

Japan's Civil Society from Kobe to Tohoku

Impact of Policy Changes on Government-NGO Relationship and Effectiveness of Post-Disaster Relief

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Abstract

Although the development of civil society organisations in Japan occurred relatively late compared to Western and some developing countries, a growing number of scholarly works have documented modern Japan's rapid growth of citizen activism and social action. However, discourse on civil society in Japan has emphasised a pattern of numerous small local groups with limited budgets and staff, and few large professionalized organisations. Nonetheless, Japan has witnessed a recent surge in civil society activism, where the number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working on international development and foreign aid issues is on the rise. As NGOs are a key source of citizens' power, the expansion of such organisations in Japan has important implications for the shifting relationship between civil society and the state.

This paper explores the development of Japan's civil society by focusing on patterns of citizen volunteerism and the role of NGOs in the country's natural disaster relief and restoration efforts. By comparing the post-disaster landscape for citizen volunteering, advocacy, and NGO performance in response to the 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku earthquakes, this paper aims to trace how civil society leadership in Japan has evolved. In particular, this paper examines how the disaster management infrastructure established after Kobe influenced NGO performance in volunteer training and coordination, liaison with officials, and relief efforts for Tohoku's disaster areas. A better understanding of citizen involvement with NGOs will provide an important indicator for the future trajectory of civil society and disaster resilience in Japan in an international context.

Keywords: Civil Society, NGO/NPO, natural disasters, policy.

Introduction

Japan has experienced countless natural disasters throughout its history and has expended considerable energy in developing a crisis management infrastructure to respond to earthquakes. Such infrastructure was implemented to enhance earthquake resistance after the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake devastated Yokohama and Tokyo, two of Japan's largest cities, and released a 40 foot-high tsunami. When the Kobe region was struck by the 7.3 magnitude Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake on 17th January 1995, however, Japan once again experienced how unprepared it was to respond to large scale disasters. The Kobe earthquake was the most destructive to have hit Japan since the 1923 Great Kantō disaster, affecting 10 cities and towns in the Hyogo Prefecture. Close to 6500 died, more than 75,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged, and infrastructure was crippled when more than 130km of railway lines and 27 roads had to close. The government was criticised for acting slowly; poor leadership and bureaucratic

negligence led to delays in the mobilisation of critical resources and thus cost lives, it was charged. The success story of the 1995 earthquake, however, was the unexpected and overwhelming upsurge of volunteerism. Some 1.3 million individual Japanese and dozens of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) flooded into Kobe and surrounding areas to fill in the void created by administrative incompetence. Although the NGOs that arrived in Kobe were critical to the relief effort immediately following the earthquake, most had not been legally registered and were too disparate or disorganised to sustain long-term projects. Even so, much scholarship has heralded the Kobe disaster experience as the “birth of Japanese volunteerism” (*borantia no gannen*) and a “volunteer revolution” (*borantia kakumei*), one that brought about civil society growth with stronger Japanese NGOs and volunteerism (Takao 2001; Yamamoto 1999).

On 11th March 2011, Japan once again experienced a disaster of unprecedented proportions. The impact of the 9.0 magnitude Great East Japan earthquake¹ that hit Japan’s Tohoku region was approximately six times larger than the Kobe disaster, affecting more than 37 towns and cities across five prefectures. The official casualty toll as of March 2013, two years after the disaster, is 15,844 deaths, with more than 3400 people still missing (Katsube 2013). More than 340,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged, resulting in some 580,000 people displaced. Infrastructure suffered extensive damage and obstructed relief and recovery efforts—344km of railroad lines and 3559 roads, the major regional airport at Sendai, and many ports along the coast all had to close. Moreover, the Tohoku disaster was a cascading calamity involving an earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown, complicating emergency crisis planning. This time, however, national and local governmental institutions responded almost immediately after the quake to facilitate and organise disaster relief efforts in concert with civic groups, particularly Japanese NGOs. Although the central government still received criticism for failing to act as effectively as might be expected after the 1995 debacle, overall, the media lauded the resourcefulness and initiative of local governments. Nongovernmental actors also came in for praise as essential to relief efforts (Robinson 2011; Kingston 2012). Within the first four months, there were 499,300 registered volunteers, many of whom participated in the relief effort through an NGO. In contrast to the post-disaster landscape for the Kobe Earthquake, the response to the Tohoku disaster has received an outpouring of praise and support with particular focus on improved government actions and the influence of NGOs. Though still a continuing saga, the Tohoku post-disaster relief effort suggests that the Japanese government’s permanence and its active liaison with local NGOs has reached a new level of professionalism, organisation, social legitimacy, and institutionalism.

Despite significant differences in the magnitude and aftermath of these two earthquakes, many scholars have compared them to observe how Japan’s lessons learned from the Kobe experience influenced the Tohoku response (e.g.: Avenell 2012; Aldrich 2012; Funabashi and Takekana 2011; Kingston 2012; Samuels 2012). These reports generally document and contrast the response to the Tohoku and Kobe disasters; research illuminating how the different characteristics of each crisis response relates to the growth of Japanese civil society is still limited, and there has not yet been sufficient scholarship pinpointing *why* these changes have occurred. There are four key aspects that characterise the differences in responses: 1) the role of the central government, 2) role of local governments, 3) role of local government efforts to coordinate with NGOs and 4) NGO performance in disaster relief.

This paper aims to address the puzzle of how to account for the changes in the effectiveness of the post-disaster response between the 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku earthquakes and trace these differences with consideration to the four aspects mentioned above. What specific aspects of civil society changed over the period of sixteen years between these two earthquakes? What has shaped these changes and how are they manifest in Japan’s post-disaster response to Tohoku? In what ways has the relationship between the Japanese government and NGOs developed in recent years and how has this shaped the role of NGOs in the relief efforts? What are the critical factors influencing effectiveness distinguishing the responses to the Kobe and Tohoku earthquakes at the levels of government, NGOs, and volunteer participation? In the aftermath of Kobe, both central and local governments failed to respond effectively, and there was virtually no recognition of or cooperation with NGOs. In the response to Tohoku, the central government was still plagued by bureaucratic delays, but an improved local government-NGO relationship significantly impacted the coordination and efficiency of disaster relief efforts. This development reflects intriguing developments in Japanese civil society with regard to NGOs as they are influenced by state policy and societal views

on disaster relief.

