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3. Working with and around Strong States: Environmental Networks in East Asia

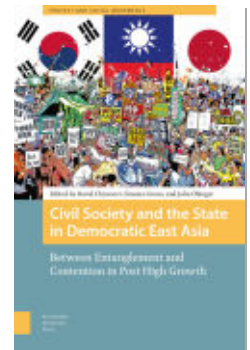
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3 Working with and around Strong States

Environmental Networks in East Asia

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Abstract

East Asia is a region dominated by developmental states that favour business and constrain advocacy organizations, yet Japan has been leading the world in emissions standards for decades, China has recently become the world's largest producer of photovoltaic panels and a world leader in renewable energy, and Korea and Taiwan have both embarked on major green initiatives that involve green business development, the creation of national parks, widespread energy conservation and comprehensive recycling efforts. This chapter discusses environmental organizations' networking strategies to find allies within governmental and business echelons in order to affect pro-environmental changes. Focusing on the issue area of the environment, it argues that non-profit organizations play important roles in developing the coordinating networks that facilitate policymaking in challenging and diverse political contexts.

Keywords: China, Japan, East Asia, civil society, non-profit organizations, networks, environmental policy

East Asia is a region characterized by developmental states that have prioritized economic growth and worked closely with business interests in order to create the world's most vibrant economic region. The region's rapid economic growth has come at a terrible environmental and social cost as intense pollution spread in the wake of rapid industrialization. First in Japan, then in the 'Asian Tigers' of South Korea and Taiwan, and most recently in the much larger China, citizens in each place have organized and successfully demanded relief. In East Asia today, whether they are located

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in China, Japan, South Korea or Taiwan, environmental organizations have found creative ways to work with and around their governments. The result is a region containing a political paradox: strong, pro-business governments that promote extensive environmental policies.

This chapter aims to shed light on one explanation for this paradox – organizational networks. As one of their most effective responses to working within a political context of strong states, environmental organizations in the region have created policy-relevant networks that simultaneously work with and around their states. Through these networks, both formal and informal, environmental activists in the region have found ways to leverage their scarce resources by sharing information and coordinating their advocacy efforts. They are able to pilot new projects and disseminate best practices. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they are able to utilize these networks to cultivate and empower allies inside the government at both the local and national levels.

The patterns and behaviour of these networks and their members help us understand not only how citizens in East Asia have fundamentally transformed the growth-first politics of the earlier developmental state period, the focus of this volume, but also how citizens more broadly can be effective actors even in hostile and diverse political contexts. Environmental advocacy in East Asia is a ‘hard case’ for political advocacy. The political, legal, and social environment in which these advocates operate is especially hostile, so their ability to influence policy is particularly impressive. Thus, environmental advocates in East Asia can offer models of success that should be useful to activists everywhere.

A Brief History of Environmental Politics in East Asia

Across East Asia the environment was one of the first issue areas around which citizens in the region were able to organize politically and made successful demands of their states. Environmental activism across the region followed directly from pollution caused by rapid industrialization – residents living near industrial facilities found their health and livelihoods threatened by polluting companies and demanded redress. In all cases this activism began in non-democratic political contexts, although it has matured, diversified and strengthened over time.

Environmental advocacy in the region began in Japan, which was the first country to industrialize. As in all countries, initial efforts took on the classic NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) form, where local residents protested

the pollution of a particular industrial plant that was polluting their community – these early advocates were not part of any national movement, they did not promote broader ideological goals, and they were not members of the elite. East Asia's first environmental advocates, in all cases, were farmers and fishermen who saw their children die, their wives get sick, and their crop and fishing yields collapse. Under Confucian political philosophy, a core political and social tenant shared by all the societies in the region, individuals are entitled to the right of subsistence, and governments lose their legitimacy if that right is threatened (Tu 1998, 1999). As a result, the states in the region have recognized that failing to deal with the environmental challenges constitutes an existential threat.

Japan's earliest environmental advocates were located in small, rural mining towns – the Ashio mine in Tochigi prefecture, Sumitomo's mine in Ehime and Hitachi's mine in Ibaraki. When industrial production exploded in the 1880s, residents quickly found that the sulphur and other heavy metals emitted from the smokestacks was polluting the soil and nearby streams, decimating crop and fishing yields, and causing serious health problems for residents. Although culpability was initially denied, company and government officials found a technical solution to the problem (higher smokestacks) by the early 1900s and compensated victims, so protests disappeared (McKean 1981). The next set of environmental protests erupted as pollution spread as a result of Japan's next surge – industrial expansion in the 1950s. In the 1960s, communities like Minamata rose up and demanded that the government force companies to halt their polluting practices. By then Japan had democratic institutions, so these victims were able to take perpetrators to court, and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leaders were pressured as citizens across the country voted opposition party candidates into city and prefectural government offices (McKean 1981; Upham 1987). By 1970 the LDP in Tokyo was feeling the pressure and worked closely with industry to get ahead of the rising citizen discontent, eventually passing such extensive environmental legislation that the 1970 Diet came to be known as the Pollution Diet. The ambitious emission goals set Japan on a course to become a global leader in environmental policy and Japanese firms on route to market leadership in green technology.

