The Effects of Japanese Civil Society on Policy-Making

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I. Introduction

My interest in this project began after studying Japan for four years as an undergraduate and realizing I knew relatively little of the country's political atmosphere. I assumed after reading Western political scholars' views on the subject, that it was a relatively homogonous nation and only after the Occupational Authority entered Japan had the country emerged with democratic ideals and a true notion of liberal rights. It is true that citizens' movements are a comparatively recent modern phenomenon in a country filled with millennia of rich cultural and political history. Still today, however numbers of Westerners, including some scholars, see Japan through Orientalism's foreign and exotic eyes and continue the assumption that hierarchy rules politics and the working class disengages themselves from day-to-day politics.

This paper not only attempts to present a broad understanding of Japan's political history, but also show how civil society has transformed from early Meiji society to post World War II restructuring. While outsiders believe democracy and liberal rights are an inherently novel part of Japanese culture, this paper illustrates the historical basis for a rich electorate, thriving with individual and interpersonal interest in freedom, rights, and the political environment around them.

The cleavages that divide civil society and the government policy-making in Japan have been written about at length. The groups examined in this paper, including the Meiji Popular Rights Movement and the post World War II environmental movement, formed organizations to address the conflict that constantly attacked their personal values. In each case, the government refused to proactively respond, from the lack of representation during the late 19th century to the pollution that destroyed lands and lives

in the 1960s and 1970s. Both of these groups asked for policy changes from local governments in order to promote their efforts through political participation, and some of these measures progressed to national levels. From the beginning of the Meiji Restoration to today, Japan exhibits dramatic progressive political awareness and engagement, therefore I deny any allegation that Japan was undemocratic until General MacArthur's restructuring in 1945.

Throughout the scholarly debate and the execution of factual evidence, three problems arise in the comparative analysis of the two examples. The first consists of the argument that Japan's civil society, specific to the two time periods analyzed in this paper, was formulated directly within and of the state. Sheldon Garon and other authors assert that the centralized bureaucratic elite Japanese government formed civil society institutions to support its own political initiatives. The evidence shows this is not the case in these two examples. The second problem arises when scholars attempt to find historical similarities between two completely separate events. I attempt to identify strong similarities between the Popular Rights Movement and the post war environmental movement, even though a century separates these two pieces of Japan's civil society. The third problem addresses the idea that civil society does not influence policy-making, but is simply an unrelated part of the policy-making process. I argue that strong grassroots movements and the efforts of dedicated participants dramatically affected Japan's local and national policy change.

To begin examining these problems, the broad base of scholarly literature must be discussed for a firm background to Japan's political history and the current discourse on civil society in Japan. After this background, the paper carefully details the political

atmosphere of the Popular Rights Movement and the post war environmental citizens'

movement. Final analysis addresses how these two examples hold up to modern scholars'

criticisms of Japan's policy-making changes in response to civil society's actions.

II. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The term "civil society" has been debated for centuries. The contemporary

scholarly debate surrounding Japanese civil society is rich with ideas and opposing

theories. The theoretical background for this research includes research from some of the

most well known Japanese and Western political scholars who have studied Japanese

civil society from within. The term "civil society" has many meanings, and it must be

examined through the eyes of these scholars in order to understand its application to

policy-making.

While the term civil society is a broad idea, numerous scholars have attempted to

specify their own interpretations of its boundaries and application to politics. Historical

political theorists like Thomas Hobbes think civil society is complementary to the state,

and while civil society cannot replace the government, it is inherently impacted by public

policy (Schwartz 28). Contemporary American scholar, Frank Schwartz, believes civil

society is autonomously organized through non-compulsory groups in a democratic,

respectful, and civil manner (Schwartz 33). Susan Pharr sees civil society as being

organized apart from state, economic, and familial institutions in a sustained and social

setting (Pharr xii). The Japanese dictionary, *Kojien*, defines civil society as a "modern

society composed of free and equal individuals, having abolished all privileges, control

by status or relations of subordination. Advocated in the 17th and 18th centuries by Locke

and Rousseau" (Barshay 63). Japanese scholars such as Tsujinaka Yutaka believe civil society can be composed of any three of either state-recognized institutions, social establishments or simply put "active groups" (Tsujinaka 85).

