level expressed interest in international cooperation issues (*kokusai kyouryoku*) (67.2%) and foreign policy (22.9%), but groups that operated only on a prefectural level expressed little interest in international cooperation issues (13.7%) or foreign policy (5.2%). Groups active on the national level were in general not very interested in international issues. For example, foreign policy (7.8%) and national security policy (6.5%) are among the least popular policy issues among the organization surveyed, ranking along with legal and human rights policies (7.7%).

We also found that groups that operated on different scales relied on different sources of information. For example, local groups relied more on other groups than any other source of information, followed closely by local governments. On the other hand, groups active on the

international scale relied on specialists more than any other information source, and very little on local governments.

V. **How? What means do civil society organizations use to influence policy?**

As any academic knows, interest, however defined or measured, is one thing, but taking action is quite another. In this section, we use the JIGS data to investigate what kinds of actions civil society organizations take. We also probe the relationship that the JIGS groups have with other political actors.

Activities on an Issue

Although interest in policy issues is universal, only about half of the groups are active in lobbying in more than one issue area. The JIGS survey asks about 7 types of activities, and if the group reports such activity, their answer is counted as expressing action or activity on that issue. The activities include contacting the ruling party, contacting the opposition party, contacting the central bureaucracy, holding a mass meeting, running an opinion ad in the mass media, holding a press conference, and forming an alliance or coalition with other groups. We found that 43 percent of organizations in Tokyo checked one of those seven activities. In other sets of questions, 30 to 60 percent of the groups answer positively to one of the activities included in the questions. Moreover, 40 to 60 percent of groups either participated or showed support to one of the twelve major policy events in the 1980s and 90s. This is to say about half of civil society organizations are actively involved in policy processes as an interest group or a pressure group. Another fact is that 10 to 20 percent of the groups show active support with a clear political party preference on issues related to election campaign, party contact, policy proposal, budget activities, and advisory council (*shingikai*) participation. In both Japan and

Korea, 10 to 20 percent of groups believe that they have quite strong influence over policy enforcement and policy revision. Most of the activities are highly correlated with self-evaluated influence. However, we simply want to state that 10 to 20 percent of the groups are in fact engaged in political activities.

Again, although interest is near universal, activity reveals specific patterns. Overall, we surmise that political and agricultural organizations are the most active, followed by labor, civic, economic organizations. Political, agricultural, citizens and labor organizations rate themselves relatively high in self-evaluated influence ranking. Through our analysis, we find different levels of engagement, actor relationships, and behavior patterns according to different types of groups. As discussed, all groups are interested in policy. There are issues that 60 to 80 percent of organizations engage in lobbying activities. At least 15 percent of groups participate in election campaign, a very political and partisan activity.

Table 2: Type of Political Activity by % of Groups Engaged in It

Type of Activity	% of Groups Engaged
Political Aim	56
Public Enlightenment	27
Policy Recommendation	17
Defending Rights	26
Cooperative Relationship with the Administration	14
Lobby central bureaucracy through politicians	31
Lobby local governments through politicians	27
Lobby either local or national government through politicians	38
Contact ruling party	16
Contact mass media	16
Overall lobbying	43
-coalitions with other groups	8
-mass gatherings	6
-paid advertisements	4
Offering Jobs to Retiring Bureaucrats	10
Election Campaigning	15
-mobilize members for voting	11
-provide staff support for election campaign	5

Relationship to Other Political Actors

The JIGS survey also included a number of questions designed to measure the relationship between civil society organizations and other political actors, including the central bureaucracy, local government, and local and national politicians, of course, but also with other occasional political actors, such as academics, mass media, welfare organizations, and other civil society organizations. The question posed to the JIGS groups was, “What kind of a relationship does this organization have to yours? Please answer on a 7 point scale from ‘highly oppositional’ to ‘very cooperative.’” So, an entity that every JIGS group reported as having a very cooperative relationship to its own would score a perfect 7, and conversely an entity reported as oppositional to all JIGS groups would score a 1. More generally, scores over 4 mean that entities have a more cooperative relationship with the JIGS groups than adversarial.