For South Korea and Taiwan, the period of industrial expansion occurred two decades later, so their environmental protests began in the 1980s. Unlike in Japan, which was able to resolve the disputes without significant political change, South Korea and Taiwan's environmental movement merged with the pro-democracy movements in both countries. Advocates had recognized that the core problem was related to governance – the close

government-business relationship of their authoritarian governments was not prioritizing the needs of the people in their policies. Unlike in Japan, the ruling party and business in South Korea and Taiwan were not able to get ahead of the problem, and both countries saw their decades-old military rule overthrown by peaceful democratic/environmental populist movements by the end of the decade (Lee 2000; Ku 2011; Reardon-Anderson 1997).

In China, the story is just now unfolding. China's industrial expansion exploded with its admission into the World Trade Organization in 2001. By mid-decade China's environmental problems were starting to become a concern globally (Economy 2004), and by the end of the decade environmental protests were spreading across the country as citizens in small rural communities as well as giant cosmopolitan cities were demanding that the government address their pollution problems (Economy 2011). Now, China is actively seeking to follow the Japanese model whereby the single ruling party works with business to get ahead of the problem, rather than the Taiwanese and South Korean path in which they fail to do so and end up out of power (Haddad 2015).

In all four countries, and indeed in much of the world, there has been a dramatic expansion in environmental organizations and advocacy in the last two decades as a result of the expansion of the global environmental movement and the spread of information technology, which has significantly sped the rate of information transfer and facilitated the creation and maintenance of organizational networks. A few pivotal events helped spur this growth. The 1992 establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change during the Earth Summit in Rio raised the prominence of climate change, inspiring many countries and activists to push for the creation of national and local plans to adapt and mitigate its effects (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

These initial efforts were strengthened in the 1998 Kyoto Protocol, which established legally binding obligations for countries that ratified it. The East Asian location of that 1997 Conference of Parties ensured record-breaking NGO participation, and the beginning of many national and regional environmental networks in East Asia (Reimann 2003; Cheng 2014; Lee 2013; Tiberghien and Schreurs 2007). The Olympic Games have also offered symbolic and commercial opportunities for the national governments of China (Beijing, 2008), South Korea (Pyeongchang, 2018), and Tokyo (2020) to compete for the 'greenest' Olympics.

Even more than crafted political opportunities, the planet itself has forced everyone in the region – businesses, governments, and citizens – to acknowledge the deadly effects of climate change. Typhoons (Mei and Xie

2016), river and coastal flooding (Arnell and Gosling 2016), and droughts and dust storms (Zhang and Zhou 2015) have all increased their scope, frequency, and intensity in recent years. By far the single most politically influential disaster in the region was the Triple Disaster (earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster) on 11 March 2011 in Tohoku, Japan (Samuels 2013). The nuclear meltdown in Fukushima focused global attention on the unsustainability of current energy consumption patterns as well as the political corruption that has supported those energy systems. The Fukushima disaster reinvigorated anti-nuclear movements around the region (Grano 2015; Aldrich 2012; Chiavacci and Obinger 2018; Harris and Lang 2015), some of which combined with other social and political movements targeting pro-business governments (Ho 2019; Harris and Lang 2015).

Whether spurred by industrial pollution, political opportunism, natural disasters or artistic inspiration, all of the chapters in this volume document East Asia's rising civic activism. In democratic and non-democratic states alike, we have seen a common pattern of pro-business developmental states engage in policies that rapidly expanded industrial development with horrific environmental consequences, generating widespread civic protests that result from the threats to life and livelihood caused by pollution, and governments are responding to citizen demands. However, although activism is rising, repression is rising, too. In China, advocates are frequently jailed when they become too outspoken (Radio Free Asia 2016). In South Korea, political lobbying is illegal, and Japan's free press is being repressed by a hostile administration (Fackler 2016, 2017).

Nevertheless, citizens across the region are working with and against their governments to promote a better environment for their communities and the world (Harris and Lang 2015). The remainder of this chapter will examine one way in which organizations are pursuing this goal – networking with other organizations to assist and pressure governments to develop and implement better policies.

Methodology

This chapter emerges from an inductive examination of advocacy in East Asia working in the environmental policy realm. As part of a broader project that investigates multiple advocacy strategies, this chapter examines the behaviour of environmental organizations and the networks that they create in order to generate insights into the patterns of network formation and the effects of those networks on policymaking and outcomes. It is

particularly interested in broader insights that can be gained concerning civic activism across political regime types that might be applicable in other parts of the world.

The research presented here is based on two primary sources: five months of fieldwork in East Asia and an original database of environmental organizations in the region. I conducted research trips to Beijing, Seoul, and Taipei in 2010, with trips to Tokyo and Beijing in 2011 and 2015. The bulk of the research presented here was gathered from interviews conducted with nearly a hundred advocates, journalists, government officials, business people, grassroots volunteers and academics. In each city I reached out to environmental policymakers inside and outside of government as well as grassroots advocates and artists. I used a combination of cold contacts and snowball-type sampling to gather a diverse range of advocates and policymakers.

The typology of networks was conceptualized by the author after analysing the processes through which advocates sought to influence policymakers as they worked to craft environmental policy in their own localities and countries. Through a close examination of the interactions of advocates and policymakers, the flow of financing to non-governmental organizations, policy tracing from problem definition through policy formation and execution, the author was able to identify patterns in the formal and informal networks among advocates and policymakers.

