

Citizen as Partner of Local Government?

—Evidences from public service delivery and trust
in Japanese municipalities —

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Introduction: Japanese NPM

Many Japanese local governments introduced New Public Management (NPM) in the late Nineties, prior to the national government and to its

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academic introduction. Most of them introduced performance measurement, programme evaluation, citizen-customer and employee satisfaction survey, outcome orientation, outsourcing and/or contracting out to private sector and/or social sector, revision of public service delivery, private finance initiative (PFI), and public and private partnership (PPP), following the Anglo-Saxon examples (Oosumi, 1999).

Public services, especially childcare, elderly care, and culture, sports and leisure related services have been mostly outsourced to private and social sectors (Yamamoto, 2008). However, after a decade of these experiences, some local governments are starting to take distances from the NPM-driven managerial style. Some decided not to renew contracts to the private sector, after evaluating the performance and considering customer satisfaction, but to bring back the service again into the hand of public administration, or to introduce new forms of collaboration between public and private sectors, mainly based on proposals from the private sector. There are evidences that some local governments have already shifted from NPM-driven management to post NPM or New Public Governance (NPG) orientation, while there are literally no domestic literature on NPG. In terms of practice, especially in case of childcare and elderly care, some local governments re-started to hire experts in order to develop internal personnel as managers and policy makers in the future. Culture, sports and leisure related services are still outsourced in many local governments; however some are revising their relationship with contractors and are starting to impose their policies and strategies much more clearly on them (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2013). So far, the examples are limited in number, and does not necessary confirm the theoretical frameworks of public governance, since the reasons of these shifts vary among local governments and also because there is almost no academic attention on NPG in Japan

(Kudo, 2014).

In order to understand: 1) while it is possible to observe NPG oriented public service delivery in Japanese practices, why there are almost no domestic research nor literature on the issue; 2) if the reason of indifference to NPG, and especially to co-production is not because of their inexistence, but because they have traditionally existed in slightly different expressions; and 3) if the trust is one of the explanatory variables of the characteristics of Japanese co-production and collaboration, the paper first explore the international and domestic literatures on the related concepts.

In order to identify the trust of citizen towards public administration and community and the trust of public administration towards citizens among abovementioned concepts, the paper analysis the results of two surveys to see if the features explored in literatures can be confirmed in practice.

The author has been taking part in a research group, which previously surveyed the financial situation of Japanese local governments and their managerial choices (Kudo, 2010) and then conducted an extensive survey among municipalities to see if they are in favour of NPM oriented managerial style, or, are introducing New Public Governance (NPG) oriented (Osborne, 2006; Bovaird, 2007) approaches in 2014. Some of the features to understand this shift are: 1) putting more importance on citizen participation than cost cutting; 2) preference of PPP to simple outsourcing; and 3) consideration of political accountability (Bakvis and Jarvis, 2012) into administrative implementations.

The results of the survey and some interviews conducted to mayors and public servants show that some municipalities have shifted from NPM-driven management to public service delivery based on NPG (Pestoff, 2011), although they are rarely aware of the theoretical transition.

The survey, together with the other on-line survey to the citizens,

revealed the existence of rather strong trust towards citizens from public administration, as well as citizens' trust towards public administration. Furthermore, collaboration among citizens and public administration is considered as important element by both.

Finally, the paper tries to identify the still missing links in the researches on Japanese NPG, especially on co-production and trust.

1. Literature Review

1-1. NPM to post NPM or New Public Governance

Attentions on public service delivery and the role of citizens and social sector in its process lead to NPG. It was also proposed as critiques to NPM, which merely stressed efficiency, effectiveness and managerial techniques.

Some authors started to point out issues of NPM and propose modifications to NPM. They have discussed that because NPM emphasised too much the viewpoint of private management techniques in public sector, elements, such as citizen participation and other forms of democratic decision-making, have been undermined. The contents and characteristics of accountability have, indeed, changed from the initial period of NPM and social audit and accounting have been necessary to consider (Osborne and Ball, 2011). Some pointed out that since NPM concentrated on performance measurement and evaluation, monitoring, and auditing, it has considered little the viewpoint of public policy in general and decision-making, thus has strengthened the short-term political interest, not the outcome of long-term and strategic policy and plans, creating situations contrary to what NPM originally aimed.