We review these figures only for groups active at the national level. We discovered that only group to score under 4 was foreign interest groups. On the other hand, the entity reported as having the most cooperative relationship with the JIGS groups was the central bureaucracy (4.67), followed by academics (4.54), local autonomy (4.48), mass media (4.44), welfare organizations (4.39), political parties (4.35), and big business (4.29). However, the standard deviation for bureaucracy is higher than for any other entity (1.19), thus we need to look at the relationship between the bureaucracy and other individual organizations separately. The organizations that are the most cooperative with the bureaucracy consider themselves administrative organizations (5.15), and next are economic organizations (4.91) and agricultural organizations (4.86), followed by professional organizations (4.68), and groups involved in welfare (4.63) and education. Groups that identify themselves as citizens groups (shimin dantai) are much less likely (4.08) to consider their relationship with the bureaucracy as cooperative, followed by political organizations (4.0) which are neutral, and labor organizations, which are the only type of group to view the bureaucracy antagonistically (3.36).

Next, let us examine which group (the administration, political party, and the courts) does organizations active in various geographical areas target to press their claims. A JIGS question asks, “When you try to make your organization’s opinion heard or defend the interest of your organization, which one of the three (the administration, political party, and the court) do you think is most effective to contact?” We broke the responses to this question down by the scale of activity for the organizations (local to international). At every level, the administration is targeted as the most effective to contact by a substantial margin, followed by political parties and the court. When we look closer, however, there are a few patterns to be found within those broad trends. For example, organizations active regionally tend to choose

political parties more than those with different scopes of activity. Organizations active at city/town/village level and wide area target the court more than any other organizations. The gap between the administration and political parties becomes the smallest for organizations that operate regionally. The reason why organizations covering wide area do not choose the administration is perhaps because there is no institution to cover such an unconventional area—Japan has no regional governments.

We also examined in greater detail the relationship the JIGS organizations have with state administrative organizations at the national and local levels. When JIGS organizations and the administration engage in interaction, who meets whom? In our survey, we asked, “When your organization directly contact the administration, which person (rank) do you meet?” At the national level, we provided four answers to choose from: minister/bureau director-level, chief-level, chief-clerk level, and the rank and file. As for local level, the four choices are head-level, chief-level, chief-clerk level, and the rank and file. If at least one of the positions out of four were chosen, we consider that the organization has contact with the administration.⁴ These are the results reported as the first question in Table 3 below.

Also, in this survey, we asked a series of questions regarding the JIGS organizations’ relationships with the state administrative organizations and with local autonomy. The questions are summarized in Table 3, along with the percent of JIGS groups that reported such a relationship at *either* the national or local level. For example, although the first question asks JIGS groups to report some interaction with the government at either the local or national level, 72.6% of groups have some interaction at one level or the other. We explore these patterns in more detail shortly. For the moment, what stands out is the fairly high percent of groups that

⁴ The original question asked the frequency of contact, but here we do not. Organization can be divided into those that did have a contact and those did not. Even if organization did not have much contact, those are considered as “having contact.”

report receiving administrative guidance (44.5%). This figure is actually higher than the number of groups who report that their activities are regulated by the bureaucracy. Of course, groups' perception of this regulation could vary, but their ability to discern, and therefore report, administrative guidance is likely very high. In addition, the JIGS organizations are likely quite accurate in reporting sending organization members to advisory committees, offering jobs to retired bureaucrats, and receiving grants or subsidies. For these figures, it is interesting to note that the ratio of groups offering jobs to bureaucrats to groups getting subsidies is about 1:2.

Table 3: Relationship of JIGS Organizations to National and Local Bureaucracy

Question	“Yes” at National Level	“Yes” at Local Level
Do you have some interaction with the government?	58.4	46.3
Does the bureaucracy have permitting authority?	37.3	21.6
Do they regulate your activities?	32.6	18.6
Do they give your organization administrative guidance?	44.5	25.7
Do you support and cooperate in the policy-making processes and budget making processes?	13.9	9.7
Do you exchange information regarding organization and industries?	35.0	23.4
Do you send your organization members to advisory committees?	13.0	9.0
Do you offer jobs to retired bureaucrats?	8.4	2.9
Do you receive grants or subsidies?	13.5	10.8

Some organizations have a stronger relationship or more frequent interaction with either local government or the national government. In fact, our analysis reveals there are four contact patterns: (1) contact both the central government and local government, (2) contact only the central government, (3) contact only the local government, and (4) contact neither. Contact pattern differ greatly according to area of activity. Organizations active in city/town/village and in prefectural levels tend to contact local autonomy only,

while national-level organization contact the state only. Many organizations active on the regional level and international levels tend to contact both the state and local autonomy. This may be due to the fact that activity areas and (administrative) regions do not match. Less than 30% of organizations contact neither local nor central government.