The examples given below are chosen because they offer good illustrations of the typologies conceptualized. Because all of these data were collected as part of an inductive research process, none of the evidence presented here is intended to test any particular hypothesis or theory. Rather, the cases here are introduced to begin to develop a better theory about how civic organizations in challenging and diverse settings can work with one another to collaborate and pressure governments to change policy.

Typology of Environmental Networks in East Asia

This section will describe three types of networks that environmental advocates create in order to promote pro-environmental policy and behaviour change: (1) hub-and-spoke networks, in which a non-profit creates a 'hub' that connects smaller organizations to one another around a policy area; (2) horizontal networks in which the non-profits facilitate the connection of a wide variety of actors – governmental, non-profit, and private – to one another; (3) vertical networks in which the non-profits connect local and

central government officials in ways designed to enhance the political power of pro-environmental officials in their negotiations with other parts of their own government.

The key features of all three types of networks is that they bring diverse sets of people together in ways that help promote the development of long-term personal relationships that can facilitate formal and informal collaboration related to policymaking and implementation. All three types of networks can be found across all the places in East Asia and, I suspect, across the world. The examples are drawn from different countries rather than a single country in order to help the reader understand that the types of networks are found all over. The types of networks as conceptualized are neither country nor region specific.

Hub-and-Spoke Network: Non-profit Organization as Funder/Coordinator

A hub-and-spoke network is one where a single organization forms the ‘hub’ through which other individual and organizational ‘spokes’ connect. The ‘spokes’ often have very little way to connect to the other ‘spokes’ except through the hub. A key characteristic of the hub-and-spoke networks in East Asia (and likely elsewhere) is that they hub organizations are often GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations) (Hasmath et al. 2019). GONGOs are frequently established with government funds, receive most of their income from the government and are led by former government officials. This means that facilitating government-NGO coordination and collaboration is core to their mission, in contrast to advocacy NGOs, which have a mission that does not presume government collaboration. Thus, one of the most important roles of these ‘hub’ organizations is to help serve as a channel from the NGO community to governmental policymakers.

A hub-and-spoke network can be created in a number of different ways, and I will discuss two distinct variations here. The first is one is hub-as-funder, where the network is formally institutionalized with a funding organization located at the centre of the network and member/recipient organizations joining that network. The power of the groups is very hierarchical in this arrangement – the funder has the money and the recipient organizations are the ones implementing the environmental agendas, but they are dependent on the funding organization. In this model the hub organization is usually set up to be the primary means through which the member organizations can access policymakers.

A second model is hub-as-organizer. In this model, the hub organization creates opportunities for members to come together and connect with relevant policymakers. Similar to the first type, there would often be little opportunity for members to connect without the assistance of the hub. However, in this model the hub organization rarely funds the members directly but merely introduces them to one another and may also introduce them to funders. Similarly, the member organizations are usually highly diverse in their power/resources, so the network is a highly heterogeneous and relatively un-hierarchical type of network, in contrast to the hub-as-funder model. In this model, governmental organizations and funders are often members themselves. Thus, the hub organization serves more a role of matchmaker to help the funders, policymakers and relevant governmental organizations/people meet each other rather than creating an arrangement where the NGO groups have to go through the 'hub' organization in order to access policymakers or funders. In some cases, once introduced, 'spoke' organizations are able to break off and form new networks of their own.

Hub-as-Funder

Perhaps the most archetypical hub-as-funder network that I found in my research was created by the China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO), which is a GONGO operating in Beijing whose main mission is to promote the development and support of NGOs in China. CANGO has a strong focus on environment and sustainable development. Like its counterparts elsewhere in the region, it seeks to build and sustain networks that will enhance the capacity for environmental organizations in China.

One of the main ways it promotes environmental agendas is by funnelling money that is collected from foreign organizations to local NGOs. Indeed, CANGO was originally the China International Technology and Cooperation Exchange Organization, which was the branch of the Chinese government that helped implement official development assistance (ODA) that was given to China by foreign governments. When the pattern of international aid shifted such that (a) aid was often given directly to organizations rather than going through the government, and (b) donations often came from international NGOs rather than foreign governments, CANGO broke off from the official implementing agency to form its own NGO in 1992, although it retains very strong ties to the government.

Most non-profit organizations in China (and most places in the world) tend to be very small, with few if any professional staff. As a result, their capacity to design and implement projects as well as to find funding for

those projects is extremely limited. CANGO helps increase the capacity of these groups through a variety of capacity-building initiatives, including workshops on fundraising, budgeting, etc. It works with multiple organizations by helping them with project development, implementation, and assessment.

For example, the Green Commuting Network was formed in 2007 to connect Chinese NGOs that were working to develop more environmentally sustainable commuting behaviour, and by 2009 the network included 20 NGOs from across the country. Members of the network promote green commuting campaigns, participate in annual conferences and take part in volunteer management workshops. The Green Commuting Network also engaged in research, gathering commuting data in seven cities in 2011. Separate but concurrent with the Green Commuting Network, CANGO established a Green Commuting Fund in 2009. The fund helps support green commuting initiatives around the country and also enabled the first voluntary domestic carbon credit trading in China.¹

It should be noted that international organizations can also form these types of hub-as-funder networks around a local branch office or a particular project. In these networks the international organization acts as the hub-as-funder, and the participating local NGOs participate in co-development and project implementation. Examples include the Yangtze Wetland Conservation Network (where the hub was WWF China and local NGOs form the spokes).

