Consideration of Potentials of Participatory Evaluation in Civil Society in Japan – From the Perspectives of Civil Society Governance

Satoshi Morita
NPO Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi
morita_s2@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article considers potentials and bottlenecks, promoting and hindering factors, and roles of civic organizations (COs) in introducing participatory evaluation (PE) to civil society, assuming PE as an effective means of active citizen involvement in civil society in Japan. Major indicative findings: 1) PE can accelerate collaboration between COs and other actors, and has merit for citizens with respect to accessibility to information, empowerment, awareness-raising, etc.; 2) legitimacy is an important factor for promoting PE in civil society; and 3) COs are expected to establish systems to support citizen participation in evaluation. Key issues for future consideration: 1) establishing PE criteria and indicators depending on the nature of collaboration among actors is useful for its application; and 2) the development of a tertiary sector built upon citizens’ further understanding of COs’ missions and roles is incumbent to balancing the three sectors in achieving development of civil society, and to citizen participation in decision-making in governing civil society.

Keywords

governance, collaboration, public interest, representation, legitimacy

Introduction

There are various ways for citizens to involve themselves in each of the actors that constitute civil society. For example, involvement through collaborative relationships between government or private corporations (hereinafter referred to as “corporations”) and civic organizations (COs) is one way, while direct involvement with each actor is another. Considering the fact that each actor plays its specific role in society, such participation mechanisms need to be created that enable citizens to be involved with other actors while respecting their social roles.

This article considers, in a comprehensive manner, from the practical viewpoint, potentials of participatory evaluation (PE) as well as ways of citizen participation, mainly focusing on the public sector, on the assumption that PE is an effective means of active citizen involvement in civil society in Japan.

This article is structured as follows. Chapter 1 focuses on relationships between citizens and the major actors of
the three sectors in society, based on the concepts of civil society, governance and collaboration that are crucial to better understanding the meaning of citizen “participation.” Chapter 2 overviews discussions on PE in the past. Chapter 3 and 4 consider potentials in introducing PE, from the viewpoints of collaboration and direct citizen participation respectively, taking into consideration the status quo of evaluation activities in the public sector. Chapter 5 discusses on promoting and hindering factors in spreading PE. Finally in conclusion, future prospects regarding the roles of PE and citizen involvement in civil society in Japan will be given.

1. Citizen Involvement with Major Actors in Civil Society

The emergence of COs in international society in recent years has drastically changed the perception of relationships between the nation and COs. In Japan, the enactment of the law called Tokuteihieirikatsudo Sokushinho (the law to promote specified nonprofit activities), known as the NPO Law, and reforms of legal systems of public-service corporations have made it possible to easily establish COs and thus, vitalized civil society since the late 90s. The development of COs has led to active discussions on governance, mainly in Western countries since 1990. The fundamental question here is how civil society should be governed, and by whom. Before further arguing this issue, it is important to first overview the ways of relationships between major actors in civil society in clear distinction from one another, and consider methods for citizens, who are considered the main constituent in democratic society, to be able to involve themselves actively and voluntarily in civil society as well as roles that COs can possibly take part in.

This Chapter reviews the concepts of civil society and governance and the roles of COs in civil society, and discusses the relationships between citizens and each actor, as these concepts are important for understanding various ways of citizen “participation” in civil society.

1-1 Civil Society and Three Sectors
1-1-1 Concept of Civil Society

Many authors have considered that the concept of “civil society” is ambiguous and complex, and defined it in many different frameworks, such as political and economic ideologies, doctrines and systems, nation-forming history and philosophical ideas. Also, a number of authors have attempted to reframe civil society in relation to the raison-être and roles of civil organizations for not more than 20 years. This article focuses, from the practical viewpoint, on the roles and functions of each of the major constituents in society, assuming that “civil society” is a society to be perceived from the viewpoint of citizens who are at its center as the main constituent.

1-1-2 Three Sectors in Society

A social system is considered to be composed of three sectors including the primary sector (or the public sector), the secondary sector (or the private sector), and the tertiary sector (or the civic, voluntary, or non-profit sector). Figure 1 describes major entities in those sectors and classification criteria. “Government” refers to governmental institutions including the Cabinet, the Diet and administrative agencies, whereas “Corporation” accounts for private entities that implement economic activities for seeking profit. “Civic Organization” applies to not-for-profit entities being active under a certain sustainable system, run mainly by citizens who are engaged by voluntary choice and without compensation (see later), whereas “Community” explains where each individual is from or belongs to.