Defining this broad idea of "civil society" also requires us to study the people who comprise these organizations and movements. A contemporary European example includes Solidarity in Poland during the Cold War. But who are these people in Japan's civil society? While the definitions above show disagreement in the specific groups included in this changing context, Tamura Shigeru includes everyone from trade organizations, labor unions, non-profit corporations, volunteer groups, school, medical, and religious organizations, neighborhood groups and economic organizations (164). Civil society could be the bible study next door, the local sustainable development cooperative or the Japan Federation of Labor. The citizens who dedicate themselves to these groups are as diverse as the organizations themselves. Brazilian immigrants of Japanese descent, farmers, prefectural governors, radical student activists, conservative religious worshipers, traditionalist Japanese families, young liberal women, and thousands of other classifiers identify the people who compose Japan's abundant civil society. Why do these participants, who have seemingly nothing in common, join to advocate their thoughts through civil society? John Creighton Campbell assesses the reasoning for this by concluding that certain groups of individuals repeatedly conflict with other groups in order to change policy, and these non-random "cleavages" allow one to understand civil society's activism and desire for policy change (295).

The first problem with this body of literature begins with the prevailing Japanese scholarly idea that the Japanese government created its own civil society institutions.

Sheldon Garon outlines this field of writing that identifies the imperial centralized government as leaving relatively few public spaces for civil society unless organizations were mobilized for politically motivated reasons (Garon 43). In fact, this school of thought contends the Japanese vernacular did not utilize the term "civil society" until after World War II (Garon 43). Garon maintains the term "civil society," or *shimin shakai,* did not enter common speech until post war citizens' movements. Garon agrees that scholars understood the idea of society, but because the nation was increasingly centralized, the thought of citizens owning society was foreign. Citizens did not see themselves as individuals, but as subjects under the imperial authority (43).

The other side of this debate argues that civil society is wholly independent from the state. Garon believes that civil society exists in a space between being fully controlled by the government and completely independent of state control (43). While Garon himself does not agree with either extreme or the other, he argues that the turn of the century inspired the Japanese government to organize civil society by "mobilizing [civil] society for the purpose of governance" (48). He contends that most organizations at this period of Japan's history did not oppose the state, but rather agreed to work with the Meiji government, which allowed for more state control (Garon 48). His examples include the Imperial Agricultural Association and other groups formed under the 1900 Producers' Cooperative Law (Garon 50). With increasing centralization came more interaction between the state and citizens' organizations. Garon claims this gave way not only for groups to work with the state but also for the state to have more control over these civil society institutions. Garon believes the post war environmental citizens' movements lacked the liberal values necessary to create long-lasting change and that

local elections remained conservative (Garon 60). This evidence ignores the vast number

of statistics that show how conservative 1960s governments were overthrown by

communist and socialist party members by election platforms vowing to end pollution

(Muramatsu 44). While Garon contends that citizens' movements blended back into the

woodwork, Muramatsu and other scholars point out how local governments experienced

lasting changes due to the political ramifications of pollution's devastation.

The second problem within this debate is the historical compatibility between two

movements in different point of time, the idea that separate events may have historical

connections. Scholars such as Susan Pharr contend that it is imperative to examine the

historical factors of Japan's "civic legacy" to understand how it affects contemporary

civil society (Pharr 2003 xiv). Susan Pharr argues that the Meiji period provides

researchers a unique opportunity to study civil society because Japan was transitioning

from an authoritarian state to a more democratic nation in terms of opportunities for

citizen involvement (Pharr xiv).

Frank Upham, a prominent Japanese legal scholar, agrees with Pharr that

historical examinations are critical to understanding contemporary citizens' movements.

He finds institutional similarities between 19th century citizens' movements and the

1960s-70s environmental movement because they both exhibit patterns of appealing to

local authorities with petitions followed by "collective action" in the form of sit-in or

protest marches (Upham 72-3). Regardless of the year in history, groups utilized this

method of activism; this emotional form of protest was meant to invoke sympathy from

the public and officials. Additionally, both in Meiji and post war periods, institutional

responses form the government occurred because the Popular Rights and environmental

movements were successful at gaining public opinion (73). The environmental movement

organized outside of political institutions in Japan and remained free from partisan,

business, or bureaucratic influence (Upham 55). 1960s and 1970s civil society consisted

of authentic grassroots organizations that promoted local politics to achieve policy

changes rather than pay allegiance to national bureaucrats that ignored their plights (55).

  S.N. Eisenstadt also uses a comparative historical perspective to claim that from

the beginning of the Meiji period through the post World War II era, reformers tried to

change political institutions through the radical, "liberal" approaches of protest and

citizens' movements (Eisenstadt 117). Eisenstadt agrees that similarities exist within

these movements because they hold related ideas on the processes to achieve policy

change. Both movements began with small groups who concentrated their efforts at local

councils and municipalities in order to promote their causes. Eisenstadt contends that the

Meiji Restoration marked the establishment of a more privatized political culture within

civil society, where groups autonomously advocated personal freedoms (118). Eisenstadt

implicitly disagrees with Garon's analysis that civil society is created within the state or

to work in conjunction with the government. Instead, he argues, these groups "rarely

directly (author's emphasis) challenge" the government without promoting autonomous,

egalitarian, and sometimes anti-state ideas (119).