Hub-as-Coordinator

The organization that perhaps best exemplifies how to create networks where the hub organization performs a coordinator role is the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), which is based in Kanagawa with branch/affiliated units in Tokyo, Kansai and Kitakyushu within Japan as well as in Beijing, Bangkok and New Delhi. It was formed in 1998 as part of an initiative of the Japanese government. Its mission is to conduct 'practical and innovative research for realizing sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.'² To this end it has seven different research themes ranging from climate and energy to sustainable cities. Each of the

¹ For more about these initiatives, see CANGO's annual reports, <http://www.cango.org/upload/files/Annual%20Report%202013.pdf> (24 February 2018).

² See the 'About Us' page on the IGES website, <http://www.iges.or.jp/en/outline/index.html> (24 February 2018).

focal themes has a team of in-house and external researchers working on particular projects, and they publish policy reports and working papers with titles such as 'Designing Adaptation Finance for the Green Climate Fund: Challenges and Opportunities Drawn from Existing Multilateral Funds for Adaptation.'³

In addition to their research and policy participation, IGES is very active in facilitating peer-to-peer learning and dissemination of best practices across the region. Through its regional centres it hosts events that bring together a wide range of different types of participants that are all concerned with particular issues. For example, the annual High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities brings together local municipal leaders with direct experience developing and implementing environmental policy at a local level (e.g. sanitation district heads, transportation office directors, and mayors), NGO activists working on these issues in the region, academics and also funding agencies (e.g. JICA, the organization that disburses most of Japan's development aid).

There are several important characteristics to notice about the networks that IGES helps to form and maintain:

- Members of the network come from all sectors of the economy: non-profit, for-profit, government, academic, etc.
- The connections formed with one another are generally informal. Some of the networks are membership based and have requirements for participation, but most do not.
- The power structure of the network is horizontal – despite the very different levels of power and resources among the participants in the network, each has relatively equal membership status and participates on an equal basis for the most part.
- The coordinating organization – IGES – is not a primary funder of the organizations in the network. For the most part, IGES finances the network itself, helps maintain communication, hosts conferences, etc., but it does not generally give funding to member organizations to carry on their missions.

This last point is a very important one. Funding organizations, for example, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), frequently participate in the networks that involved international groups, and the events create the opportunity for organizations and governments seeking funding to solicit

3 Full text of the working paper, http://enviroscope.iges.or.jp/modules/envirolib/upload/4171/attach/IGES_Working_Paper_CC-2012-04.pdf (24 February 2018).

funds and pitch proposals. However, IGES does not itself offer members funding, so it is able to serve as an impartial coordinator and facilitator, significantly reducing the power asymmetry that would exist if it were serving as both coordinator and funder of its members.

Horizontal Network: Fluid, Web-like Networks with No Centre

Because environmental organizations are frequently all-volunteer or have very few professional staff, they form networks in order to increase their capacity to carry out projects and also to advocate for policy change. These types of networks are usually characterized by their high level of flexibility – it is easy to join and easy to leave. It is easy to remain connected but not active, or to shift from being not particularly active to highly active and then back to not very active again. Networks are a method to connect with like-minded individuals and organizations. Networks can also provide political cover for individual organizations that may be engaged in work that is controversial or challenges the status quo, since it is the network that is taking the action, not any particular organization.

Horizontal networks can be as informal as an email list set up after a conference or as formal as an organization with annual dues. They are highly diverse in form, but, as with the above, I will highlight two distinct types below: event-focused networks and issue-focused networks. The key characteristic of the first type is that they are short-term, focused on creating a network of individuals and organizations to ease coordination around a particular event. After the event, it may be that the network re-forms with a different purpose and continues to expand. More frequently, the network disbands after the event, although once it has formed, it is relatively easy to reactive or re-engage the participants in order to support other events in the future. The key characteristic of the second type of network is that the members are drawn together because of interest in a particular issue.

Event-Focused Networks

Perhaps one of the best-known environmental NGOs in Japan is the Kiko Network (Kiko Nettowaku – *kikō* is the Japanese word for ‘climate’). It began as a horizontal event-focused network, the Kiko Forum, which grew and eventually institutionalized into an issue-focused network organization. Since 1995, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has held annual Conferences of the Parties (COP) meetings. The third of these (COP3) was held in December 1997 and was the conference that first

adopted the Kyoto Protocol. In the late 1990s, it was not yet standard practice to hold a 'shadow' conference that gathered the NGO community together at the same time as governmental leaders were also meeting. Kiko Forum's efforts to mobilize the NGO community prior to the COP3 meetings in Kyoto contributed to the creation of the 'meetings in conjunction' that has now become standard practice with all of the major intergovernmental conferences (e.g. COP, G8, WTO etc.).

Starting in early 1997, the Kiko Forum began mobilizing the NGO community both within Japan and around the world to connect the organizations working on environmental issues to share information, arrange meetings, and raise public awareness prior to and during the COP3 meetings in Kyoto. It was very successful, not only enabling the NGO community to participate actively in the COP3 meetings, but also by establishing a model that other groups could follow. Following the meeting, the Kiko Forum disbanded and formed a more permanent NGO, called Kiko Network, or Kiko-Net.⁴ Although it is now a registered non-profit, it remains very small by international standards. Although it has a membership of about 700 organizations, it has only about ten staff members – six in Kyoto and four in Tokyo (Reimann 2003).