This paper suggests that over the sixteen years between the two disasters, changes in state policy strengthening the cooperative relationship between local governments and NGOs underlie critical differences in Japan's post-disaster response. More specifically, state policies impacted changes in disaster management in two interrelated ways: 1) by removing bureaucratic obstacles to communication between local and national governments, thereby also enabling civil society and NGOs to play a bigger role in the disaster response system, and 2) by promoting civil society growth through the enhancement of a support structure for Japanese NGOs to develop, including changes in national policy towards foreign aid. Lessons learned from the Kobe disaster prompted the Japanese government to initiate policy reform and improve crisis management in cooperation with civil society organisations. These amendments included monumental legal changes establishing a consolidated disaster management system that actively incorporates NGO support, as well as measures to promote NGO growth through the 1998 NPO Law and a more open policy towards accepting international aid. The impact of these changes are most notably revealed in the Tohoku disaster relief effort, where NGOs responded immediately to the Tohoku disaster because they were more experienced, prepared, and accepted as professional actors by both citizens and the state.

A better understanding of government policies in relation to disaster management, citizen volunteerism, and NGO activity will provide insight to the future trajectory of civil society and disaster resilience in Japan. This paper will first provide a brief overview of current scholarship on the links between disaster recovery, volunteerism, NGOs, and civil society in Japan. The bulk of this paper will then explore how government policy changes to improve Japan's disaster management framework actively incorporates and supports NGOs, stimulating local government cooperation with NGOs and impacting the effectiveness of Japanese NGO post-disaster response to the Kobe and Tohoku earthquakes.

Civil Society, NGOs, and Disaster Management in Japan

The State of Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Japan

The notion of "civil society" has a range of contemporary meanings, but has generally been used to describe a society or space consisting of sustained, organised social activity that is non-state, non-market, and is distinct from the family or individual (Cohen and Arato 1992; Pharr 2003). As a historically rooted Western phenomenon, scholars have debated how to define civil society in Japan given the overriding importance of the Japanese state in relation to the structure of society (Alagappa 2004; Okimoto 1988; Schak and Hudson 2003; Schwartz and Pharr 2003).² Building upon the work of Robert D. Putnam (2000), Susan J. Pharr (2003), Robert Pekkanen (2006), and others, *this paper advocates for a more inclusive framework for civil society in Japan that embraces a large number of social groups, organisations, and movements as long as they meet minimal requirements of dual autonomy, have the potential for collective action, are non-usurpatory and are voluntary in nature.*

In this definition, civil society encompasses a range of voluntary groups, such as nonprofit foundations, charities, nonprofit organisations (NPOs), and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). It is larger in scope than only considering either civic groups or the nonprofit sector alone, as both more narrowly incorporate participatory organisations and are sometimes limited to public service groups (Hall 1987; Bestor 1999). However, civil society does not include government bureaucracy, political parties, the family, and market sector groups such as labour unions, trade associations, or professional associations (Cohen and Arato 1992; Pekkanen 2006).³ Using this wider lens to consider a diversity of social groups, Japan's civil society is able to come into better focus.

Studies of comparative civil society tell a consistent story about civic engagement and citizen participation in Japan: they emphasise the "underdeveloped" or "weak" status of Japanese civil society when compared with other advanced capitalist democracies (Yamamoto 1999; Yamaoka 1996). Japanese civil society groups can be characterised by the "four smalls": they have small budgets, small membership, small numbers of professional staff, and small geographic scopes (Pekkanen 2006; Pharr 2013).⁴ Compared to the U.S., even the largest Japanese groups are barely a third in

size (Bothwell 2003). The 2011 Cabinet Office survey of 2,345 Japanese nonprofit organisations (NPOs) revealed that 54 percent of those NPOs had annual budgets of less than ¥10 million (US\$123,000), only 11 percent had more than 100 members, and 50 percent had less than 20 staff. With professional staff in the civil society sector only making up 0.4 percent of the Japanese workforce, organisations rely heavily on volunteers and often operate within a restricted local area (Yuko *et al.* 2012). The aforementioned survey reflects this limitation: only 7 percent of NPOs reported that they engage in nationwide efforts, whilst more than 80 percent are confined to one prefecture or city (Cabinet Office 2011, 3-7).

Historians have attributed the weakness of Japan's civil society to the nation's centralised, bureaucracy-dominated government, underscoring how a strict legal framework, regulatory restrictions, the lack of recognition, and limited funding in Japan impact the types of groups allowed to form and their expansion or influence (Baron 1997; Keiko 2002; Pekkanen 2003). Pekkanen (2006) has observed that Japan exhibits a "dual civil society" of organisations characterised by "many small local groups, but few large professionalised groups" where Japan's "political institutions, including the regulatory framework constructed by the state, directly and indirectly structure the development of civil society" (1-2). Thus, the question of civil society in Japan is not about *whether* the state plays a role, but rather about *what* role it plays and how it influences the development of civil society.⁵

Here, it is important to distinguish among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and non-profit organisations (NPOs) in the Japanese context. The terms of NGO and NPO are conceptually vague. NGO is used in an international context to refer to non-profit, voluntary citizens' groups which are organised on the local, national, or international levels and not directly affiliated with the government. NPOs are sometimes used in a broad sense as an umbrella term referring to both NGOs doing international work and groups working domestically (Fernando and Heston 1997). However, in Japan NPO (or *enupîô*) usually refers to a nonprofit organisation that is only engaged in domestic activity (Yamaoka 1996). In contrast, the term NGO is generally used more broadly to indicate either international or domestic nonprofit citizens' organisations that address both local and global issues, engaging in overseas programs such as ones providing development assistance and emergency relief (Heins 2008).

This paper defines NGOs as nonprofit, voluntary organisations that work towards social change both domestically and globally, focusing on Japanese NGOs that provide emergency relief and their relationship with local governments. The global presence of Japanese NGOs influences how organisations gain disaster relief experience, coordinate both international and domestic support and volunteers, and distribute reliable information about disasters. In recent years, there has been a progressive increase in the number of Japanese NGOs working on international development and foreign aid issues (JANIC 2008; Hirata 2010; Vinken et. al 2010). In 1998, there were only 20 NGOs affiliated with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), generally considered by scholars to be a good indicator for general patterns of NGO growth (Bothwell 2003; UN 1999). By 2012, Japan's number of ECOSOC-affiliated NGOs had increased to 217 (UN 2012; ESC 2012).