Organizations contact the administration not only directly, but also indirectly. In order to grasp how organizations contact the administration indirectly, we asked, “Which person do you ask to contact the administration?” The choices are: (1) diet members from the local district, (2) diet members not from the local district, and (3) chief of the municipalities and local assembly persons. To contact local government, the choices are: (1) diet members, (2) prefectural or city assemblymen, and (3) powerful people in the area.⁵ In general, the most popular answer for indirect contact was “Diet members not from the local district.” However, the percentage that chose this answer was 24% and this is much less than contact directly. Organizations that are active at prefectural and regional levels contact local diet members, while those active at regional and national levels contact Diet members not from the district. Organizations active on the regional level also contact chiefs and local representatives. These results show that in order to influence diet members, the area of activity needs to be large. Moreover, those that have indirect contact with political parties tend to use politicians (Diet members, local representatives, chiefs). There are organizations that attempt direct contact with the administration, but also ask politicians to contact the administration. The percentage of indirect contact with local autonomy through politicians (11-23%) is not as large as direct contact (46.3%). Organization active at prefectural and city/town/village levels tend to contact local representatives.

⁵ The original question asked the frequency of contact, but here we do not. Organization can be divided into those that did have a contact and those did not. Even if organization did not have much contact, those are considered as “having contact.”

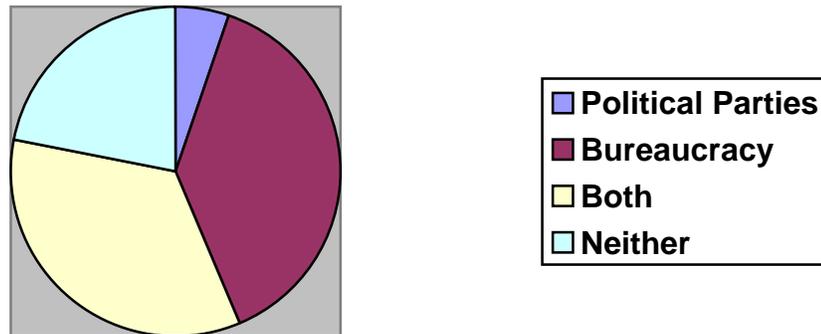
The JIGS survey also asked about consultations regarding policy between the government and the JIGS organizations. The question is phrased as, “Do national and local administrative organizations contact your organization to ask for advice concerning the making and enforcement of a particular policy? If so, please list all the organizations that contacted you.” Among organizations active at the national level (690), 240 (34.8%) of them wrote specific names of the organizations that contacted them. Moreover, of the 240 organizations, 62 (25.9%) listed more than one organization (maximum 5).⁶ The most active relationships are those between the economic ministries and economic organizations. In fact, those consultations (45 between METI and economic, business, or trade organizations alone) number three times more than *all* consultants of any ministry to any citizens group, political group, and welfare group combined (14). Moreover, the economic ministries, in particular METI, engaged in contact more frequently than any other ministry. They made 83 consultations, versus only one for the Defense Agency, 4 for the Environmental Agency, and 14 for the Ministry of Labor. Similarly, economic organizations engaged in the most consultations. They engaged in 97 consultations with 17 Ministries or Agencies. We see here the clear dominance of the economic in the interactions between JIGS organizations and the government. This is one result that stands out. Another result is the emergence of two types of patterns. Some groups are “specialists” and others “generalists.” For example, educational groups are specialists. They engaged in 28 consultations, but most were with the Ministry of Education (86.4%) and only with the Ministry of Education did they engage in consultation more than once. Other specialists are agricultural organizations, which have close relationships with the Ministry of

⁶ If organization answered several related organizations of the same ministry, we do not consider that the organization has a close relation with multiple numbers of administrative organizations. We need to note that since the survey was conducted by free reply model by mail, there were some inconsistencies with the reply. Some were too general but others were very detailed with specific names. Hence, the measurement of this reply can not be as rigorous as some other responses.

Forestry and Fishery and its related organizations. Almost all of consultations between agricultural organizations and government involved the Ministry of Forestry and Fishery (91.7%). Similarly, economic organization tended to be involved with METI (68.2% of contacts) and welfare organization with Ministry of Welfare and its related organizations (66.7%). On the other hand, citizens groups engaged six times in consultations with separate ministries or agencies. They are “generalists,” and lonely ones at that.