More typical than event-based networks that institutionalize into their own organizations are networks that form around particular events and then disband when the event is over. One example from China is the group of NGOs that networked together to promote the 26 Degree campaign, which began in Beijing in 2004. This campaign aimed to get everyone, but particularly large hotels and businesses, to keep their air conditioners set to 26 (as opposed to 22 or 20) degrees in the summer. Partnering with a number of international NGOs with offices in Beijing (e.g. WWF), a group of local Chinese environmental groups (including Global Village of Beijing, Green Earth Volunteers and Friends of Nature) got together to run a very successful campaign that not only raised public awareness in Beijing, but also resulted in significant carbon emissions savings, and, ultimately, a shift in local and national public policy that required government offices to keep their air conditioners set at or above 26 degrees, and set that temperature as the standard for hotels, restaurants, and office buildings. The network that they formed was significantly based on the personal network already existing among the leaders of these groups, and it remained ad hoc, dissolving once the campaign finished.

4 Koko Network homepage (in Japanese, English page also available, <http://www.kikonet.org/> (24 February 2018)).

Issue-Focused Networks

Issue-focused networks bring together loose associations of organizations which have similar interests. The issue might be air pollution, garbage, fisheries management, etc. Many of the most enduring of these networks are organized around rivers. Rivers are themselves network systems, so perhaps it is only natural that organizations located in different towns and cities along the same river, even if they are in different countries, frequently form networks among their organizations.

Sometimes these networks seek to join together multiple organizations and local governments to mobilize support for changes in national policy (see Waley 2005). More frequently, they are focused on local environmental issues, and use their network connections to gain support to fight their local NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) battles (Litzinger 2007). Grano's chapter in this volume shows how these local NIMBY fights can grow to form national political movements, and Weiss's chapter demonstrates how networks of organizations with different issue foci (e.g. women's rights and environment) can combine to demand political change from the ruling party.

A successful example of an issue-focused network that transformed into a national non-profit organization is Wetlands Taiwan. The organization originated in the mid-1990s from a grassroots NIMBY battle against the expansion of the Tainan Industrial Park on Taiwan's south-eastern coast. As similar NIMBY battles were fought across the country against the expansion of industrial parks and the degradation of the surrounding environment, similar efforts in other localities joined together. Now Wetlands Taiwan is a network of regional associations which focus on protecting particular wetlands. While the Tainan association remains the strongest (the organization's headquarters is there), the other associations and the national network work closely with local residents, local organizations, local and national governments on conservation issues. They disseminate relevant local and international news pertaining to wetland conservation, host lectures, organize activities such as bird watching tours inside the protected areas, and work with local and national policymakers on issues related to wetlands conservation.

Vertical Networks

When NGOs form vertical networks, they are frequently acting as a match-maker or policy broker, introducing lower-level bureaucrats to higher-level bureaucrats, connecting local governments to corporate investors, or

enabling civil servants to encounter international actors that the lower-level policymakers would otherwise have no way to meet. In some ways the relationship is somewhat similar to the hub-and-spoke model above, but in these models (a) the 'spokes' have very different status and power, and (b) the NGO/GONGO does not remain the hub, but rather uses its network to facilitate new relationships among actors that might not have been previously connected. Once the new links are made, the NGO will remain connected to all parties, but it will usually step back, enabling the 'spokes' to create the architecture and purpose of the new, policy-relevant network.

The largest environmental organization in East Asia is the Korea Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM). It has 80,000 members and 52 regional organizations. It was intimately involved with Korea's democratization movement (Kim 2000; Ku 2011; Lee et al. 1999), and has been active in the global environmental movement since its inception. It is active in a wide range of environmental issues, and its federated organizational structure, combined with its five specialized institutions (including a research institute and a legal assistance centre) enable it to connect local concerns directly with allies in the national government and international environmental organizations. Sometimes this is done with a specific purpose in mind – such as blocking the Saemangeum project component of the Four Major River Project. In other cases, the organizations work to connect relevant actors together around issues of concern, such as food safety. The goal in these cases is not necessarily to influence policy directly, but rather to facilitate favourable change by connecting policy actors that might have difficulty finding one another together (Interview KFEM 2011; Ku 2011; Lee 2000).

Modes of Network Advocacy

The three types of networks described above – hub-and-spoke, horizontal, and vertical – are the formal and informal institutional structures that facilitate network advocacy. Each of the actors within the network engage in their own advocacy efforts independently – for example, lobbying legislators, engaging in public protests, legal advocacy, writing policy papers, grassroots education, cultivating connections with policymakers, etc.

However, the policy-relevant networks that the NGOs have created are not merely the sum of these individual actors' efforts. I am arguing here that the networks themselves exert a somewhat independent, or more precisely, interdependent effect on the policymaking process. In particular, these networks help interested policymakers work around institutional

collective action problems. As a result, the networks can have a catalytic effect on other forms of advocacy. This section attempts to describe three effects that the networks exert on policy: information exchange, ally empowerment and citizen engagement. In all cases, the central feature of the network's effectiveness in influencing policy is the ways that it is able to reduce the institutional collective action problems found in environmental policymaking.