Given the dramatic increase in the presence of registered NGOs, more scholars have started examining Japanese NGO development in connection to the shifting state-society relationship in Japan (Auger 2003; Osborne 2003). A defining component of this relationship is that Japanese NGOs consist of two distinct legal groups: unincorporated associations, commonly also called "civic groups," and incorporated associations. The majority of Japanese NGOs are unincorporated associations that are not registered with the state; they are free from state intervention and control, but do not benefit from legal protection and tax breaks (Pekkanen and Simon 2003). The incorporated and registered associations, in contrast, are regulated and supervised by the state (Reimann 2010).⁶ Scholars have thus highlighted that Japanese NGOs cannot be divorced from the state, and that their primary function is to supplement goods and services that are not provided by the government (Hiroko 1999; Ogawa 2009; Ueto 2003). This interwoven relationship between the Japanese government and local NGOs is central to the nation's disaster management framework and post-disaster response.

NGOs, Volunteerism, and Disaster Management in Japanese Civil Society

Scholarship has pointed out that major disasters tend to serve as focal points for civil society and the state, as they

test government competence in crisis management and often trigger widespread volunteerism (Aldrich 2012a; Aldrich 2012b; Haddad 2007). Civic engagement theories have emphasised that rates of volunteerism reflect citizen attitudes towards governmental and individual responsibility (Hirata 2010; Tadashi 1998). Mary Alice Haddad suggests in her book on *Politics and Volunteering in Japan* (2007) that “[c]ivil society is multifaceted, and within it, volunteer organisations play three vital roles: they are the forum through which citizens meet one another to build trust and social capital; they act as a low-cost service provider, supplying necessary social services to meet the needs of community residents; and they act as a pipeline between society and the state, relaying citizen concerns to public officials and public policies to citizens” (4). As such, volunteer participation in civic organisations is one of the most important ways for citizens to develop social capital and keep their government accountable to the public (Aldrich 2012; Haddad 2007; Ohwa 2003).

Although both the Kobe and Tohoku earthquakes witnessed an outpouring of volunteerism and NGO activity, the superior disaster response in 2011 arose primarily due to state cooperation and support. Specifically, changes in state policy implemented post-Kobe had critically shaped the environment for volunteer participation and NGO leadership in the Tohoku response. By 2011, NGOs were recognised for their strengths in coordinating resources provided both by the government and volunteers to address critical issues in Tohoku. Governmental support of NGOs through extending them legitimation, cooperation, and funding are central to explaining variations in volunteer participation rates and effectiveness of the post-disaster relief. Drawing upon the idea that volunteer organisations lie at the heart of Japan’s state-society relationship, understanding how changes in government policies have improved cooperation with and enhanced the performance of local NGOs can provide insight into the development of Japanese civil society and patterns of volunteer participation in post-disaster relief efforts.

The 2011 Tohoku Disaster: Not a 1995 Kobe Redux

Both the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake in Tohoku were catastrophic disasters that took thousands of lives and attracted widespread national and international attention. The 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was a major turning point in Japan’s approach to a disaster management framework, where the government’s failure to respond effectively revealed the importance of having a civil society that can provide self-support and assistance in the event of crises (Imada 2003). In the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake, most NGOs had no legal recognition or assistance from the government and largely failed in coordinating timely relief and restoration efforts. Both officials and civic groups were poorly prepared to respond to the crisis, and this administrative debacle led promoted the Japanese government to initiate policy reform and improve the disaster management system. Significantly, these policies generally centre upon the decentralisation of state power and the promotion of civil society growth through civic groups, especially the development of NGOs.

An analysis of the differing responses to the Kobe and Tohoku earthquakes due to changes in state policy must take into account the scale of each disasters. Table 1 provides key statistics that reveal how the Tohoku disaster caused devastation of unprecedented levels, affecting multiple prefectures with damages afflicting an area almost six times greater than that of the Kobe earthquake. In Tohoku, the tsunami-generated damage that occurred on top of the destruction caused by the earthquake was compounded by the damage inflicted by the nuclear power plant crisis. The overall cost of the Tohoku disaster is estimated between \$210-300 billion, equivalent to 3.4% of Japan’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making it the most expensive natural disaster on record. In comparison, the Kobe earthquake caused an estimated \$130 in damage, representing around 2% of Japan’s GDP. As such, the 3.11 disaster is almost twice as costly as the Kobe earthquake in terms of GDP. For the purposes of this paper, the amount of government expenditure earmarked for reconstruction—23% of estimated damages in Kobe and approximately 80% of estimated damages in Tohoku—stands out as a direct result of state policy to enhance disaster relief efforts.

Table 1: Disaster Statistics for the 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku Earthquakes

Earthquake	1995 Kobe	2011 Tohoku
Areas affected	Hyogo Prefecture 1700 km ² (10 cities/towns)	Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Chiba 9800 km ²

		(37 cities/towns)
Population of affected areas		
Earthquake Magnitude		
Casualties: Dead/Missing/Injured	6,434 / 3 / 43,792	15,879 / 2,698 / > 27,000
Number Homeless (in temporary shelters)	320,000 (236,899)	470,000 (337, 300)
Buildings damaged	200,000	400,436
Estimated Cost of Damages	\$130 billion (2% of GDP)	\$210-300 billion (3.4% of GDP)
	\$30 billion	\$203 billion yen (10 year plan)
Transport & Communication Situation	- 130 km rail closed - 27 roads damaged - 27 highway bridges - 285,000 phone lines not working	- 344 km rail closed - 3,559 roads - 77 highway bridges damaged - 1.9 million fixed lines; 29,000 mobile stations closed

(Sources: Nishikawa 2011, Katsube 2013; Özerdem and Jacoby 2006; Shaw and Goda 2004; Smits 2011)

To isolate the impact of the earthquake from that of the tsunami and nuclear crisis as much as possible, this paper will focus on the post-disaster response in the short and medium terms. Scholars regularly divide post-disaster time into three stages: emergency, restoration, and reconstruction (Aldrich 2012b; Ichikawa 2011; Kates and Pijawka, 1977).⁷ By considering the government response and NGO activity during the first and second stages of post-disaster recovery, it is possible to investigate how changes in state policy have influenced earthquake management. Table 2 below highlights critical areas where Japan's post-disaster response was markedly more expedient and effective in the Tohoku aftermath. The development of a cooperative government-NGO relationship for disaster management from 1995 to 2011 reveals post-Kobe lessons Japan has learned and implemented, as well as areas for further improvement. The superior response time to the Tohoku crisis despite the remote geographical location and complications across multiple prefectures stands out, indicating how policy changes enriched Japan's disaster management infrastructure and NGO performance.