Figure 2 shows the range of each sector and the position where each major actor stands in civil society from the viewpoint of citizens at its center. The term “citizen” here refers to collective individuals who do not belong to any entity, or when they are released from any role they fulfill at the institution they belong to.
1-2 Concepts of Governance

The development of argument about governance has led to the expansion of its concepts. Table 1 shows examples of definitions and interpretations of various concepts of governance. Among these concepts, (a) good governance is mainly applied to the primary sector, whereas (b) corporate governance and (c) NGO governance are to the secondary sector and (d) IT governance is to the tertiary sector. These four describe governance within internal organization of each major actor, focusing on a mechanism in which the major constituent of each sector actively involves itself in decision-making. It should be noted that the citizen, clientele and beneficiary, all of which enjoy services provided by
Table 1 Example of Definitions and Interpretations of Typical Governance Concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Concepts</th>
<th>Examples of Definitions and Interpretations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a Good Governance</td>
<td>Good governance refers to the management of government in a manner that is essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law (IMF 2007). * The term is often applied mainly in the context of development assistance for developing countries, but can be applied to any governments including those of advanced countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Corporate Governance</td>
<td>The corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among the different participants in the organization – such as the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders – and lays down the rules and procedures for decision-making (ECB2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c IT Governance</td>
<td>IT governance is the responsibility of the board of directors and executive management... it consists of the leadership and organisational structures and processes that ensure that the organisation’s IT sustains and extends the organisation’s strategies and objectives (ITGI2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d (Good) NGO Governance</td>
<td>1) A transparent decision-making process in which the leadership of a nonprofit organization, in an effective and accountable way, directs resources and exercises power on the basis of shared values; and 2) Good NGO governance is based on the distinction between organizational entities (management and the governing body) and the distribution of decision-making power between them (Wyatt 2004). * These definition can be also applied to NPOs (see later).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e Public Governance</td>
<td>Public governance, whose authority is the State, government or public sector, relates to the process by which a society organizes its affairs and manages itself (UNDESA 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f Private Governance</td>
<td>Private governance is composed of the decision making processes and the binding decisions of private groups that affect the quality of life and opportunities of a larger public (Rudder 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g Voluntary/Civic Governance</td>
<td>The decision-making mechanism or structure of civic organizations that affect the citizen or civil society (the author).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NGO stands for non-governmental organization. Regarding the concept of (g), the author found very few references and thus, applied relevant elements of the other two concepts of sector governance ((e) and (f)) to tertiary sector.

Source: The author

the major actors respectively, are not considered part of the main constituents of three sectors. With regard to (e) public governance, (f) private governance and (g) voluntary/civic governance, all of which explain governance of each entire sector, there is no common understandings or interpretations yet, as seen in the fact that not many relevant references can be found.

Meanwhile, Yamamoto (2005) quotes, from Rhodes (1997) and other publications, a set of views on governance focusing on the relationships between major actors in civil society, and calls them (h) network governance, describing it as a complex concept. The argument behind the concept is that civil society is ruled through collaboration and coordination among major actors while each actor plays a complementary role to one another. He also quotes from Peters (2000) the concept of (i) participatory governance based on the view that a mechanism of wide citizen participation in policy-making is needed instead of the traditional hierarchical structure controlled by government in the relationship between the primary sector and the citizen.

Table 2 shows a classification of those various governance concepts at different governance levels in three sectors. Based on the model in Figure 2, these concepts are considered all relevant to civil society governance, a
Table 2  Classification of Concepts Relevant to Civil Society Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Levels</th>
<th>Actor Level</th>
<th>Sector Level</th>
<th>Society Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Sectors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sector</td>
<td>a Good Governance</td>
<td>e Public Governance</td>
<td>h Network Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Sector</td>
<td>b Corporate Governance</td>
<td>f Private Governance</td>
<td>i Participatory Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary Sector</td>
<td>d NGO Governance</td>
<td>g Voluntary/Civic Governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The author

The concept of decision-making mechanism or structure in governing civil society. As mentioned earlier, the four concepts ((a) to (d)) describe governance within internal organization of each major actor, meanwhile the three ((e) to (g)) explain governance of each entire sector and the two ((h) and (i)) of entire civil society. Table 2 is visualized in the two conceptual models in Figures 3 and 4. In Figure 3, the four ((a) to (d)) principally target internal systems and mechanisms of government, corporations, and COs, whereas the three ((e) to (g)) mainly focus on actions towards the citizen by those three actors. In other words, the three ((e) to (g)) focus on the functions of each sector to influence the “external” citizen as the main target to provide services to. This is different from “internal” governance as

Figure 3  Conceptual Model I — Major Actors of Three Sectors and Governance Classification

![Figure 3](image1)

Source: The author

Figure 4  Conceptual Model II — Major Actors of Three Sectors and Governance Classification

![Figure 4](image2)

Source: The author
described in the four ((a) to (d)). In Figure 4, (h) shows networks on the basis of interactions between sectors, whereas (i) refers to the application of citizen participation to each sector on the assumption that various stakeholders take part in the management of civil society. Understanding these governance concepts is indispensable for further considering various ways in which each actor relates to one another in civil society and the way civil society is.

1-3 Roles of COs in Civil Society

1-3-1 Characteristics and Roles of COs

In civil society in Japan, NPOs and public-service corporations are leading the tertiary sector. This article mainly deals with NPOs since new public-service corporations are still in transition to new systems.