Information Catalyst: Easing Coordination Problems and Lowering Transaction Costs

The networks described above act as a catalyst for policy-relevant knowledge creation and dissemination. As mentioned above, the environmental organizations in East Asia are miniscule compared to their counterparts in North America and Europe. For example, in 2017 The Nature Conservancy (founded in 1915) reported total net assets of \$6.2 billion, gained \$1.1 billion in revenue, carried out 472,790 conservation activities and events, and had 46,650 members and 3,500 fulltime staff. The Nature Conservancy has permanent offices in 50 US states and 29 additional countries. In 2017 it was involved in projects located in 72 different countries around the world (The Nature Conservancy 2018).

In contrast, one of the oldest and largest environmental organizations in East Asia is the Wild Bird Society of Japan. While it is almost as old (founded in 1934) and has similar membership levels (45,000) as The Nature Conservancy, it is a tiny fraction of its size and influence. The Wild Bird Society of Japan has only seven regional branches inside Japan with no international offices and just \$10 million in income (Wild Bird Society Japan 2018) – in other words, fewer than 10% of the offices and 1% of the income as compared to The Nature Conservancy. And, The Wild Bird Society is one of the biggest environmental groups in the region. The vast majority of environmental organizations in East Asia depend largely on volunteer labour and have fewer than ten staff members (Haddad 2017).

As a result of their comparatively small size and low level of professionalization, East Asia's environmental organizations do not have the resources individually to (a) figure out which knowledge is the most policy relevant, (b) generate that knowledge, and (c) disseminate the new knowledge to relevant policymakers. Additionally, bureaucratic structures often put up barriers between different ministries and between central government and local government officials. Finally, all actors – governmental, NGO and private – have limited resources. Without these networks, all of the policy

actors are forced to work rather independently – trying to identify relevant problems, generating policy solutions, testing those solutions, and then disseminating best practices. Without the networks, these actors cannot be very efficient. Limited resources mean that no single actor can do much. Limited coordination results in both redundancies in efforts and gaps in coverage. Limited exchange slows the adoption of policies and practices that work, even once they have been developed and refined.

NGO-generated networks can help policy-relevant actors work around institutional barriers to be significantly more efficient in the way that they deploy resources to generate new policy-relevant knowledge and then disseminate that knowledge once it has been created. There are numerous areas of environmental policymaking where this can be seen, but perhaps the most obvious is the ability to find relevant sites to conduct local pilot projects and then enable the results of those pilot projects to be disseminated to others – national government policymakers within the same country, local governments in foreign countries or international NGOs that can spread the information to governments and environmental organizations around the world. These networks enable peer-to-peer knowledge generation and sharing in ways that would be impossible, or at least significantly more difficult, without the networks.

The KitaQ System Composting⁵ is an excellent example of how one environmental GONGO worked with a variety of actors governments to (a) identify a good pilot site, (b) carry out the pilot project, (c) facilitate peer-to-peer learning about the pilot, (d) replicate the pilot project elsewhere, and (e) disseminate information about the successful project for widespread adaptation – currently eleven cities in five countries.

The composting project began in Kitakyushu, Japan, as part of the city's efforts to reduce household solid waste. Working with experts from the local university and city residents, and funded by the local and national governments, activists and city officials developed an urban-friendly composting system that they thought was replicable. The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, a Japanese GONGO with a branch office in Kitakyushu, with funding and assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, facilitated a connection between the officials in Kitakyushu and Pusdakota, a local environmental NGO located in Surabaya, Indonesia. The project was piloted from 2005 to 2007. Over the course of the period, the city, with a population of three million, saw a reduction of 350 tons (23%) in the solid waste collected annually. There was also a dramatic improvement in the hygiene and aesthetics of the city streets as abandoned lots were

5 KitaQ System Composting homepage, <http://kitaq-compost.net/> (15 May 2017).

transformed from informal garbage dumps to public green spaces that utilized the compost generated for gardening. Through the activities of the city, IGES, local NGOs and additional corporate sponsors, the composting system has now spread to nineteen additional communities.⁶ IGES (in collaboration with others) continues to develop policy tools for easy implementation by other municipalities as well as hosting conferences that are specifically designed to bring together communities with experience in the system and those that are thinking about implementing it.⁷

It would be tempting to ascribe the success of the KitaQ System Composting to IGES exclusively. There are ways that the experience of developing, refining and disseminating the system could be seen as analogous to the process followed by most development programmes emerging from large development banks such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank. I would like to argue here, though, that while IGES and the Kitakyushu city government were important actors, utilizing the advocacy strategies commonly used for policy advocacy – for example, pilot projects, policy papers, public information sessions, press coverage, engagement with local leaders, etc. – the network created by IGES exerted a somewhat independent catalytic effect on the outcome. The network dramatically expanded the number of communities considering adopting this policy solution; communities that would never have been reached by IGES or Kitakyushu without the network that they had created.

Furthermore, the network created a comprehensive policy feedback loop that enabled the piloted composting system to be refined, tested in new areas, further refined, etc. by multiple communities at the same time. Finally, most of the people involved in the programme were ordinary citizens volunteering their time. They were supported by a small number of paid staff at the NGOs, local government offices and national development agencies, but most of the people who were engaged in developing, implementing, refining and disseminating the projects were volunteers.