Table 2: Progress of Post-Disaster Relief Efforts in 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku

Time taken for Relief Efforts	1995 Kobe	2011 Tohoku
Utilities Reconnected (gas, electricity, water)	6 months	1 week
Railway Service and Roads Reopened	7 months	4-15 days ("Operation Comb")
Phone Lines Restored	3 weeks	Radios distributed immediately, internet and phone service restored in 3-7 days
Housing Units Built	134,000 houses by 1999 (4 years)	Construction started in 8 days; 100,000 housed in 3-4 weeks
Bridges Repaired	14 months	1 week

(Sources: Cabinet Office 2011; Edgington 2010; Government of Japan 2011; MEXT 2011; MILT 2011)

The 1995 Kobe Disaster: Disordered Government Response and Disaster Management Shortfalls

The 1995 Kobe Earthquake has been recognised by the United Nations as "the first really severe test for a modern city built, theoretically, to be earthquake resistant" (UNCRD 1995, xiii). The Japanese government has been roundly criticised for responding too slowly and ineffectually, poorly managing volunteer efforts, and refusing offers of aid from dozens of countries (Shaw and Goda 2004; Tierney and Goltz 1997). Under Japan's 1961 Disaster

Countermeasures Basic Act, all disaster management coordination was centralised to take place in the Central Disaster Management Council positioned within the Cabinet Office and led by the Prime Minister. However, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi did not have an officer on duty in the Prime Minister's office when the earthquake hit. Consequently, Murayama only found out about the disaster several hours later through a phone call from a friend who suggested he turn on the TV news, by which time thousands had already been buried under rubble and homes had been engulfed in flames (WuDunn 1995).

The Murayama Administration responded haphazardly to the disaster, where media accounts scorned the bureaucratic infighting and red tape that held up government action. As an initial response, the government established an emergency disaster relief centre within the National Land Agency (NLA). However, the NLA squabbled with other ministries and agencies for control and it was not until two days later that another emergency relief headquarters staffed by all members of the Cabinet was set up. Unfortunately, this dual structure was very inefficient and cumbersome. The government's inability to accurately assess the situation and mobilize critical resources in the immediate post-disaster period was exacerbated by broken communication lines obstructing the flow of information and the collapse of the transportation system (Özerdem and Jacoby 2006). The Diet in recess lacked authority and infrastructural connections; there was considerable difficulty in reaching decisions on a plan of action without precedent, and requests by the Hyogo Prefecture for assistance from Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF)—submitted four hours after the earthquake—did not get approved until several days later (Nakagawa 2000, 58). Even when mobilized, only 9000 underequipped troops were dispatched (Tierney and Goltz 1997, 6-7). The miscommunications and blame shuttling back and forth between politicians and soldiers, between central and local governments, only further accentuates how the government was excruciatingly unprepared to face the Kobe disaster (UNCRD 1995; 2003).

The problems of disaster management and political leadership were multiplied by conflicting local government responses. Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters created in the Hyogo prefectural office within an hour, but the established disaster management procedures did not accommodate for large scale disasters (Cabinet Office 2006). Amidst turmoil, Governor Kaihara Toshitami was slow in transmitting requests to central government for aid: although the Disaster Relief Law requiring local public bodies to set aside funds for each Prefecture in case of emergency has been in effect since 1947, it was not invoked by Kobe city until five days after the earthquake (Terry 1998, 237). Moreover, Kobe officials refused medical assistance from other areas and rejected temporary shelters proffered by Osaka (Choate 2011). The dependence on an institutionalisation of complex rituals rather than more flexible and *ad hoc* measures was at the root of these failures (Farrell 1995). As Japan's decision making process required a group consensus developed from structured gathering and weighing of data, social mobilisation and critical resources failed to initiate (Özerdem and Jacoby 2006).⁸

In contrast to an absent government response, Japanese civil society emerged on a national scale as never before. More than 1 million people arrived in Kobe to help within four months of the disaster, transforming the public image of volunteering from an obscure activity to something commonplace that ordinary civilians could engage in (Imada 2003; Tanaka 2005, 161). The media contributed to this image by relaying glowing stories about the thousands of individuals—mostly youths—who volunteered in the post-disaster relief effort. Pre-existing NGOs and volunteer groups were compelled to take the lead in coordinating post-disaster relief for the first time. Professionally qualified NGOs such as the Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service (JOCS) and the Japan Red Cross were among the first on the ground, providing specialist medical and other emergency services (CODE 2004,164; Avenell 2012, 56; Imada 2003). Although few in number, other locally established groups such as the Osaka Voluntary Action Centre, Peace Boat, and Rescue Stockyard were pushed to new levels of professionalisation and organisation. Nonetheless, the dearth of established Japanese NGOs and infrastructure for distributing resources at the time stagnated relief and restoration efforts (Nakagawa and Shaw 2004; Aldrich 2012a). Many NGOs were not formally registered, and were simply too disparate and inexperienced without the necessary staff to effectively coordinate volunteers and organise large-scale relief projects.

One NGO worth highlighting is Peace Boat, an antiestablishment group founded by activist and later socialist politician Tsujimoto Kiyomi in the 1980s. Prior to the Kobe earthquake, the group was accused by national

bureaucrats and politicians of propagating an anti-Japanese agenda. A week after the Kobe disaster, 88 Peace Boat activists began distributing a newsletter, *Daily Needs*, for people in shelters without access to accurate information, and later expanded their activities to distributing supplies and providing volunteer services (Peace Boat 2011c). While the media focused on reporting about post-disaster damages, Peace Boat volunteers provided information about immediate daily needs collected from observations and interviews with survivors (Okabe 2002). Consequently, Peace Boat managed to generate exceptional levels of popular goodwill and social legitimacy, where their appeal for assistance on Asahi Television soon inundated the organisation with over 850 volunteer inquiries (CODE 2004,168; Avenell 2012, 58). Moreover, Peace Boat began to be recognised both by the Japanese government and general public as a leader in post-disaster relief and volunteerism (Peace Boat 2011c; Direct Relief 2011).

Despite the positive stories about volunteerism in Kobe, the reality of 1995 was that both government officials and NGO leaders were poorly prepared to coordinate the thousands of volunteers that flooded into Kobe. This was compounded by the fact that most individuals simply showed up to Kobe without registering or having any prior volunteering experience, causing confusion. The Kobe earthquake struck along a fault line directly under an urban area and most of the damage was isolated in one strip of land, so it was relatively easy for people to enter the disaster zone. In particular, many volunteers made day trips from Osaka, a large city located only 30-40 minutes away by train (Funabashi 2011). By showing up unaffiliated with any organisations, these “unsolicited volunteers” were not well prepared, and came to be labelled “refugee volunteers” as they used up limited resources instead of actually helping. NGOs and volunteer groups were constantly strapped for funds, exacerbated by the government refusing to provide local support and, citing language differences and the lack of local medical accreditation, rejecting most offers of foreign aid (MOFA 1995; CBC News 2011). Insufficient resources diminished the ability of NGOs to assist in the relief; there were perennial shortages of motivation, inadequate technical skills, and opaque organisational mandates (Shaw and Goda 2004, 21-2). Nevertheless, the rudimentary volunteer coordination networks established laid the foundation for NGOs to take the lead in later post-disaster relief efforts and volunteer management.