  The third and final aspect of scholarly debate on civil society centers on the idea

of the national government's policy responses to citizens' movements. Citizens'

movements, as Muramatsu Michio describes, are created with explicit goals to influence

national policy making (Muramatsu 41). Starting with the environmental movement in

the 1960s and 70s, Muramatsu argues that citizens' movements are a major factor of the

national government's long-term plans (41). During the 1960s and 1970s disengaged and disillusioned citizens became increasingly interested in local environmental movements because participants realized saw their actions directly influence national policy.

David Apter found that during the post war environmental movement citizens participated in protests because they felt the policy-making system of the status quo respond to movement's demands. The 1960s and 1970s political structures did not proactively enact policies that benefited the welfare of Japanese citizens. Civil society organizations, Apter writes,

> shared the belief that they could not effectively utilize the prevailing structures of political participation in order to affect government policy and that the regular institutional means of politics prevented rather than facilitated the proper flow of appropriate information (228).

The nation's elite led the post war Liberal Democratic Party government. An increase in civil society participation stemmed from the idea that each individual citizen had the power to change the government's policy-making decisions to better promote the self-interests of the middle and lower classes. From Meiji to the contemporary environmental movements, policy changes did not occur until the public was sympathetic citizens' movements and local policy makers were convinced to change current procedures.

Sheila Smith and Patricia Steinhoff also give numerous contemporary examples of how grassroots movements enacted change at national levels by working with local politics. From information disclosure acts and NGO responses to military bases and local economic development, Smith concludes that citizens' movements transformed the way policy is made in Japan even today (Smith ix). Steinhoff notes that, prior to the Meiji restoration, the *kan-* (bureaucrats) *min* (people) relationship rested on the idea of *kan*

ruling the *min* (Steinhoff 115). The 1868 government transformed these two groups into a symbiotic relationship where *min* became a part of *kan* through constitution changes and citizens' movements. The fact that citizens valued politics as an avenue to advance their own interests directly impacted the movements that inspired policy changes.

III. Case Studies

Over 3,200 municipalities represent the 126 million people that live on the island of Japan. This makes it extremely difficult to analyze how civil society effects policy change on a broad scale, but allows one to examine specific examples of local movements. The two movements discussed, the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement of the late 19th century and the post war environmental citizens' movement are excellent examples to utilize for two reasons. First, these movements began with small organizations that progressed to national levels to implement their policy goals. Second, the vast difference in the movements' goals represents how many different civil society organizations exist within Japan and why so many citizens believe in the power of these organizations.

Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, Meiji 1868-1912

Susan Pharr writes that the Meiji government provided "a unique laboratory for thinking about how organized social life outside the state fares under conditions ranging from authoritarianism to quasi-democracy to fascism and to liberal democracy" (Pharr 2003 xiv). The Freedom and Popular Rights movement formed after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 when the Japanese shogunate was relieved of power in a *coup d'etat.*

This "restoration" of power symbolized the disintegration of *hōken,* or decentralized, feudal hierarchy known to Japan for nearly three centuries in the form of the Bakufu and shogunate system (Beasley 300). Through the following examination of both the rhetoric and institutions that supported this movement, this paper proves that the Popular Rights Movement comprised the beginnings of Meiji's civil society.

The Meiji Restoration brought about two significant impacts: it not only dismantled the feudal hereditary hierarchical systems that were obstacles to civil society, but it also opened Japan to Western thought and discourse including ideas about liberal society and a free economy. First, the Meiji government disbanded all forms of class inequality that previously led to occupational discrimination (Silberman 169). With the elimination of hierarchical leadership, citizens could marry among peasants and samurai and participate in all economic occupations without the worry of status or money (172). The government emphasized political equality through its policy-making decisions to remove nobility lines.

The second transformation after 1868 was the influx of Western ideas into the country creating rhetoric allowing groups to question governmental policies. With scholars and activists reading the thoughts of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty,* they too contemplated the ideas of utilitarianism and natural rights. Western scholarly thought provided them with stronger rhetoric with which they questioned the power of the Meiji government. These influences strongly affected the way in which politics were organized in Meiji years.

The Popular Rights Movement began in 1874 with Itagaki Taisuke and Goto Shojiro, who used John Stuart Mill's political theory to question whether radical political

reforms would end the tyranny of authoritative government officials (Duus 108). Their manifesto demanded the government implement a *kōgisho*, or representative body in the form of a national council. After the government rejected this request, Itagaki and Goto organized the Popular Rights Movement under the name *Risshisha* to organize public opinion and educate citizens on natural and human rights the Japanese government should uphold (108).