The network acted as a catalyst for information exchange by increasing (a) the number of actors involved, (b) the quantity and quality of feedback about the system and policy implementation, and (c) the scope of further dissemination. The network was not just an add-on or a communication method; it took on a life of its own and acted in ways that was more than the sum of its component parts.

6 See the Surabaya case study, http://kitakyushu.iges.or.jp/publication/Takakura/Surabaya_Experience_Full.pdf (15 May 2017).

7 See the IGES composting page, <http://www.iges.or.jp/en/archive/kuc/compost.html> (15 May 2017).

An important feature of the networks created by these NGOs is the way that they continue to grow in unexpected ways, which are often complementary to the original policy goal. In October 2015 the cities of Kitakyushu and Haiphong, Vietnam, became one of three pioneering twinning cities to collaborate in a City-to-City Cooperation (C3) programme sponsored by the international NGO Clean Air Asia to reduce air pollution.⁸ Where did this seemingly odd partnership originate? Perhaps at the Networking Meeting for Local Governments: Creating Low-Carbon and Sustainable Cities sponsored by IGES and held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in March 2012. At that meeting IGES staff presented information about the Surabaya composting pilot, where both the NGO Clean Air Asia and representatives from Haiphong were participants. In 2014 Nippon Steel, Sumikin Engineering, Amita, and NTT Data Institute Management Consulting presented a low-carbon development plan for Haiphong, which was modelled on the Surabaya example.⁹ That same year Kitakyushu and Haiphong formalized a sister city relationship.¹⁰ One year later the two cities were collaborating on clean air initiatives, branching out into and expanding an entirely different NGO-facilitated network. They went from composting to clean air in the space of three years. Allies expanded from a couple of NGOs and two local governments to additional international NGOs, several national funding agencies and numerous corporations from both countries.

Empower Allies: Overcome Bureaucratic Barriers and Furnish Allies with Resources

One of an advocate's most powerful strategies is to cultivate influential policymakers. One of the best ways that NGOs can do this is to form personal connections with early and mid-career bureaucrats and support those individuals as they gain experience and power. Connecting these officials to others in the NGO network can be one of the most important methods through which these sympathetic insiders can be empowered. The NGO-created network enables these lower- and mid-level public servants to bypass the layers of bureaucracy that inhibit communication with central government officials. The networks also connect these policymakers to individuals

8 Clean Air Partnership page of Clean Air Asia, <http://cleanairasia.org/cities-clean-air-partnership/> (15 May 2017).

9 See <http://asiangreencamp.net/eng/pdf/68.pdf> (15 May 2017).

10 Kitakyushu city information about sister city agreement, http://www.city.kitakyushu.lg.jp/english/file_0049.html (15 May 2017).

and organizations they would never otherwise be able to encounter through their day-to-day operations. In the end, the new relationships that are formed through the network can significantly enhance the capacity of these policymakers to enact effective and far-reaching policies.

Here is a description of how the process worked in one case in China, as described by Barbara Finamore, Senior Attorney and Asia Director, China Program of the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) (Interview Finamore 2015):

The first really big project that we did was energy efficiency in Jiangsu. We went to a conference in Chongqing hosted by the Demand-side Management Center set up by the Asian Development Bank. The head of the Jiangsu power company was the head of that collaborative project, and I kept up with him for years. First, we did the demand-side management project. For that project the utility companies pay customers to be more efficient. It was very successful and got the attention of the central government. It took ten years, but eventually the central government extended the rules nationwide.

So, we kept in touch. We brought people down to Jiangsu. We brought people from California. We brought California officials to China. We brought Jiangsu officials to California. We brought central government officials to California. We brought Governor Schwarzenegger to China because California was a leader in demand-side management because of their energy crisis. There can be a gap in the connection, but it is still there, and now he [my Chinese contact] is very important.

There are people who sat through all those meetings, who were very quiet, but who sat in all the meetings who move up the administrative ladder, and now those people are running the regulation companies. They're not quiet anymore.

[Interviewer: It seems like you're not just empowering allies by giving them information, but you're also empowering them by helping them to make political connections. Can you expand on that?]

We brokered a memorandum of understanding between the California public utility commission and the Jiangsu utility to cooperate on energy efficiency. We brought the California officials over to Jiangsu – they're sister provinces. The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) had two parts – the first was government to government, and the second included the NRDC as implementers. I helped found the China-US Energy Efficiency Alliance ten years ago – that alliance is now helping other communities form these kinds of agreements.

NGOs can serve a critically important role in improving and promoting policy development by building networks across bureaucratic divides that impede policymaking through purely governmental procedures. Governmental bureaucracies can often be rigid, making it difficult for like-minded policymakers to find each other and work together. NGO-generated networks can help connect these dots by bringing these officials together. Since officials (and sometimes NGO professionals) move around, these personal networks remain dynamic, sometimes being activated, sometimes going dormant, waiting for the time when the connection can be usefully employed. Sometimes, as was the case for the China-US Energy Efficiency Alliance, the network itself can become institutionalized enough to become an independent organization.

Engage Citizens: Raise Awareness, Motivate Volunteers, Spur Engagement

The final and most obvious way that NGO-created networks act as policy catalysts is the ways that they can engage citizens. When organizations are connected through a network, they can dramatically expand their reach. They can spread the word about particular issues. They can coordinate volunteer activities. They can motivate the public to become more politically engaged.