Below, I examine the policy reforms that took place after Kobe and examine how these changes directly shaped the way the relationship between the Japanese government and NGOs has developed. I then turn to the post-disaster response in Tohoku, focusing on how the actions of the government and Japanese NGOs exhibit characteristics that have clear imprints from policy changes that were implemented during the sixteen years from 1995 to 2011. Table 3 summarizes some key differences in how the government, volunteers, and NGOs responded to the Kobe and Tohoku earthquakes, highlighting policy changes that influenced these developments.

Post-Kobe Policy Reform: Active Liaison with NGOs on Regulatory Support Measures

The failures of Kobe’s post-disaster response prompted the government to acknowledge the importance of developing a professional and “self-sufficient” (*jiko kanketsu*) model of disaster management focused on increased collaboration between the Japanese state, NGOs, and volunteers (Imaho 2003). More than sixteen national laws were passed enhancing cooperation between national, prefectural, and municipal governments, as well as civil society organisations. As Tadashi Yamamoto (1997) notes, the Kobe earthquake was “a watershed event for the development of a civil society in Japan” that led to a shift in public understanding of state and civic responsibility for disaster recovery efforts (1). The Japanese government thoroughly reviewed and revised the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act in 1995 to establish a more immediate response system by breaking down its bureaucratic structure and promoting a faster flow of information. In the event of a major disaster, the Prime Minister is granted the power to mobilize the SDF without first receiving a request from the local governor if he or she deems the catastrophe to warrant it. The Prime Minister can also establish on-site emergency headquarters and designate its head. Under the 1995 Disaster Basic Act, an annual white paper on natural disaster by the government is submitted to Parliament and published for the general public. The Act explicitly states for national and local governments to provide an environment conducive to the performance of voluntary disaster relief activities. This clause involves public bodies such as NGOs in the drafting of crisis management operation plans and establishes government-NGO cooperation on a range of responsibilities related to disaster risk reduction (MOFA 1998; GOJ

2005).

Institutional arrangements to remove abstruse prefectural and national regulations and bureaucratic structures were also established. The Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management position was created several months after the Kobe earthquake to enhance local efforts in gathering data and clarifying information for disaster management (Terry 1998). In January 2001, the Minister of State for Disaster Management position was established in the Cabinet Office to boost inter-ministerial planning and coordination. This minister's presence has since improved the status of disaster reduction policy at the national level. Although these changes in state regulations are directed at improving the government's official disaster management framework, they also proactively incorporate the support of NGOs. Emphasis was placed on transitioning from a centralised concentration of power towards local autonomy, extending to local governments and also into civil society and NGO activities (GOJ 2005). For example, the decentralisation of the official government post-disaster response prompted ministries to form their own cooperative alliances with local NGOs to facilitate relief efforts. Both governmental and social institutions began to direct more support towards NGOs to strengthen this bond (Yamauchi 1999; Hiroko 1999).

Although the Japanese public and many individual politicians were quick to recognise and applaud the role of volunteers and community organisations post-Kobe, the central government did not officially acknowledge their role immediately. Hence, it took several months and often years before the state initiated legislative steps to strengthen Japan's volunteerism and non-profit sector. Once pressure from citizens forced the government to recognise the strengths of NGOs in coordinating disaster-relief and implementing foreign aid, however, there was a spike in government funding (Cabinet Office 2011). NGO Subsidy Funds for Japanese NGO Projects doubled from ¥624 million in 1994 to ¥1.15 billion in 1998, and Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects expanded from ¥970 million to ¥5.8 billion in 5 years. In 1998, the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activity (NPO Law), an amendment to the 1896 Civil Code, liberalised the process for volunteer organisations to acquire legal status as nonprofits and thereby benefit from tax breaks and access to public and private funding (JANIC 2000; Takao 2001). Within five years, 16,160 organisations had been incorporated (EPO 2004). According to a recent report by the Economic Planning Agency, the total number of these NGOs now reaches about 85,000, although many groups in Japan are still not incorporated and remain small. Among those registered, about 350 NGOs have professional staff and are engaged in overseas assistance (Saotome 2011).

Table 3: Comparison of Kobe and Tohoku post-disaster response from the Japanese government, NGOs, and volunteers

Response	1995 Kobe	1995-2011 Policy Changes	2011 Tohoku
Government Official Response	<p><u>Slow</u>: Delays before news was received and decisions made</p> <p><u>Ineffective</u>: political conflict at National Land Agency and Diet, delayed decision making</p> <p><u>Did not cooperate</u> with NGOs or volunteers</p> <p>SDF Mobilisation Delayed (5 days late), poorly prepared. Only 9,000 troops dispatched.</p>	<p>1995: Amendment of 1967 Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act</p> <p>1995: Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary for Crisis Management</p> <p>1995: Act on Special Measures for Earthquake Disaster Countermeasures</p> <p>2001: Minister of State for Disaster Management (Cabinet Office) to chair Central Disaster Management Council</p> <p>Overall reform for greater government efficiency and accountability: Ministries reduced from 22 to 12.</p>	<p><u>Faster</u>: National Committee for Emergency Management convened immediately</p> <p><u>More Effective</u>: Numerous ministries and departments were involved in response and targeting different sections of relief effort</p> <p><u>Actively cooperated</u> with NGOs and volunteers</p> <p>SDF mobilized instantly (within minutes), well prepared. More than 100,000 troops in 3 days.</p>
NGOs Activity	<p><u>Few present</u>: <20 recognised by UN</p>	<p>1998: NPO Law easing corporate status and tax break regulations</p>	<p><u>Many present</u>: >100 recognised by UN</p>