According to Salamon et al. (1996), COs in international society share the following characteristics: 1) organizations; 2) private; 3) not profit distribution; 4) self-governing; 5) voluntary; and 6) public interest. Among these, the issues of (3) and (6) are considered especially important and often discussed by many researchers. Regarding the NPO Law of Japan, it is pointed out that there are legal systems to secure these two characteristics. In terms of the former, the term “non-profit” is part of the name of the law itself, and the law prescribes prohibiting the distribution of any profit or surplus to stakeholders of NPOs including their board members and the staff. With regard to the latter, the term “public interest” is not exactly defined in the law. However, the law prescribes that NPOs should, as an object, contribute to extending benefits to unspecific and numerous persons on the assumption that NPOs’ areas of activities fall in specified areas by the law such as international cooperation, environmental preservation, and disaster relief. Accordingly, “public interest” is considered important.

Yamaoka (2004) points out that COs can play a variety of roles in civil society, such as: 1) surveillance or observing society; 2) social representative; 3) service provider; and 4) mediator as a third party. In other words, COs are considered to be entities who can implement non-profit activities or activities of public interest, and who can interact with each stakeholder from a more flexible standpoint, which distinguishes themselves from government or corporations.

1-3-2 Concept of Collaboration

With regard to governance of civil society, it is important to look at the way each actor’s roles can complement to others’ from the viewpoint of multidimensional management by major actors. The concept of “collaboration” is crucial in considering relationships and ways of interactions of COs with government and corporations. For example, Kanagawa (2008) quotes from Sullivan et al. (2002) three types of collaboration such as: 1) contract; 2) partnership; and 3) network. He also points out some characteristics of “partnership” as follows: 1) “partnership” involves negotiation and co-making decision among various parties under mid-/long term common goals and thus, differs from “contract;” 2) “partnership” requires officially setting objectives and plans among relevant parties and thus, differs from “network;” 3) creation of added values that one single organization cannot achieve is an important element in “partnership.”

1-3-3 Relationships of COs with Government and Corporations in Japan

Based on the above-mentioned points, this article overviews first the current situation of collaboration efforts between COs and the local government in Japan. According to the survey results by the Cabinet Office (2004, 2007), the percentage of the local government implementing activities in collaboration with COs at the prefecture and municipality levels is high, and the percentage of NPOs working in collaboration or partnership with government is also high. That is, both COs and government are eagerly involved in establishing collaboration with each other.
Meanwhile, it is incumbent to pay attention to the fact that many NPOs in general seek from government an understanding of the significance of establishing equal relationships (Cabinet Office 2004, 2007). Here, the way partnerships are built between COs and government is an important issue to be considered.

With regard to the relationships between COs and corporations, a larger number of corporations are actively involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in recent years and providing CSR services in collaboration with NPOs. In the meantime, both COs and corporations are still groping for a way of establishing better collaboration towards the future. Collaboration of COs with corporations differs in nature to a great degree from that with government. Many common values are shared under the goal of expanding public interest in the primary and tertiary sectors, and there are a number of cases in which government provides public services through funding COs, whereas corporations are usually assumed not to outsource profitable activities to COs for profit-making and commercial values (Sullivan et al. 2002, Kanagawa 2008).

1-4 The Citizen and Civil Society: Involvement in Three Sectors

1-4-1 Relationships of the Citizen with Each Major Actor

Next, this article considers relationships of the citizen with each actor in civil society in Japan from the viewpoint of representation—that is, who can represent and speak for the citizen, on the assumption, from the practical viewpoint, that the citizen is an independent entity of other actors as seen in Figure 2.

In government, the major actor of the primary sector, politicians are elected by the citizen through election systems and thus, represent the citizen. In this case, legal and political representation is ensured. Meanwhile, officials at administrative agencies who take charge of implementing policies, programs and projects are not elected by the citizen and thus, only function to provide services of public interest without representing the citizen.

Likewise, COs, the major actor of the tertiary sector, do not represent the citizen, but can also function to provide services of public interest. What distinguishes COs from government is that they can perform work while declaring their own visions and strategies that reflect public interest and non-profitability, not necessarily being bound to government’s policies and plans. This makes it possible for COs to implement activities that better meet the needs of certain beneficiaries. In this regard, COs can speak for the citizen.

For corporations, the major actor of the secondary sector, profitability is the most important principle. There are occasions when corporations meet some specific needs or respond to some specific preferences of the citizen as customers or consumers, however corporations do not politically or legally represent the citizen, nor speak for the citizen for the sake of public interest and in line with non-profitability. In summary, relationships of the citizen with each actor are fundamentally all different in nature.

1-4-2 Citizen Involvement

In order for COs to be able to function to speak for the citizen, raising awareness of the citizen towards the raison-étre of COs in civil society is indispensable. Also, from the viewpoint of participatory governance, it is assumed important for the citizen to be actively involved in each actor. Furthermore, citizen involvement is essential in the collaboration of COs with government and corporations from the viewpoint of network governance. Taking these points into consideration, this article mainly analyses the current situation of the primary sector mainly.