These authors have tried to modify the concept of NPM, which stressed the viewpoint of private management in public administration, emphasised

the importance of citizen participation and role of social sector in public service delivery, and focused on much broader public governance, which includes public and private partnership. They have focused on co-production between the citizen and the public and social sector as service agent and stressed the importance to co-produce the services.

While NPM is based on neo-classical economics and particularly of rational/public choice theory and has an emphasis on implementation by independent service units, ideally in competition with each other and a focus on economy and efficiency, NPG is rooted within organizational sociology and network theory and it acknowledges the increasingly fragmented and uncertain nature of public management (Pestoff, 2011).

Osborne (2010; 2006) ironically argues that NPM has actually been “a transitory stage in the evolution (from traditional public administration) towards New Public Governance”. He agrees that public administration and management has gone through three dominant stages or modes: a longer pre-eminent one of PA until the late 1970s/early 1980s; a second mode of NPM, until the start of the 21st Century; and an emergent third one, NPG since then. The time of NPM has thus been a relatively brief and transitory one between the statist and bureaucratic tradition of PA and the embryonic one of NPG (Osborne, 2010; Osborne, 2006).

Bovaird (2007) argues that the emergence of governance as a key concept in the public domain is relatively recent, and he traces the evolution of the concept in public administration. He suggests that “governance provides a set of balancing mechanisms in a network society, although it is still a contested concept, both in theory and in practice”. By the end of the 1990s various concerns about corporate governance, local governance and network society had crystallized into a wider focus on “public governance”, which he defines as “... the ways in which stakeholders interact with each

other in order to influence the outcomes of public policies” (Bovaird, 2007).

1-2. Co-production of Public Service under NPG

Co-production becomes a key concept and the importance attributed to it by Public Governance has two major implications for public administration. First, it “seriously questions the relevance of the basic assumptions of NPM that service delivery can be separated from service design, since service users now play key roles in both service design and delivery”. Second, “service users and professionals develop a mutual and interdependent relationship in which both parties take risks and need to trust each other” (Bovaird, 2007). Trust has thus become an important issue for co-production under NPG.

Bovaird also argues that there has been “radical reinterpretation of the role of policy making and service delivery in the public domain resulting in Public Governance”. Policy making is “no longer seen as a purely top-down process but rather as negotiation among many interacting policy systems”. Similarly, “services are no longer simply delivered by professional and managerial staff in public agencies, but they are co-produced by users and communities” (Bovaird, 2007). He presents a conceptual framework for understanding the emerging role of user and community co-production. Traditional conceptions of service planning and management are, therefore, outdated and need to be revised to account for co-production as an integrating mechanism and an incentive for resource mobilization – a potential that is still greatly underestimated (Bovaird, 2007).

NPG, which was proposed first as critiques to NPM, then, has introduced some new concepts and actors into public governance: its attention on citizen participation and its leadership lead to “citizen-centric” governance; it guarantees active participation of stakeholders in decision-making as

well as public service delivery through “joined-up governance”; that is based on democratic decision-making; its strong emphasis on public service delivery resulted in the concept of New Public Service (NPS); its stress on partnership in delivering public service lead to “co-production”; it is based on network governance; gives important role not only to private sector but also to social sector; and it introduced new issues such as public value and/or trust.

Pestoff pointed out that under NPG, “central role attributed to citizen co-production and third sector provision of public services” (Pestoff, 2011), while Osborne defined NPG as “it posits both a plural state where multiple interdependent actors contribute to the delivery of public services and a pluralist state, where multiple processes inform the public policy making system” (Osborne, 2006).

Examining public service delivery models, many recent models show characteristics of NPG; emphasis on “citizen-centric” governance and democratic decision-making; participation of stakeholders; “co-production”; emphasis on social sector; and introduction of public value and/or trust. Since NPG had to introduce some new principles in order to contrast NPM and its efficiency, effectiveness, and value for money, many authors started to investigate into public value (Hartley, 2005) and trust (Bouckaert, 2012). There are also critics to NPG, mainly pointing out its lack in instruments/tools similar to NPM (Pollitt, 2014).

2. Japanese Public Administration Reform

The author conducted literature survey on domestic articles and publication in journals and annuals of societies for public administration,

administrative law, public policy and public management since 1990, focusing on the terms (NPM, governance, public governance, NPG, co-production, cooperation, collaboration, partnership, and their Japanese equivalents) used in the articles. While NPM was introduced also in the literature in late Nineties with some years' delay to the Anglo-Saxon counterparts, there was no article/paper on NPG or citation of its major authors in its original context. NPG seems to have systematically ignored.