	<p><u>Small</u>: most unable to handle more than a few people</p> <p><u>Poorly Organised</u>: no formal coordination with volunteers, government or other NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation with Government Ministries (MOFA) - Reorganisation of JICA - ODA Reforms Promoting MOFA-NGO cooperation <p>1998 onwards: Subsidy Funds for NGO Projects and Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects increased</p> <p>2000: MOFA launched 3 funding schemes (NGO Consultation System, NGO Management Council, NGO Research Group on Evaluation of International Cooperation)</p>	<p><u>Larger</u>: As result of more funding, NGOs can attract more members</p> <p><u>Better Organised</u>: formal coordination with volunteers, government, and other NGOs.</p>
Volunteers	<p>More than 1.3 million individuals</p> <p><u>Unregistered and Unprepared</u></p> <p>Poor organisation</p> <p><u>Inefficient and disorganised work</u></p> <p><u>Short-term</u></p> <p>No government recognition or assistance</p>	<p>1995: National Social Welfare Council</p> <p>1996: Policies for Volunteer Facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased volunteer network-NGO collaboration <p>1996: Designated Disaster Reduction and Volunteer Day</p>	<p>500,000 within first 4 months, 1 million in a year</p> <p><u>Registered and Prepared</u></p> <p>Good organisation</p> <p><u>Effectively coordinated work</u></p> <p><u>Long-term</u></p> <p>Government Representatives for Volunteering Appointed (Tsujimoto and Yuasa)</p>
Foreign Assistance	<p>70 Offers</p> <p>REJECTED</p>	<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) given primary responsibility in dealing with bi-lateral offers of aid</p> <p>NGOs recognised for strengths in aid implementation</p>	<p>170 Offers</p> <p>ACCEPTED</p>

(Sources: Cabinet Office 2006; Edgington 2010; MEXT 2011; MILT 2011; MILT 2012; UNCRD 2003; Samuels 2013; Wagner 2012)

In 2000, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) launched three additional support schemes for NGO personnel: the NGO Consultation System, the NGO Management Council, and the NGO Research Group on Evaluation of International Cooperation (Haddad 2007; Reimann 2010). The government began to actively engage NGOs in policy dialogues, where MOFA invited NGO leaders to participate in a variety of policy forums. The NGO-MOFA Regular Council was established in 1996 to discuss how government funding schemes can strengthen Japanese NGOs (Hiroko 1999). The MOFA also actively coordinated with Japanese NGOs for International Cooperation (JANIC), the largest NGO network in Japan, as the ministry's counterpart for NGO meetings. In 1998, participants in the NGO-MOFA Regular Council Meeting introduced the NGO-JANIC Council Meeting, a committee designed to promote information exchange and cooperation between NGOs, JANIC, and the government, especially on issues of aid (JANIC 2000). As a result of the increased collaboration between NGOs, MOFA, and JANIC, the government started to contract out grassroots projects to NGOs on a regular basis, further cementing the cooperative state-NGO relationship (Nakagawa and Shaw 2004; Ikeda 2012).

Increased cooperation between the state and NGOs is also evident in government schemes to establish volunteer preparation and evacuation drills (MEXT 2002). The government designated January 17 as "Volunteer Day" and January 15 to 21 as "Disaster Reduction and Volunteer Week." During this period, seminars, and lectures are held to promote volunteerism and self-sustaining disaster reduction activities (GOJ 2005; MEXT 2011). These events take place throughout Japan, cooperating closely with local governments and NGOs. In particular, NGOs take charge of disseminating information and organising community evacuation drills. This collaboration between NGOs and the government on volunteer training strengthened the social status and legitimacy of NGOs, providing NGO staff with

critical experience in organising potential volunteers (Okabe 2002; UNCRD 2003; Ueto 2003).

The 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake: Results of Lessons from 1995 Kobe Revealed

Lessons learned from the successes and failings of the Kobe Earthquake are evident in the recent Tohoku crisis. A comparison of the government's initial responses to the 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku crises exhibits how Japan's disaster management has developed as a result of policy changes over sixteen years. Significantly, the partnership of NGOs and government agencies takes centre stage in the organisation of an effective volunteer system. Due to the large-scale nature of the Tohoku crisis, disaster response coordination among the affected prefectures was crucial, and the role of the national government became more important in coordinating the 227 municipality governments simultaneously struggling in recovery (Smits 2011). Since the implementation of the 1995 Disaster Basic Act, there has been a government crisis centre on duty 24/7 with a standby emergency response team. Hence, the state responded immediately after the earthquake by convening the National Committee for Emergency Management, headed by Prime Minister Kan Naoto. The Committee declared a national emergency in Tohoku and dispatched the SDF and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams for rescue and medical operations (Koresawa 2011). Within hours, the first troops were already on site, and more than 10,000 (almost half of the entire SDF) arrived in the first three days. The SDF actively cooperated with NGOs and volunteers in assisting with rescue and relief, organising a network of inter-agency committees, releasing funds requested, and reassuring citizens (Choate 2011; Koresawa 2011).

All ministries and departments including the MOFA, Ministry of Transport, and Ministry of Health were involved in this response, and local disaster response offices in all affected prefectures immediately began operations. The Ministry of Health was in charge of preparing suitable vehicles for supplying water and assigning hospitals for victims; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries worked with the Ministry of Finance to provide food, portable toilets, blankets, radios, torches, and other essential items. The government also issued a mandate for all of the main highways in the north of the country to be blocked off for emergency response activities (GOJ 2011). In contrast to Kobe, strict earthquake resistant building codes and the prior dissemination of public information on disaster evacuation helped save many lives. Although the Tohoku disaster claimed close to 20,000 lives, reports indicate that the majority of people were killed by the tsunami impact (Katsube 2011). Experts estimate that less than 6 percent of casualties—around 1100 deaths—were caused by collapsed buildings or fires after the Tohoku earthquake. While the nature of the disaster makes it difficult for experts to determine exactly how casualties were incurred, greater preparation from evacuation drills and an enhanced warning system undoubtedly saved numerous lives (Cartillier 2012; Ichikawa 2011).

Although state policy reforms towards disaster management have directly improved Japan's official response, the government is still criticised for shortcomings. High profile government officials, including Prime Minister Kan and the Minister of State for Disaster Management, Ryu Matsumoto, were criticised for their lack of foresight and inappropriate responses to the Tohoku disaster (Aldrich 2013a; Jurriaans 2012). The Crisis Management Centre in the Prime Minister's Office, though much more efficient since its establishment post-Kobe, was unable to reach across barriers of jurisdiction that existed between ministries, contributing to delays (Funabashi 2011, 226). After the crisis erupted, the Kan administration established more than 7 organisations to deal with the post-disaster response. However, in a time of crisis, officials were unable to find time to schedule additional meetings, and so these new organisations were not very successful. Tensions between politicians and bureaucrats once again played a role in preventing quick and resolute decisions and actions (Aldrich 2013b). Consequently, in its handling of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster, the Kan administration has been described as dealing with a "management crisis of crisis management," where the lack of a comprehensive national disaster response plan, inability and unwillingness of ministries to share agency-specific plans, limited resources, and small crisis management office exposed a "systematic shortfall that hampered adaptability" (Bosner 2011, 1).