First, concrete means of active citizen involvement in government are secured in some legal systems that have recently been enacted at the country level in Japan. For example, Goseitetsuzukiho, or the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) took effect in 1994; Johokokaiho, or the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs came into force in 2001; and Kankyoeikyohyokaho, or the Environmental Impact Assessment Law was put into operation in 1999. These laws have increased opportunities for citizen participation and expanded the range of
participants’ rights (Okubo 2005). Also, a number of ordinances aiming at urging citizen participation and collaboration in administrative activities have recently been enacted at the municipality level. In the meantime, there are more gaps observed between municipalities that are more advanced in introducing citizen participation and collaboration and those lagging behind — there are actually numerous municipalities that have not even considered about enacting ordinances (Okubo 2005). Citizen participation in administrative activities is not common enough yet, and opportunities and means for individual citizens to be directly involved in government are still limited. This is also true to the relationship between the citizen and corporations.

As a matter of fact, from the citizen’s standpoint, corporations are not entities that can speak for the citizen. Also, very few citizens consider that public opinions are reflected on overall government policy. Considering the current situation in which there have been increasing cases of collaboration of COs with government and corporations, establishing systems or mechanisms for the citizen to be actively involved with government or corporations through collaborative relationships is desired in civil society for the future.

Next, as a means of active citizen involvement in NPOs, citizens can become shain, or regular members and attend the general meeting of members. The NPO law prescribes that “...provisions regarding acquisition and loss of qualifications for membership are not unreasonable,” and there is no judgment for membership by the board of directors. Therefore, there is no legal limit regarding membership and also no penal provisions for losing membership. In other words, such legal systems are established that make it possible for the citizen as insiders to participate in decision-making of the management of NPOs.

Figure 5 shows a conceptual model demonstrating the ways citizens involve themselves with government, corporations and COs in civil society, based on above-mentioned points. In the figure, (c) refers to the collaborative relationship between government and corporations that already has been in operation for a long time, whereas (a) and (b) describe relatively new collaborative relationships of COs with government and corporations respectively. Also, (d), (e) and (h) show already existing ideas of involvement of the citizen with government, corporations and COs respectively, while (f) and (g) represent new types of involvement of the citizen through the above-mentioned

Figure 5 Conceptual Model of the Citizen’s Involvement with Government, Corporation and Civic Organization

Source: The author
collaborative relationships of COs with government and corporations respectively. Based on Figure 5, potentials of PE in civil society will be considered in the following chapters.

2. Overview of Participatory Evaluation (PE)

2-1 Streams of PE
According to Cousins et al. (1998), although the term “participatory evaluation (PE)” has been used in different contexts by different authors, there are two principal streams in PE. One is practical participatory evaluation (P-PE) focusing on the function of evaluation use. This stream has been formulated through the application of PE to decision-making or problem-solving in implementing social programs, developing plans and measures, and organization management in community, private corporations, schools, etc. in the United States and Canada since the 1960s. The other is transformative participatory evaluation (T-PE) focusing on the empowerment of the socially vulnerable and achievement of social-justice which are part of an important process of social reforms. This stream has been developed through the application of PE in the context of international development assistance in developing countries including Latin America and Africa since the 1960s.

2-2 Discussions on PE in Japan
It was not until 2000 that PE came to draw more attention and be often discussed in Japan. JICA (2001), for example, considers potentials of introducing PE to the organization through reviewing methods and practices of PE in the contexts of development assistance and international cooperation. Yamaya (2002) discusses PE in the contexts of policy evaluation and administrative evaluation (see later). Miyoshi et al. (2001) argues PE in a comprehensive way, applying case studies and statistic data, in relation to development assistance or policy evaluation and administrative evaluation. According to Miyoshi et al. (2001), PE generally refers to an approach that allows various stakeholders to actively participate in evaluation, principally with an emphasis on influencing stakeholders in the entire evaluation processes and improving on-going activities and projects as evaluation targets and thus, differs to a great degree in its objectives from conventional evaluation focusing on value judgment of meaningfulness or effectiveness of activities and projects. Miyoshi et al. (2001) explains that conventional evaluation mainly emphasizes ensuring accountability to fund providers and acquiring knowledge and information required for making decisions on whether to implement projects or for gaining lessons and making propositions, whereas PE basically focuses on building capacities and promoting ownership of, and sharing knowledge among those implementing projects and beneficiaries who participate in evaluation.