The 26 Degree Campaign is a highly successful example of how environmental organizations with few resources can network together for a huge policy impact. In 2004 Sheri Liao, founder of Global Village, floated the idea for the campaign to her NGO colleagues in the city. She described the origin of the idea to me during an interview in Beijing in 2015 (Interview Liao 2015):

I think I got the idea when I was in the US. I would go into a supermarket in the summer time, and I would have to wear a sweater. I'd think, 'This is ridiculous!' At the time I hoped that China would not do this kind of thing. But then I found that China was following the same path. So, I discussed it with some NGO people, and we came up with the idea of 26 [degrees] in summer and 20 [degrees] in winter.

The small group met several times to discuss their plan of action. They collaborated to put together a report that documented how much energy would be saved if people set their air conditioners higher. Hotels and large businesses, especially, were setting the thermostats very low – 17 or 19 degrees – because businessmen were expected to wear jackets, even in the summer, so the room temperature needed to be cool for them to be

comfortable. The NGO leaders used their good relationships with the press to gain a lot of coverage of their findings. An energy shortage that summer helped fuel interest in the issue. Beijing factories experienced power rationing during peak hours, and Beijing was the last of the major cities to face power cuts, which had spread across most of the electricity markets in the country.¹¹ Journalists began to spot-check hotels and publish what they found in their newspapers. Friends of Nature mobilized volunteers to go into public spaces such as shopping malls, hotels and businesses and record the temperature, and violators would be written up by the organization and also by the press (Interview He 2015; Interview Liao 2015; Interview Wang 2015; Interview Yang 2011).

In 2005, the campaign gained momentum – more organizations joined the campaign, it gained greater press coverage, and the Beijing mayor, always concerned about local pollution, also got involved. By this time the idea had caught the attention of the central government, and Premier Wen Jiabao announced that government offices and meeting rooms would not have temperatures set below 26 degrees, and in July the Beijing municipal government sent a directive to all corporations in Beijing urging them to save energy by adopting the 26 degree standard in all restaurants, hotels, offices, banks and other public areas.¹²

Although the excitement around the campaign has waned, the network has expanded. By 2015 Friends of Nature was coordinating more than 50 volunteers in Beijing and collaborating with NGOs in 30 other Chinese cities to crowdsourcing temperature readings on a variety of buildings and share the data on WeChat. Their efforts were not just a collaboration with other NGOs and the press but also businesses – for example, HSBC helped to fund their efforts (Interview Wang 2015). The campaign's success was a direct result of the event-based network created by the NGOs. That network enabled the organizers to coordinate their use of resources to develop high-quality research. They were able to raise public awareness through their collaboration with the press.

Residents of Beijing knew that their air was bad, but most had not made the connection between the temperature of their homes and offices and the quality of the air they were breathing. The network created a framework whereby citizens could be motivated to action and then engage in a

11 *Financial Times* article about the power cuts, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7d831806-d144-11d8-99cf-0000e2511c8.html?ft_site=falcon&desktop=true#axzz4hF54XH8E (16 May 2017).

12 See the Friends of Nature report about the campaign, <http://www.fon.org.cn/uploads/attachment/4711361524307.pdf> (16 May 2017).

productive way to help solve the problem. The network enabled profitable and productive collaborations with businesses to reduce emissions. It framed its grassroots activities in ways that were digestible for policymakers and convince high-level officials to change government policy. The network enabled all of these actions – it had an independent, catalytic effect on citizen engagement.

Conclusion

This chapter has described three types of networks that NGOs in East Asia commonly build as part of their advocacy strategies: hub-and-spoke networks, horizontal networks and vertical networks. These networks in turn enable policy actors within and outside of governments at local, regional and national levels to overcome institutional collective action problems. In particular, they enable diverse actors to work together for the creation and dissemination of policy-relevant knowledge. They create a mechanism whereby NGOs can empower allies in government by helping them to overcome bureaucratic barriers and by connecting them to new resources. The activists are not changing the interests of these elite actors; they are changing their ideas. Activists working through their networks are able to persuade policymakers that certain activities are problems and help them develop productive policy solutions to solve those problems (Teets 2018). Finally, networks dramatically expand citizen engagement related to the policy area – spreading awareness of issues that matter, inspiring individuals to volunteer their time and facilitating citizen engagement in politics. They have contributed to the transformation of East Asia's political landscape in the post-high growth period.

These examples, while they originate in East Asia, are likely found in other parts of the world. When we study citizen activism as well as the public policy related to that advocacy, we should also be examining the networks that advocates – located both inside and outside the government – have formed and the diverse ways that those networks are affecting both the policymaking process and policy outcomes. The networks that non-profits create can alter the fundamental structure of policymaking in the places where they exist. They can create new patterns that change the flow of policy ideas, experimentation, feedback and implementation not only between the governmental actors and the objects of the policy (e.g. citizens, corporations) but even among the governmental policymakers themselves. These externally created networks can fundamentally reshape policy subsystems – how they operate at any given point in time and how they evolve over time.

East Asia is a particularly difficult political context for policy advocates because governments in the region tend to be conservative, pro-business, and the legal structures are often hostile to advocacy organizations. Examining how civic organizations are working with and against their governments in this challenging political context can offer insights that are relevant for advocates everywhere.

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