But, of course the bureaucracy is not the only political actor in Japan to lobby. What about political parties? As it turns out, although many JIGS organizations worked with the local and national bureaucracy, relatively few of them chose to contact political parties. Are there perhaps some groups that orient towards political parties while others work closely with the bureaucracy? Figure 4 presents a graphical depiction of these patterns. Most organizations engage in interaction *only with the bureaucracy* (38.2%), while almost none choose to work only with political parties (5.4%). Of course, many groups engage in contact with the bureaucracy and political parties (34.4%). However, this finding underscores the centrality of the bureaucracy to the lives of JIGS organizations and to the policy-making process in general.

Figure 4: JIGS Organizations' Interactions with Political Actors



VI. Conclusion

We have discussed the wide policy interest of JIGS organizations, and examined in some detail their activities and efforts towards influencing the policy-making process. But, how successful have those efforts been? Stated more broadly, how much can civil society organizations influence the policy-making process in Japan?

We begin with some caveats and revisit our discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the JIGS survey. The JIGS survey is not an ideal instrument through which to measure actual policy change. It measures and reports the perceptions of the organizations, not actual policy change per se. It also relies on how organizations view the policy-making process, rather than examining through process tracing what actually happens. In this sense, case studies are superior to the JIGS survey in evaluating the influence of civil society organizations on policy-making in Japan. However, the JIGS survey also has some concomitant advantages due to its scope and scale. It covers a wide range of issue areas and organizations. Moreover, taking advantage of the surveys in other countries mentioned above, we can make some tentative cross-national comparisons.

The JIGS survey asked groups to report on achieving success in influencing (or changing) policy. However, only 14.3% of JIGS organizations reported such success. This was lower than Korea and less than half of what German organizations reported (32.5%) in the German version of the JIGS survey and a third of what the Russian organizations reported (46.5%) in the Russian version of the JIGS survey. Japanese groups also reported little success (6.5%) in blocking policies. Again, this was less than Korean groups (11.1%) and much less than the Russian (21.2%) and German groups (26.3%). At least in terms of groups' perception

of their own success, Japanese groups do not have much influence over policy-making in absolute or comparative terms.

One question in the JIGS survey asked the organizations to report their evaluations of other actors' influence over policy. Specifically, we asked, "How much influence do groups listed below have on Japanese politics? Please rate from the scale of 1 to 7 (7 being the strongest)." Although this necessarily relies on their perceptions rather than some "objective" measure of real influence, these groups are often intimately involved in the policy-making process and have a good sense of where the real power and influence lies. In a sense, too, this replicates interviews done in case studies in which researchers ask about who has influence, but on a much broader scale. We are able to rank which groups JIGS organizations feel are the most powerful in Japan. We also are able to compare these rankings with similar ones from the JIGS surveys in Korea, Germany, and the United States.

The central bureaucracy is perceived as the most powerful entity in Japan, with an average score of 6.32 out of seven. The bureaucracy's only real rivals are political parties (6.12). Women's groups are perceived as weakest (3.42), barely exceeded by the category of "NGO-citizens groups-residents movement groups" (3.48) and welfare groups (3.49). Foreign governments are seen as powerful (5.18), nearly the level of some significant domestic players, such as agricultural groups (5.22), the mass media (5.32), big corporations (5.38), economic groups and managers (5.65).

These rankings are interesting in themselves, as they reflect the JIGS organizations view of the world. However, they are also interesting in comparative perspective. Compared to the other three countries mentioned above, bureaucracy, agricultural organizations, foreign governments, international organizations, and foreign interest groups are ranked much higher

in Japan. Local government was ranked slightly higher or about the same in all four countries. Mass media, labor organizations, consumer groups, NGOs, civil organizations, and citizens movement organizations were ranked lower in Japan compared to other three countries. Women's organizations and academics ranked slightly lower or about the same. Political parties, economic and business organizations, big firms, and social welfare organizations in Japan were ranked at a similar position as in other three countries. We cannot be certain about the relationship between the results from our survey and the actual political power, but we were able to find some similarities and differences of the four countries surveyed. When we focus on the rankings, the pattern found in Germany was the closest to that of Japan, and the United States' pattern was most different. Korea's ranking falls somewhere in the middle.

Our paper has explored the interests, activities, and success of civil society organizations in influencing public policy making in Japan. Our primary tool has been the quantitative data from the JIGS data. This tool has uncovered some surprising results, and also provided additional evidence in support of widely suspected patterns.