3. Current Situation and Future Potentials of Introducing PE: from the Perspectives of Collaboration

This chapter considers potentials of PE, recognizing the fact that collaboration of COs with government and corporations is especially important for accelerating active citizen involvement in governing civil society. The author assumes that introducing PE in collaboration approaches is effective from the two perspectives: 1) PE as a means to further accelerate active involvement of COs with other major actors; and 2) PE as a method for evaluating, with citizen involvement, collaboration efforts between actors. These two perspectives are not alternative to but can be complementary to each other. The former is applied to (a) and (b), while the latter to (f) and (g) in Figure 5.
Theoretical grounds and supportive evidences for these two suppositions are provided in the following sections, based on the model of stages in evaluation process proposed by Iwabuchi (2005) (see later) and the current situation of collaboration efforts between COs and government in Japan, focusing on the characteristics of PE described by Cousins et al. (1998) as well as the differences between PE and conventional evaluation explained by Miyoshi et al. (2001).

3-1 PE as a Means of Collaboration Approach (a P-PE Model)

The first supposition is that introducing PE as a means to accelerate active involvement of COs with other actors ((a) and (b) in Figure 5) is effective. In general, the level of involvement of COs depends on the stage of evaluation process, and ways of involvement differ in nature accordingly. Especially in PE, opinions of COs tend to be more easily reflected at the stage of value-judgment and decision-making because the degree of their autonomy becomes higher compared to other stages of evaluation process. This characteristic provides grounds for the above-mentioned supposition which derives from the stream of P-PE.

This characteristic will be further explained as follows. Iwabuchi (2005) describes that a general evaluation process is classified into four stages along the timeline, such as: 1) evaluation design; 2) data collection; 3) data analysis; and 4) judgment/decision-making. He also discusses the relationships between ways of involvement of NPOs as a third party in evaluation activities at government level and the degree of independence of NPOs at each stage of evaluation. Figure 6 is a conceptual model by the author, demonstrating an analytical framework based on his discussions. According to him, “autonomous involvement” is a way of involvement with more independence, whereas “heteronomous involvement” is with less independence such as outsourcing to NPOs by government. The latter refers to passive involvement in evaluation activities. At the “design” stage, for example, NPOs often function as a contractor and government as an organizer and thus, the level of NPOs’ dependence is higher, whereas at the “judgment” stage, it is assumed there is almost no occasion in which NPOs take part in evaluation in a dependent way. Meanwhile, the former refers to active involvement in evaluation activities. At the “design” stage, government

![Figure 6](chart.png)
almost always makes decisions in light of internal rules, systems and budget and thus, again there is hardly an instance in which NPOs take part in evaluation in an independent way, whereas at the “judgment” stage, NPOs are assumed to participate in the entire value-judgment process. In summary, based on Iwabuchi (2005), the level of NPOs’ dependence is higher at the earlier stage while the level of independence can become higher at later stages.

The author considers that the model in Figure 6 is relevant in discussing the potentials of introducing PE to government by COs. Conventional evaluation in a form of outsourcing to COs, for example, is deemed typical and a way of passive collaboration in evaluation between government and COs, whereas PE can be a way of more active collaboration in which COs involve themselves more independently. The application of PE enables COs to take part in the process of decision-making and value-judgment more actively than in the process of evaluation design as described in Figure 6 and thus, PE is considered an effective tool for reflecting opinions of COs on value-judgment in evaluation and decision-making at government.

3-2 PE as a Means to Evaluate Collaboration Efforts (a T-PE Model)
The second supposition is that introducing PE as a method for evaluating, with citizen involvement, already existing collaboration efforts of COs with government or corporations is effective. As described in the previous chapter, PE has many characteristics that are useful for accelerating active citizen involvement with government or corporations ((f) and (g) in Figure 5) through collaboration efforts of COs with other two actors ((a) and (b) in Figure 5), of which citizens are the beneficiaries. In addition to capacity building, fostering ownership and sharing knowledge, as mentioned earlier, PE has merit for citizens also with respect to accessibility to information, awareness-raising, empowerment, fostering leadership, etc. These characteristics provide grounds for the above-mentioned supposition which derives from the stream of T-PE. In concrete, citizens will have accessibility to wider varieties and larger amount of information by participating in evaluation activities. Also, through dialogues with other major actors, citizens will have more opportunities for gaining consciousness or awareness of themselves as “citizen” in comparative relationships with others in civil society, as well as for recognizing their roles and developing their capacities. These merits can greatly contribute to accelerating citizen participation in governing civil society.

As a matter of fact, there seems to be enough room for applying PE involving citizens, to collaboration efforts between COs and major actors. This is because each of those actors is already aware of the importance of evaluating collaboration efforts, although in many cases actors are still at an early stage of introducing evaluation or even considering appropriate approaches for applying evaluation. With regard to already existing collaboration efforts, each actor recognizes the necessity of evaluating its own collaboration activities. In the case of collaboration between COs and administrative organs, one of the requests to administrative organs from COs identified in the above-mentioned survey results of the Cabinet Office (2007) was the necessity of developing mechanisms for evaluating outcomes of partnership or collaboration between the two actors. On the other hand, the results of survey conducted earlier by the Cabinet Office in 2004 show that among 40 respondent prefectures three had already established evaluation systems for collaboration activities and 21 were going to establish such systems. In other words, 24 prefectures recognize the importance of evaluation of collaboration activities. Among them, 20 prefectures recognize the necessity of evaluating outcomes and processes of collaboration activities. Also, 18 prefectures attach importance to internal evaluation, whereas 11 incline towards external evaluation.