Nevertheless, these shortfalls should not be just seen as failings of the government; rather, they actually reflect changes in the relationship between state and society in Japan. The enlarged role of Japanese NGOs in disaster relief

reveals how lapses in government effectiveness actually opened up areas for civil society and volunteerism to lead the post-disaster relief effort. It is worth highlighting that the government specifically appointed figures experienced with NGOs, such as Tsujimoto and Yuasa, to serve as intermediaries for NGO and government activities. Both Tsujimoto and Yuasa have great credibility among NGOs: Tsujimoto for her activities as the former founder of Peace Boat, and Yuasa for his reputation as a tireless advocate for the homeless and poverty, and for leading two influential NGOs in these areas (Avenell 2012). The national government also rapidly implemented a series of regulatory and administrative measures to facilitate volunteering. NGOs were provided special road passes to access roads that were reserved for emergency service vehicles to transport volunteers into the disaster area (Tsujimoto and Yuasa 2011). Policy changes also streamlined certification procedures for new nonprofits (NPOs), eased reporting requirements for existing groups, and simplified procedures allowing NGOs greater mobility. These policies noticeably affected the increased presence of NGOs in Tohoku. For example, before 3.11, there were only 24 registered NGOs in Iwate Prefecture; 6 months later, there were 360 (Samuels 2013).

In the wake of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, the response and performance of local NGOs in post-disaster relief have garnered widespread international attention (Aldrich 2013a; 2013b). Like in post-Kobe, NGO groups were among the first to reach Tohoku after the disaster. However, NGOs now have a higher public profile, greater social legitimacy, and a central role in organising volunteer work. In comparing volunteer data from these two earthquakes, one may note that while the number of NGOs involved in the disaster relief effort *increased*, the actual number of individual volunteers *decreased* from Kobe to Tohoku. This was primarily due to how Tohoku was extremely inaccessible compared to Kobe, and the nuclear danger also made Tohoku an abnormal context. Within the first four months after the Tohoku Earthquake, there were 499,300 volunteers registered in Fukushima, Iwate, and Miyagi. Volunteer numbers rose to 935,000 after a year. As such, scholars have observed that the nature of volunteerism and NGO activity in Tohoku is characterised by fewer volunteers on-site initially but larger numbers engaged in longer-term relief work. This is distinct from the post-Kobe landscape for NGOs and volunteerism, where although 1.3 million people volunteered in the first few months post-Kobe, there was a sharp decline after 6 months as infrastructure to sustain nonprofit activity was lacking. In light of the fact that the Tohoku disaster affected a remote geographical region, where even short visits necessitated at least several days' lodging, the number of volunteers and NGOs that still made it to Tohoku reflects the success of policy changes implemented to promote civil society growth post-Kobe (Funabashi and Takenaka 2011). NGOs and volunteers in Tohoku possess an extensive network of resources, including experienced staff, and are better prepared to coordinate a sustained relief work. The greater credibility of NGO activities in the public eye also influences people to contact NGOs active in the area to volunteer their services, rather than going to the disaster areas on their own. This way, NGOs are able to plan accommodations for volunteers without disrupting the lives of disaster victims in shelters (Sodekawa 2011, 276).

NGO work in Tohoku is facilitated by national and local government support. Kobe City from Hyogo Prefecture provided ¥1.3 million in grants for NGOs sending local groups to Tohoku to build critical facilities, including medical centres. Kobe also partnered with local NGOs to provide volunteers with free buses from "Volunteer Plaza" to Tohoku (Ido 2011, 132). Volunteer Centres staffed by Japanese NGOs were established by each affected municipality to coordinate and assign tasks. These Centres were the primary institutions for coordinating disaster relief to Tohoku from across Japan, complementing relief work by government ministries. In working closely with municipal Disaster Headquarters, social welfare NGOs were among the first to provide needs assessments, assemble and assign volunteers, evaluate work, and provide information on the Tohoku crisis (Samuels 2013). Moreover, NGOs actively worked with ministries such as the Ministry of Finance to distribute food and other essential items. Due to the close working relationship developed between local governments and Japanese NGOs through grassroots contract projects post-Kobe, familiarity with collaborative work during the Tohoku response revealed swift and targeted results.

The diversity and depth of voluntary groups involved in Tohoku is striking and reflects the substantial growth of many Japanese NGOs, especially their increased strength and effectiveness vis-à-vis government support. For example, the leading presence of Peace Boat reveals a larger, better organised, experienced, and more resourceful NGO as compared to its first engagement with disaster relief in 1995 Kobe. Peace Boat began operations in the devastated Ishinomaki region of Miyagi in cooperation with the city's Social Welfare Council, the Mayor, Japan Youth Chamber, and SDF almost immediately. Upon consultation with local authorities, Peace Boat established a

base to collect information about damage and needs to deliver emergency supplies (Peace Boat 2011c). The NGO was then able to guide local government action by proposing specific measures to alleviate the hardship of disaster victims and coordinate relief efforts between Ishinomaki's local government and numerous other NGOs, institutions, and individuals in the region (Peace Boat 2011a; Direct Relief 2011).

Another area where changes in government policy allowed NGOs to take the lead was in directing foreign aid and volunteers. After the Kobe earthquake, the Japanese government actively collaborated with NGOs to foster greater public understanding and support for its Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs (MOFA 1998). NGOs were established as a channel through which people can participate in international cooperation activities (Yamashita 2003). In the aftermath of the Tohoku disaster, more than 170 different countries and organisations extended help to Japan as a result of the government's public appeal for international assistance. This gesture clearly reflects a stark change in Japan's foreign policy since 1995 Kobe, when the government rejected such aid. NGOs such as Peace Boat recruited and managed foreign donations and volunteers, stepping in when local governments were unable to deal with coordinating international support (CBC News 2011; Robinson 2011). Peace Boat organised volunteers and volunteer buses independently and held its own briefings for volunteers in major cities (Peace Boat 2011b). To facilitate the participation of foreign volunteers, the NGO deployed bilingual staff and prepared multilingual guidance pamphlets. The NGO was also able to conduct street donation campaigns and collect emergency supplies from its Tokyo headquarters to send to the Tohoku team. Another local NGO, the Tokyo Voluntary Action Centre (TVAC), coordinated volunteer busses to Tohoku in cooperation with the Tokyo municipal government and private tour companies (TVAC 2013). Like Peace Boat, TVAC provides volunteers with explanatory sessions and pre-departure briefings, a process that reveals the increased professionalisation and autonomy of NGOs in volunteer training and coordination, liaison with officials, fund raising, and overall relief efforts for Tohoku's disaster areas.

Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the post-disaster responses to Kobe and Tohoku reveals improvements in the effectiveness of crisis management, especially with regard to the enhanced cooperation between the government and NGOs facilitated by changes in state policy. The legal changes implemented after the Kobe Earthquake not only improved the government's ability to respond to major disasters, but also directly and indirectly strengthened the role of Japanese NGOs in coordinating post-disaster relief. Consequently, the government and NGOs were much more prepared and effective in transforming volunteers and aid into concrete actions addressing urgent tasks. The achievements of this extensive cooperation between state institutions and NGOs to stem the Tohoku catastrophe are momentous. Within a year, all 13 airports were back to operation. Most of the transport routes and telecommunication networks were reestablished in a considerably short period of time (JT 2012; TPF 2012). Almost all households have been reconnected to water, electricity, and gas supply networks, and more than 100,000 people have been provided with temporary housing facilities (McCurry 2012; Toyokuni 2012). However, numerous questions and challenges remain with regard to the future trajectory of government policies and NGO involvement in disaster management.

It was beyond the purview of this paper to analyse the impact of social media and technological advancements on disaster mitigation. Although not a direct result of Japan's state policy towards disaster management or civil society, technological advancements from 1995 to 2011 greatly affected the post-disaster relief effort. NGOs used social media and the Internet extensively to communicate information, fundraise, and coordinate volunteers. Several scholars have already begun work on the impact of social media in Japan's disaster management infrastructure (e.g.: Slater *et al.* 2011; Slater 2012; Tkack-Kawasaki 2012; Murai 2011). As Japan becomes an increasingly advanced society based on information technology, further research illuminating how online networks may facilitate state-society relations or contribute to strengthening NGO influence and civil society is necessary. We must nonetheless note that government cooperation with and support for NGOs extended them the basic legitimacy and recognition necessary to develop and reach out to civil society. Additionally, the business community played a major role in contributing to the Tohoku relief effort. Although not addressed in this paper, it will be important for more studies to consider how the relationship between government policies, NGOs, and business corporations have developed vis-à-vis Japan's

disaster management framework and civil society (Kawashima 2003; Muruya 2011).

Ultimately, 1995 Kobe and 2011 Tohoku are very different disasters, with Tohoku requiring substantial long-term reconstruction work. Considering that 3.11 was actually a chain-reaction disaster of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear crises, it is difficult to compare the 2011 Tohoku and 1995 Kobe Earthquakes as a model to measure the performance of Japan's disaster management policies and NGO activity in earthquake relief developed over time. Nonetheless, with NGOs as a key source of citizens' power and advocacy, the expansion of and support for such organisations in Japan signals shifts in the relationship between civil society and the state. It is likely that the state will help facilitate NGO efforts through more legislative action, given that the government must continue to rely on NGOs and volunteers for recovery in Tohoku and future disasters. Although there has already been some progress with the improvement of the tax treatment of donations to NGOs in June 2011, the number of certified organisations strong enough and willing to effectively manage large numbers of resources remain limited (Wagner 2012). As NGOs become increasingly more systemised with government backing, another important question concerns the extent to which they represent non-state organisations. With the ongoing Tohoku post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, how shifting state policies and systems are shaping and perhaps constraining future NGO growth and patterns of volunteerism in Japan becomes an increasingly important issue.

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Notes

[1] The Japan Meteorological Agency officially announced that the Great East Japan Earthquake was the fourth largest earthquake recorded worldwide since the beginning of the 20th century (Funabashi and Takenaka 2011).

[2] Attempts to examine civil society in the Japanese context have consistently highlighted the fact that few Japanese promoted or even discussed "civil society" prior to 1945, and that the concept would have likely been regarded as inappropriate or illegitimate (Iokibe 1999; Yamamoto 1999; Garon 2003).

[3] Although I propose a broad definition of civil society, market sector groups in Japan generally fall under the business sector, and are closely intertwined with the state. Thus, they do not meet the minimal requirement of dual autonomy.

[4] Professor Susan Pharr brought up the issue of the “four smalls” that define Japanese civil society groups during the Week 7 Government 2148 class discussion on Japanese civil society. Pekkanen (2006) also makes reference to Pharr’s comment on this issue in the context of a conference panel discussion.

[5] In the Anglo-American world and France, civil society is typically also closely tied to the presence of a public sphere as a domain of discourse for the vibrant exchange of ideas monitoring and limiting state authority (Garon 2003). Studies of the nonprofit sector and civil society portray three conceptions of the relationship between the state and civil society. The first is a situation where civil society is established in opposition to or in place of the state. Second is civil society portrayed as the independent sector or another actor with public aims often cooperating with the state in service provision (Salamon 1995; Smith and Lipsky 1993). Third is civil society viewed as a source of social capital and civic engagement (Putnam 1993).

[6] Based on the Uniform Civil Code of 1896, many incorporated associations were established at the state’s initiative and are staffed by retired bureaucrats. This process whereby retiring civil servants “descend from heaven” from bureaucracy to important posts in incorporated associations has been referred to as the practice of *amakudari* (Alagappa 2004; Keiko, 2002). Consequently, the majority of associations established up until the mid-1990s do not fully meet the criteria of an NGO as a voluntary and self-governing group (Keiko 2002; Reimann 2010).

[7] During the emergency period, the response is focused on rescue and recovery, with rescuers seeking to save people still trapped beneath buildings, bringing the injured to hospitals and medical care, or providing temporary shelters and emergency food for survivors. The restoration period after the initial relief phase involves the removal of damaged infrastructure, collapsed roads, bridges, debris, and initiates the replacement of public facilities. During this time, utilities such as gas, water, sewage, and electricity services are reconnected, and temporary housing is built nearby. Finally, the reconstruction period seeks to re-house survivors in old neighborhoods or help them reestablish their lives in new areas (May 1985).

[8] The frustration caused by these failings is summarized in Hiroshi Fukunga’s article in Tokyo’s *Business Today*: “It now seems clear that even in a national emergency the nation’s penpushers will not swerve a millimeter from official procedures, even if fellow citizens’ lives are at risk... While the hours slipped by and thousands lost their lives in the fiery ruins left by the Kobe disaster, Japanese officials’ top priorities were observing protocol and following precedent (qtd. in Oakes, 1998: 31-2).”

About the Author

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