One of the movement's initial problems was that its leaders were former political and upper class figures. Its leadership consisted of hierarchical elites including previous Bakufu members, former samurai, village leaders, and upper class peasants constituted. As Peter Duus describes, disaffected samurai did not believe lower class citizens had the ability to govern themselves. These leaders were proven wrong, however, after the movement integrated many other lower class citizens including lower class peasants, entrepreneurs, local officials, journalists, school teachers, and common laborers (109). J. Victor Koschmann's argues that a movement cannot exist until it transcends class lines. After *Rissisha* was formed, the former hierarchies of the Tokugawa period were long since history because the leaders of the Popular Rights Movement realized the power in numbers. With the integration of lower classes and diverse citizenry into the movement, it truly became a movement of the people (193).

To further their cause, the movement purchased advertisements and wrote editorials in newspapers encouraging people to protest for a constitution that reflected an egalitarian agreement between the government and the people (Duus 110). In the early 1880s, over six hundred *seishi,* political associations, organized to promote the idea of a national assembly and equal rights. One of these organizations, the League for the

Establishment of a National Assembly, organized local political associations to make their case for a national assembly. Mass distribution of pamphlets, newspaper editorials, temple speeches, visible protests, school and shrine sit-ins demonstrated the movement's vigilance for fair representation. With fifty-five petitions circulating with signatures demanding for a government response, Peter Duus explains, "it was the first time in Japan's history that pressure-group tactics were systematically organized on a national scale" (110).

In 1878, the movement achieved one of its goals when the Meiji government established prefectural assemblies representing[1] its constituents. Another goal was achieved with the ratification of a national constitution in 1889 that incorporated the idea of natural rights and democratic representation. The Meiji Constitution stated that the emperor had direct powers of the emperor including commander-in-chief of the military, the ability to adjourn or prolong the national assembly, the Diet, and the right to appoint cabinet members. While these were extremely broad power, members of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement declared victory because of the constitution's explicit protection of freedoms of speech, assembly, association and religion (Beasley 217). The Popular Rights Movement believed the "emperor and people should rule together" or *kunmin dochi*, and therefore the Meiji Constitution designated power to the imperial authority within the proper constraints of the people's will (Duus 125).

The movement approved of this constitution because of its protection of the common citizen's freedoms and representation within the Diet. With no other immediate goals to be fulfilled the movement dissipated, but the repercussions and memories of the movement lived on (Duus 110). The Freedom and Popular Rights provided the

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[1] The right to vote for representatives was still given solely to landowning males (Duus 109).

foundation for a strong Japanese civil society, challenged the Meiji government to represent the views of the common citizen and "legitimized a new kind of political dissent" (114).

Environmental Citizens' Movement, 1960s-70s

Almost a century after the Meiji Restoration, a new form of political dissent swept through Japan. After the devastating defeat of World War II, the nation lay ravaged, both politically and economically. As the government attempted to recover from humiliation, a new hand began to transform Japanese policy making: the sweeping hand of the citizens' movement.

Citizens' movements, as Muramatsu Michio describes, were movements "composed of groups of local residents whose actions were intended to influence government decision making" (Muramatsu 41). Starting with the environmental movement in the 1960s and 70s, Muramatsu argues that citizens' movements were a major factor of the long-term plans of national and local governments (41). Citizens who had seldom previously engaged in politics increasingly became interested in local environmental changes and policy goals. The 1960s-70s environmental movement exhibited rhetorical and institutional similarities with the Meiji Popular Rights Movement.

World War II ravaged Japan's infrastructure with atomic bombs and incendiary raids. The Occupational Authority and General Douglas MacArthur, known to most Japanese as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), wanted to fulfill America's foreign policy goals to cultivate Japan into a peaceful, democratic country. In order to do so, a new constitution and a thriving economy were necessary. The new SCAP constitution brought many liberal democratic values to Japan including the idea of representing the will of the people. Article 21 guaranteed the freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and press as well as created a judiciary complete with supreme court

and judicial review (Duus 262). Article 92 in the new constitution stated the government's dedication to an increase in local authority through "redefining center-local relations as independent decision making and individual responsibility" (Furukawa 33). The goal was to decentralize Japan by drawing attention away from the emperor, making the position more of a figurehead (Garon 56).

The occupation removed the Peace Preservation Law of 1925 from the books, which permitted officials to disband organizations and expurgate news publications (Garon 57). The Trade Union Law was implemented in 1945, which allowed citizens to formally organize and participate in labor unions. Government bureaucracies were reorganized in 1947, beginning with the separation of the Ministry of Interior into eight divisions (Furukawa 25). A significant affect of this action changed prefectural gubernatorial elections to direct popular vote, rather than appointment by the central government. With dramatic bureaucratic changes, Japan was able to focus on economic recovery. Between 1955 and 1973, Japan's gross national product (GNP) rose an average of 10 percent each year, more than any other nation in the world (Duus 291).