In the case of collaboration between COs and corporations, one of the requests to COs from corporations identified in the survey results of Fukuoka Prefecture (2009) was the necessity of reporting outcomes of collaboration efforts in an objective manner.

When citizens participate in evaluation of collaboration activities, there are many important roles that COs can play, such as providing knowledge of evaluation target projects and expertise of project evaluation in general,
coordination between citizens as beneficiaries and other stakeholders, conducting public relations for civil society from the perspectives of ensuring public interest and transparency, declaring visions of envisaged civil society for the future from the standpoint of assuming accountability for civil society or speaking for the citizen, etc. It is expected that COs establish supporting systems for citizens participating in evaluation by performing these functions with their expertise or through their own networks, since government/administrative organs or corporations cannot play these roles.

3-3 Current Situation of COs Participation in Evaluation at Administrative Organs

Based on the above-mentioned points, recent new evaluation systems in the government need to be drawn upon when considering potentials of introducing PE for urging independent involvement of COs in existing evaluation frameworks in the government. In April 2002, as part of Japan’s administrative reforms, the law called gyoseikikan ga okonau seisaku no hyoku ni kansuru houritsu (the law regarding evaluation of policies undertaken by administrative organs), known as the policy evaluation law, was enacted for administrative organs, as the main entity, to make objective judgments on the effects of policies (in a wide sense) that are composed of three tiers, namely “policy (in a narrow sense),” “program,” and “project,” and provide information contributing to policy formulation, and the system commonly referred to as seisaku hyoka (policy evaluation) was introduced to all 12 ministries and government offices. Prior to that, since the mid-90s, in Japanese municipalities, evaluations targeting their own projects and activities have been implemented under the name of gyosei hyoka (administrative evaluation) and gradually become widespread.

With regard to these evaluation activities at administrative organs, Miyoshi et al. (2001) points out that there is a strong applicability of PE methods to policy evaluation and administrative evaluation because both of them in principle take a form of self-assessment, and that these two evaluation systems can be made more effective through the introduction of PE. In fact, in terms of the two suppositions proposed in this article, the author considers it possible to examine the effectiveness of applying PE to collaboration efforts between COs and government by analyzing cases of such evaluations.

In the meantime, many authors point out that there is virtually no case or example of COs involvement in policy evaluation or administrative evaluation, or applying PE based on collaborative relationships between COs and administrative organs (Moteki 2006, Yamaya 2002). It is necessary to keep an eye on future developments regarding the introduction of PE to administrative organs.

4. Potentials of Introducing PE — from the Perspectives of Direct Citizen Involvement

In continuation, this chapter overviews the current situation of introducing PE as a means to accelerate direct citizen involvement with major actors in civil society ((d), (e) and (f) in Figure 5), especially with a focus on the primary sector, following the discussions on potentials of PE in relation to collaboration among those actors. According to the results of survey targeting all 1,845 municipalities in Japan on the current situation of citizen participation in above-mentioned administrative evaluation, conducted by Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI) in 2009, among 845 municipalities which count for 46 percent of the total: 1) those who responded that citizens directly take part in establishing systems for administrative evaluation account for about one percent at both policy and program levels; 2) those who responded that citizens’ voices were reflected on the choice of evaluation indicators, for example, account for less than five percent at both policy and program levels; and 3) those who responded that citizen representatives take part in evaluation account for about six and 15 percent at the policy and program levels respectively (MRI 2009).
The municipality personnel mentions some reasons for all these low percentages, according to MRI’s report, such as: 1) in general, among the municipality personnel, there is very little understanding of the objective for introducing administrative evaluation or of its systems, which in turn makes them feel that administrative evaluation is merely a routine work or an additional burden for them; 2) it is difficult for them to see the way evaluation results are utilized or the effectiveness of utilizing those results; and 3) there is no standard evaluation method including evaluation criteria at municipalities (MRI 2009). Under these circumstances on the ground, it is apparently not easy to raise motivation to accelerate citizen participation in administrative evaluation.

Also, according to MRI’s report, municipalities that were expecting to receive feedback from citizens through the publication of evaluation results account for about 14 and 31 percent at the policy and program levels respectively and there were more numbers of municipalities that were not planning to reflect citizens’ voices on their activities. In addition, the report draws upon the fact that in many municipalities, conventional evaluation is still commonly implemented only internally, also pointing out the importance of reconsidering evaluation approaches and the possibility of citizen involvement (MRI 2009).

Next, it is pointed out that there is no system established for citizen participation in policy evaluation. Yamaya (2002) mentions that policy evaluation was operated and managed under the control of administrative organs and that there was only very limited room for citizen involvement until then. The reason, according to him, was that the designing and development of policy evaluation systems was led by the bureaucrats. He also mentions the necessity of restructuring policy evaluation systems from the viewpoints of citizens as clients and allowing them to independently involve themselves in policy evaluation since they are the beneficiaries.

As Miyoshi et al. (2001) and other authors mention, the significance of introducing PE to government/administrative organizations is to allow them to adopt citizens’ opinions and reflect their voices on decision-making through developing systems for citizens to participate in evaluations of its own policies, programs or projects. This is highly related to the issues of participatory governance of civil society. As many authors have already mentioned, in order to achieve democracy in civil society, reflecting pluralistic values on its process is extremely important, and PE can be an effective tool in this respect. For example, Yamaya (2002) points out that policy evaluation should not be regarded merely as a tool for improving the efficiency of administrative activities or disclosure of information, and asserts that policy evaluation will come to function and sound governance systems will be ensured only after incorporating elements for citizen participation, such as involvement and collaboration of stakeholders, empowerment of citizens for acquiring expertise and knowledge, policy proposals by citizens, etc. In any case, it is expected that citizen participation in existing evaluation systems at administrative organizations will be accelerated.

5. Promoting and Hindering Factors in Spreading PE

It is noted that citizens’ willingness of “participation” is very low in general, which is a hindering factor for widely spreading PE. In relation to the primary sector, for example, according to the survey results by MRI (2009), quite a few municipalities responded that there was almost no feedback or response from citizens in general to the publication of results of administrative evaluation. In terms of the tertiary sector, according to the results of “public opinion survey concerning NPOs” targeting 3,000 persons over 20 years of age nationwide, conducted by the Cabinet Office in 2005, those who had took part in NPOs activities account for only less than 10 percent, and those who were unwilling to participate in such activities in the future account for up to 49 percent (Cabinet Office 2005). Underlying this situation is the lack of awareness of citizens as “a constituent of civil society” or recognition of their
potential roles in civil society.

Even if this issue is solved, there would be no easy progress in widely spreading PE if there is no systematic framework to apply it. In this respect, it is pointed out that ensuring legitimacy, or legalizing PE is important. For example, as mentioned earlier, in recent years a number of ordinances aiming at urging citizen participation and collaboration in administrative activities have been enacted at the municipality level, and following these trends, it is assumed that ordinances prescribing principles and mechanisms of PE or concrete methods of citizen participation in administrative evaluation will possibly be enacted. As a matter of fact, considering that evaluation activities have been vitalized at administrative organizations through the legislation of policy evaluation and administrative evaluation, ensuring legitimacy is certainly a promoting factor for widely spreading PE since positive influences can be exerted on the spreading approaches as well as the degree of citizen involvement.

**Conclusion: Issues regarding PE for Future Consideration**

This article considered the ways of citizen participation mainly at administrative organizations in the primary sector based on two suppositions regarding the effectiveness of introducing PE. It will be beneficial to gain lessons and make proposals through case studies and analyses of PE in order to examine the effectiveness of introducing PE in the future. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier, almost no reference or report can be found of cases of evaluation for collaboration activities between major actors, or of citizen participation in policy evaluation or administrative evaluation. Therefore, it is highly desirable that PE will be widely spread in each sector including at administrative organizations and that a number of cases of PE will be reported in the future. Also, through case studies, it is expected that: 1) the methodologies of PE will be developed and systems for its application will be established; and, in concrete, that 2) knowledge will be accumulated with regard to appropriate methodologies of PE and approaches for introducing PE depending on the entity of project implementation, the type of projects and the way of implementation systems.

When applying PE to collaboration activities of COs with government or corporations, it can be effective to establish new evaluation criteria, indicators and guidelines depending on the nature of collaboration from the viewpoint of, for example, the degree of maturity of civic society. Accumulating know-how and experience through developing such systems will lead to accelerating citizen participation in various activities in entire civil society in Japan in the future. COs play crucial roles for citizen participation in evaluation activities, and thus, are expected to establish good supporting systems as entities that can speak for the citizen. In the meantime, the raison-ètre and roles of COs are generally not understood well in civil society in Japan, and it is urgently needed to promote further understanding among major actors as well as citizens in order to accelerate citizen participation in civil society.

As for the side of the citizen, it is incumbent to clearly recognize the roles they can play in relation to COs, and it is expected that raising citizens’ awareness will revitalize COs and lead to the development of a tertiary sector, which in turn will contribute to balancing the three sectors in achieving development of civil society. That is to say, sound, fair and better civil society will be realized, in the sense that citizens will be in an equal position to other actors, through citizens’ understanding of their rights and duties, opportunities and roles as constituents of civil society, as well as participating in important decision-making in governing civil society by utilizing approaches such as PE.

The shortcomings of this article include the following: 1) it does not deal with public-service corporations or communities since it mainly focuses on NPOs among COs in Japan; 2) it does not discuss much about the situation surrounding corporations; and 3) it does not deal with concrete cases of collaboration among actors or citizen
participation since it emphasizes overviewing an entire picture of the current situation of citizen participation in civil society in Japan. It is highly expected that knowledge and experience will be accumulated through studies of concrete cases of citizen participation in Japan by researchers and practitioners, research on different collaboration approaches among major actors in civil society in other countries, and comparative studies of the current situation surrounding the application of PE and citizen participation in civil society between various countries.