The environmental landscape paid dearly for the dramatic success of post war industrialization. Large *kombinato,* or industrial sites, combined oil refineries, chemical plants, power generation plants and all other forms of heavy industries in the same area (Duus 318). With the majority of Japan's economy concentrated in a geographic area smaller than the California coastline, environmental degradation ensued. Landfills, smog, exhaust fumes, polluted beaches, and dyed rivers lay as evidence of Japan's number three worldwide economic ranking. Anti pollution protester exclaimed, "you'd wash something, hang it out to dry and it'd be black immediately" (Upham 39). Not only did

this pollution affect the environment, it also ruined people's health. Nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide filled the air causing asthma and respiratory failure (Broadbent 12). The "Minamata disease," a neurological disorder that led to eventual mental retardation, occurred when mercury leaked into streams and local residents ate the inhabiting fish (Duus 320). Other diseases included "itai-itai byō" which translates into "it hurts disease;" a disease that dissolved bone density, leading to brittle bones.

Middle class individuals responded to this national disaster by creating non-partisan grassroots citizens' movements. Their actions are further evidence of civil society in Japan (Duus 322). Frank Upham compares the environmental movement to the civil rights movement in America by pointing out that they employed local political tactics in a country whose history was filled with historical examples of centralized change. Citizens' movements organized around the local and regional environmental issues and aimed their efforts toward local governments for policy changes (Upham 54). One of the reasons behind middle class environmental activism in the 1960s and 1970s is due to the instability caused by the rapid growth. Formerly content citizens suddenly demanded for changes and "made political activism possible for the first time" (Muramatsu 43). The citizens' movement began with local protests in areas like Mishima-Nazumo, where government tests claimed oil refineries would not negatively impact residents (Broadbent 107). Through protests, local protesters placed pressure on the Nazumo town council to vote against the oil refinery development. After several massive waves of protests, local officials decided against the refinery (108).

Another example of local movements includes the case of Oita City. Broadbent described the atmosphere as a newly proposed industrial site was to enter the city,

> protestors filled the dimly lit hall outside the governor's office; thirty or forty made their way inside…a retired high-school teacher, the person of highest social status among the villagers, slowly stepped forward. He handed the governor a document stating the villagers' two central concerns: first that the smoke from the proposed factories would be trapped over their village by the mountains just behind, and second, that the landfill would destroy the coastal spawning beds for the red snapper, ruining the fishers' livelihoods (3).

Local villagers organized themselves into gropus to make municipal officials aware that citizens disapproved of the economic and industrial changes to their landscape. Nishio, a fisherman, exclaimed, "we got the same value as human beings…how come you have the right to kill me?" (Broadbent 3). This incident dramatizes the intensity and voracity of the way in which protesters attacked the problem of pollution

With the success of the Mishima-Nazumo and Oita City protesters, many more groups organized to protest. Over 3,000 anti-pollution groups like Tanaka Yukio's Friends of the Earth, Let's Get Together for Minamata, Fukugawa's Society for Health and Sanitation and Kanagawa's Green Trust Foundation organized by the 1970s with over 100,000 members in just these four organizations (Pharr 2003 329). Patricia Maclachlan classifies many of civil society's tactics as *kokuhatsugata,* or confrontational, "accusatory" means to address business and state representatives (224). Forms of protests included praying at local shrines, blockaded villages, staged sit-ins, picketing, and public forums (Broadbent 108). During the 1960s and 1970s, thirty-five organizations existed for every 100,000 persons (Tsujinaka 99). This shows how citizens' movements mobilized thousands of Japanese to enact political change. Hundreds of protests were directed at local political officials and businesses. At the height of the movement in 1973, over 120 protests occurred to organize local governmental opposition (108). Civil society

was thriving and actively persuading local governments to promote the ideas of every day individuals.

The environmental movement continued to create ways to voice their opinions and educate the public about the pollution that was destroying their local environments. Local governments who exhibited laissez-faire attitudes in their responses either responded to local groups and changed their policies or were voted out of office for more liberal policy makers (Upham 55). Local politics were reformed by socialist and communist elected officials, and this trend was felt at the national level after the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) majority suffered dramatic losses in the Diet, Japan's national parliament.

To placate the citizen's movements, the government passed the Basic Law against Pollution in 1971, but this did not suffice. The citizens' movements continued their efforts to reduce pollution. By the 1970s they pushed the government to create some of the strictest pollution standards in the world. The Law for the Resolution of Pollution Disputes incorporates the cooperation of local governments including Pollution Complaint Counselors and Prefectural Pollution Review Boards (Upham 57). The 1973 Law for the Compensation of Pollution-Related Injury addressed the health of families afflicted by pollution and required polluters to take responsibility for their actions by compensating victims for damages. Over 80,000 victims received 85 billion yen in compensation, or an equivalent of $425 million dollars (59). Additionally, boards were created that involved activists and local citizens in regards to formulating national environmental policy through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (59).The

1960s and 1970s environmental movement led to the creation of the former

Environmental Agency, now named the Ministry of the Environment (Tamura 163).

IV. Analysis

Freedom and Popular Rights Movement

When analyzing Japanese civil society it is important to understand whether or

not specific case studies exhibit the signs of being a part of civil society. While Sheldon

Garon claims that the idea of the Japanese citizens' movement is archaic and rests on

Western European assumptions of civil society, he ignores the contextual definitions of

grassroots organization in Japan. I disagree with his analysis because under the Popular

Rights Movement leadership of Itagaki Taisuke and Goto Shojiro, the idea of

independent citizens demanding representation for their personal political autonomy

prevailed. While the term *shimin shakai,* or civil society, may not have been a part of the

Japanese vernacular at the time, *shimin* still imparted the idea of a citizenry; a citizenry

who increasingly demanded their autonomous freedoms as earlier outlined by their

constitutional demands for liberal rights. The Freedom and Popular Rights Movement

was in fact a citizen's movement in and of itself according to Muramatsu Michio's

definition that citizens' movements are groups who influence policy-making. Its

leadership began with village elite and disaffected samurai, eventually extending to the

lower classes and resounded in a movement popularized by the people. The Japanese still

paid heed to their beloved emperor, however, and strongly believed in the power of the

nation of Japan as a whole. Many Japanese believed that the emperor needed to retain his

status to present a unified democracy to the rest of the world. This did not deny the fact

that citizens were beginning to demand ownership over their daily lives by working to protect their unalienable rights and receive tangible government responses from these requests.

After noting that the 19th century Popular Rights Movement was in fact an integral part of Japan's active citizenry, we must also examine the problems that scholarly literature proposes when discussing Japanese movements. To begin, was the Popular Rights Movement one of the people and free from state rule? The example of the Popular Rights Movement directly negates Sheldon Garon's logic that Japanese civil society originated from state-based institutions. Garon's examples all stem from agricultural associations, formed under Meiji centralized control. Not only did the agricultural organizations Garon specifies voluntarily surrender their autonomy to the government, but they are also considered interest groups, not voluntary associations of the Popular Rights movement where the public actively exercised freedom of speech and association. When a politically motivated government attempts to organize organizations on its own, I do not agree that this is civil society or even a citizens' movement. Rather, government imposed institutions are political associations created on the state's prerogative to coerce dialogue and create results that benefit the state, not individual citizens. In some cases, the Japanese government made it seem as though citizen's had autonomous platforms from which to voice their views through these agricultural organizations, but this is simply not the case. While Garon believes civil society works in between the state and the populace, his examples represent organizations completely rooted in government control. Murumatsu, on the other hand, contends civil society organizations are wholly independent of the state. While the Japanese government

demanded mandatory participation from agriculture associations of the late 19th century, the Popular Rights Movement formed around the ideas of individuals who wanted to protect rights and promote individual values through representation. The movement was entirely independent and free from the state, even though the government resulted in responding to the movement's demands.

Finally, scholars address the idea of governmental legislative responses as compared to proactive policy changes. Did the Popular Rights Movement coerce the Meiji government to change policy, or was it simply a coincidence that the state was already reforming the constitution to incorporate the will of the people? Citizens' movements thought government institutions impeded rather than facilitated policy change {Apter 228) because prior to the Popular Rights movement, a precedent did not exist for the former elite hierarchical government responding to lower class ideas. The revolutionary-like style of the Popular Rights Movement allowed disengaged citizens to demand change from their government. The Meiji oligarchy did not restore the government in 1868 in order to allow individual citizens to rule. As earlier discussed, its purpose was simply the opposite of direct participation. The government's goals were to centralize control under a bureaucratic structure, which was inherently filled with upper class elites. The Popular Rights Movement was the medium for change that demanded representation in the newly centralized government. After this change, the *kan-min* relationship was dramatically altered to one where *kan* and *min* ruled together.

Environmental Citizens' Movement

The first problem with the scholarly debate on Japan's environmental citizens' movement surrounds the idea that civil society was dependent upon government control and therefore not influential on sustainable environmental changes. Evidence shows that for nearly ten years corporate interests were more important than that of the local communities utterly destroyed through pollution and disease. With over six million participants protesting in the 1970s, journalists described this response as a *shimin undo,* or citizen's movement (Garon 60). This was the beginning of the intellectual discussion of citizens' movements, because citizens were taking a stake in their own interests and developing ways to participate in the policy-making process. The environmental movement mobilized and engaged disaffected citizens who had never before participated in political procedures.