Acknowledgement

The viewpoints and thoughts covered in this article all come from the author. I would like to acknowledge those referees who provided me with instructive advice.

Notes

1 This article clearly distinguishes concepts such as citizen, civic organization, civil society and the tertiary sector, considering the fact that these concepts are sometimes confused with one another and their relationships are not clarified in many literatures.

2 This article focuses on the roles of COs and thus, does not deal with "community."

3 In Figure 2, “citizen” is independent of other three entities on the assumption that each individual who is a constituent of civil society can take different positions in different situations—that is, he/she becomes "a (general) citizen” once he/she is released from any role to play at the institution he/she belong to, no matter what entity it is. In this article, the terms "citizen” and "civic organization” are clearly distinguished.

4 Since the NPO Law came into effect in December 1998, the number of newly registered NPOs has been increasing. As of the end of August 2010, 40,689 NPOs are registered and certified (Cabinet Office 2010). Regarding public-service corporations, legal system reforms were carried out in December 2008. Some authors point out that COs in Japan generally include other types of institutions in addition to NPOs and public-service corporations. NIRA (2004) mentions that Shohiseikatsukyodokumiai (consumers' cooperatives), (Danchi)kanrikumiaihojin (home owners' association corporations), Ninkachien-dantai (certified territorial organizations), and Koekishintaku (charitable trusts) can be included in a wide variety of COs. Yamaoka (2004) refers to civil society organization (CSO) as private organization of various standpoints or characteristics, and explains that CSO also can include residents' association such as neighborhood self-governing body or community, as well as civic organization without juridical personality. However, this article does not deal with these organizations.

5 In the United States, (3) and 6) are considered indispensable and important characteristics, whereas in continental Europe, (3) is not necessarily indispensable and (6) is excluded (Kanagawa 2008).

6 NPOs receive a certification by the administrative agency in charge at the time of their establishment. NIRA (2004) points out that not all NPOs are considered to be implementing activities of public interest because a high level of independence is ensured in NPOs organization management after having received their certification. Also, many cases of decertification of NPOs have recently been reported (Cabinet Office 2010).

7 According to the Cabinet Office (2004), 40 prefectural governments and 413 municipalities were implementing projects in collaboration with COs. Also, the Cabinet Office (2007) mentions that about 75 percent of 1,019 respondent NPOs among 3,000 NPOs as survey targets were being in collaboration or partnership with government.

8 According to the results of survey on CSR targeting member companies in 2009 by the Japan Business Federation, 74 percent of 437 respondent companies have stipulated CSR basic principles and strategies, appointed board members, and established
cross-company mechanisms as well as CSR-specific departments in order to promote CSR activities (Japan Business Federation 2009).

9 Refer to Ishikawa Prefecture (2005), Fukuoka Prefecture (2009) and CIRAC (2009), for example.

10 Refer to Morita (2009), for example, for discussions of the roles of COs in establishing strategies and visions as a social mission.

11 According to Okubo (2005), these ordinances are generally classified, based on the types of their provisions, as follows: 1) basic principles for autonomy; 2) principles for participation and collaboration; 3) systematizing participation and collaboration methods; 4) individual participation and collaboration systems; 5) provisions regarding support for NPOs; 6) combining principles for participation and collaboration and provisions regarding support for NPOs; 7) provisions regarding community organizations; and 8) participation and collaboration mechanisms for individual specific areas. Ordinances on the ombudsman system, the public comment system and the council system are mainly classified into (3) and (4).

12 With regard to citizen involvement in corporations, Kojima (2007), for example, asserts that the citizen essentially has rights to exercise influence over corporations and refers to the concepts of “right for reform” and “right for opposition” as a direct and an indirect right respectively. He explains that the latter is the citizen’s action itself that is not prescribed in law, while the former has not been institutionalized yet although it needs to be legislated in the near future. Regarding CSR, it has not been legislated in Japan yet, and one main factor in the background is a strong opposition by the business circles against government to take the lead in the legislation process (Japan Business Federation 2004).

13 According to the polls carried out by the Cabinet Office in 2010, more than 70 percent of the respondents indicated that public opinions or ideas are not reflected on overall government policy (Cabinet Office 2010).

14 Sha in here does not refer to the staff, but to members who have a right and a duty to vote at the general meeting of members, the highest organ of decision-making at an NPO, that must be held at least once a year where decisions on important matters are made (NPO C’s 2010).

15 Refer to Morita (2009), for example, for detailed discussions of accountability of COs.

16 As of October 2008, administrative evaluation has been introduced to 864 municipalities including all prefectural governments and ordinance-designated cities among the all 1,857 municipalities in Japan (MOIAC 2009).

References


(Accepted 15th June, 2012)