Sheldon Garon contends that citizen's movements of the 1970s did not strengthen civil society. After the Diet passed the 1968 anti-pollution laws, Garon claims most of the quickly organized groups dissipated once policy makers responded. What he ignores, however, is Susan Pharr's analysis that 2,000 of the 3,000 groups created during this time are still sustained today as active, strong grassroots organizations in Japan (Pharr 2003 328). While Garon proclaims that groups lack legitimacy, he ignores the fact that many remain active, without formal state recognition, because the remaining 2,000 citizens' organizations that exist do not want their actions to be dictated by the government. Friends of the Earth, one of the most prominent environmental organizations of the 1970s brought about profound policy changes, and did so without the official government recognitions that Garon claims is necessary for civil society exist. Susan Pharr points out

that many unofficial grassroots organizations lack government legitimacy because the

feel strongly that their policy goals are better achieved without government control (Pharr

2003 328). Pharr points out the many institutional barriers that exist for organizations,

particularly for government NPO or NGO status approval. Without this status it is

difficult to lobby for causes because of the lack of fiscal resources for these groups, but

does not mean that policy changes are impossible. The groups that enacted policy

changes during the 1960s and 1970s rarely exercised official NPO or NGO status, but

government concessions and legislative changes were made regardless.

Second, the problem of historical compatibility between the Popular Rights

Movement and the environmental citizens' movement must be examined. Both

movements employed similar rhetoric and institutions to promote policy change, but

many of the protests that occurred during the environmental movement can be traced to

Meiji's Ashio copper mine protests and later Taisho labor protests, rather than the more

politically motivated Popular Rights Movement. When first beginning this paper I found

the rhetoric and institutional similarities astounding, but in closer examination, there are

other precursors to the post war citizens' movements than the late 19th Popular Rights

Movement.

Beginning with rhetoric, similarities exist between the two movements in terms of

unalienable rights demanded. Both groups wanted to recognition by the government

through policy changes. The Meiji protests consisted of citizens demanding a change in

policy, and if village or prefectural authorities did not enact this change, they formed

groups and directly opposed governmental decisions through sit-ins and other symbolic

protests (Upham 68). Both during the 1870s and the 1960s, progressive rhetoric was used

to promote such actions. Just as in the Popular Rights Movement of the late 19th century, the environmental citizens' movement used the same protest tactics as Japanese had a century before.

It is inaccurate to claim the Popular Rights Movement was the precursor to the environmental movement, but the same institutional tactics of targeting local governments existed in both movements. Both the Popular Rights Movement and the environmental movement used protest methods aimed at local officials, but this does not equate the former with the latter. Other examples of citizens' movements occurred in Japan's history that have many more similarities to the post war environmental movement than the Popular Rights Movement. The 1890 Ashio copper mine anti-pollution citizens' movement is one such example. Citizens' dramatically responded to the Ashio mine's deforestation and flooding of rice paddies in local villages and prefectures (Upham 69). Peasants reacted with petitions and protests demanding their representatives protect their constitutional and individual rights. The movement's local efforts, specifically the farmers' protest march of 1897, made the public and media more aware of the situation and forced the government to enact anti-pollution legislation (Upham 71). This Meiji environmental movement displays many similarities to the 1960s environmental movement not only because both policy goals were oriented toward anti-pollution legislation, but also because these groups were not formally recognized by the government. Additionally scholars such as Frank Upham and Muramatsu Michio use this Meiji example to demonstrate historical precursors to the post war environmental movement. Even so, the Popular Rights Mivement's liberal democratic values of personal autonomy and representative rights surely paved the way for the post World War II

government opposition that created numerous measures to protect the environment and the lives of Japanese.

Finally, the problem of whether the citizens' movement instigated policy-making, or the government proactively instituted policy changes must be addressed. Scholars like Sheldon Garon and Jeffrey Broadbent, who agree with the idea that environmental protests did not instigate the Diet's policy-making solutions, deny the fact that citizen's movements brought about pollution awareness and discussions, not the state itself. Jeffrey Broadbent claims that "the dominant elite compromised and adopted strict regulations" to reduce pollution and that there were relatively few public interest grassroots organizations that remained after the 1970s (Broadbent 19). Policy changes could have been implemented because of the sympathetic public support given to citizens' movements (Pharr 1990 231). What is important to address is the government response from locales like Oita City and Mishima-Nazumo, where the government responded with policy changes directly after listening to the plight of families and protesters. The Japanese Diet, however, did not proactively create legislation before protests or organized opposition incurred, but instead made concessions with civil society and put anti-pollution laws before the goal of economic success.

An interesting paradox exists between the government's decision to support business and industrialization through the 1960s but then seemingly turned around 180 degrees to enact anti-pollution legislation. I do not believe this change in policy is adequately addressed through Broadbent and Pharr's theories of public sympathy and elite bureaucrats solving the pollution problem. The environmental movement transcended social lines and found a sympathetic ear with the public by vocalizing the

negative impacts of pollution; impacts the government was not being forthright about. Through protests, petitions, and victims' statements, the political scene changed when environmental movements came forward with their stories. Even though political officials were sometimes reluctant to change policy, as was Governor Taki in Oita City, these bureaucrats made concessions only after the citizens' movements approached them with their problems and solutions. Pharr claims that the state has a role in civil society, but that often this role is relegated to inspiring citizens' to mobilize in reaction to denied rights and, in the case of many pollution protests, corrupt corporations (Pharr 2003 323). The state may inspire or enable groups to form, but that does not mean those specific organizations are state-based institutions. Instead groups often form in response to unfair or controversial state policies, and therefore have a direct correlation and interest in governmental policy-making, but do not relinquish power to the state. This proves the environmental movement formed in response to state economic and industrial policies. In response to active organizations within civil society, the Diet created anti-pollution policy measures.

V. Conclusion

The two movements discussed in this paper chronologically differ by a century's worth of growth, modernization, war, and technological improvements yet they still contain similarities that have scholars focusing on the progressive nature of Japan's civil society. Many people still believe that Japan is a nation strictly ruled by its imperialistic, centralized bureaucracy, but underneath the surface it is a state filled with grassroots organizations and responsive municipalities.

Challenges exist when attempting to note the historical congruencies between two movements separated by a century. Even with two movements as different as the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement and the post war environmental citizens' movement, many similarities exist. Japan faced historic political changes preceding these two movements. Both arose from grassroots levels to address government inequities in an effort to create policy changes that reflected the citizens that made up the land of the rising sun. Both utilized local government officials, leaders, bureaucrats, and leaders to address their specific problems. Each movement amassed numerous constituencies in order to better promote their efforts. The Japanese public was responsive and sympathetic to both of these movements. Most importantly, these two movements succeeded in their goals for policy change, both progressing on a national scale.

Inherently, however, vast disparities exist between these two movements. The Freedom and Popular Rights Movement was inspired by political theorists' ideas of natural rights and common peasants advocating for a national assembly through ideas of democratic representation. While the movement succeeded at using their local representatives and grassroots tactics to promote these changes, their scope was more national in scale. Contrastingly, the environmental movement of post war Japan was based on the lives affected in each local village. Policy changes were demanded from municipal officials and prefectural leaders, and while the movement never assumed that the national Diet would respond in the considerably responsive manner that it did, it had always hoped that profound changes would occur.

Japan offers a unique history in terms of diverse political institutions, Western interactions, Asian traditions and post war occupation. In a nation that began closed to

foreign influences, its constitution now reads "We the Japanese people…(Duus 261)" just as the U.S. Constitution does. Japan has amazingly recovered from its World War II devastation to become one of world's leading economies and consistent governments. The reasoning behind the world's fascination with Japan's civil society remains in its progressive ability to address local governments and advance individual goals to national policy setting agendas. While it remains important to understand the unique, progressive power the citizens' movements of Japan possess, one must ask whether this activism can transcend Japanese borders and change national policy in foreign countries? Many scholars believe this as a possibility, but I believe it takes much more examination and dedication to preserving cultural heritage and constraints before one can make the assumption that Japanese grassroots activism can exist in any other international setting.

Further questions remain around recent Diet laws that enable increasing numbers of organizations and movements to legitimately lobby and influence public policy. Over the last ten years of the 20th century, Japan experienced many efforts to decentralize the national government. The 1995 Law for Promoting Decentralization created the Committee for the Promotion of Decentralization (CPD), which proved readily capable of advocating change within the government (Furukawa 28). The chairman of the CPD declares this law the "third wave" of Japan's road to decentralization, with the Meiji reforms as the first wave and the post war democratization as the second (33). Another example of recent changes include the 1999 Omnibus Law of Decentralization, which granted numerous powers to local governments by ceding the central government's power in municipal affairs (Furukawa 21). Will the Japanese government continue this trend to legitimize components of civil society, or is the bureaucracy simply attempting to

stifle the progressive citizens' movements that create conflict to promote policy change? Only the future will tell.

        Beneath Japan's renowned cultural homogeneity and centralized bureaucracy exists a multitude of conflicting cultures, ethnicities, and political views. It is these groups that create Japan's rich, active civil society. History shows that from the late 19th century, Japanese citizens were increasingly viewing themselves as individuals who could control policy-making and demand a better representative government. Throughout the twentieth century this trend has continued through the post war environmental movements and others yet to be named. Japanese governmental policy has been drastically shaped by the goals of civil society and will continue to be for years to come.

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