One hypothesis is that since the late introduction of NPM allowed both in practice and in research in Japan to include NPG driven elements (stakeholder participation and co-production, trust and public value, etc.) into its NPM, there was no strong motivation to launch NPG as a new theory. The other hypothesis is that the Japanese literature developed an original or peculiar "governance" concept per se, which was distant from public governance theory in Anglo-Saxon context. Since NPG is a very complex concept, the paper focuses on participation, co-production, and trust as the key features of NPG and will explore the interpretations among literatures.

2-1. NPM Japanese Style: Introduction in Literature and Reform Practice

At national level, NPM has been introduced from its Anglo-Saxon experiences and implemented in Japan in its own unique manner since late 90's. The critical situation of public finance, urgent need for public sector reform, and political instability lead to two extreme options; one was the self-reforming effort of bureaucracy, and the other was the citizen empowerment and its pressure on bureaucracy. Meanwhile the second has been struggling to get public consensus, expertise for practice, and institutionalization, the first managed to result in reorganisation and restructure of administrative institutions to a certain extent, and in establishment of legal framework and

operational system for performance measurement and policy evaluation (Kudo, 2002).

Renewal of public management and public service delivery has become an important trend in Japanese public sector reform since its introduction. NPM changed managerial style of traditional public administration with its series of techniques delivering from business management. Reform in public service delivery forced public sector organizations to outsource some of its functions, privatise its enterprise, and revise the role of government in accordance with the role of private sector and civil society. PPP, PFI, and other forms of collaborations implemented became alternatives to traditional government restructuring; so far, the Japanese reform process followed the global reform trends as well as the international literature.

2-2. Public Service Delivery in Japanese Local Government under “Governance” Model

Meanwhile, some interesting efforts can be observed at local level. While the national government struggled reaching a consensus, almost all prefectures and major part of the municipalities have introduced performance measurement systems. Some of these show ideas to realize co-governance (Kudo, 2003). Some have introduced policy evaluation and/or programme evaluation. Some enacted special charters or regulations, most issued guidelines in introducing their system¹⁾ Those charters showed, in fact, efforts to introduce a kind of citizen's charter and are one of the most interesting experiments among the local governments to realize NPM in its

1) The Sumida Special Ward of Tokyo Metropolitan Government introduced the concept of co-governance in its Basic Concept in 2006, published a guidebook entitled “Co-Governance Guidebook” for its inhabitants in 2007, and finally enacted the “Charter to Promote Co-Governance” in 2011.

original sense, as they tried to guarantee the control of stakeholders and thus enabling the advocacy of the citizen (Tsujiyama, 2002).

This nation-wide movement of experimenting performance measurement and/or policy evaluation by local governments was rather independent from the national effort to establish legal framework for evaluation system. It was these local government movements that actually led the nation's trend of NPM and drew attentions of academia²⁾. Both national and local efforts for better governance in their different manners produced interesting results, not always positive though, on their reforms and also on governance in general.

One of these interesting experiments was that of introducing its unique governance model, or so-called "*Atarashii Kokyo*" (literally means "new public"), in a Japanese municipality (Kudo, 2003; Imamura, 2002; Tsujiyama, 2002; Yamamoto, 2002). This case represented governance model in local governments, trying to introduce concept of new public governance, redesigning the public domain and trying to establish a partnership in providing public services. The system, which was implemented in Setagaya Ward (municipality level local government) in Tokyo Metropolitan Government (provincial level), can be considered as one of the Japanese examples of public governance model. The system focused on reviewing the role of public sector and seeking its partnership with private sector, NPOs, social sector, and civil society in local public service delivery.

The system introduced the concept of public governance, or so-called "new public". Its performance indicators consider the possibility of outsourcing,

2) In 2001, one of the parallel sessions of the annual meeting of the Japanese Society for Public Administration was dedicated on "Various Aspects of Local Governance". Two years later in 2003, another session was dedicated on "NPO and Local Governance".

citizen participation, and different forms of partnership. Projects are thus classified, according to these criteria, into those: 1) which need strong and direct public sector involvement also in the future; 2) which might be outsourced or need partnership; and 3) which have to be passed completely to private sector as soon as possible. This experiment was thus analysed from the points of view of public governance model and that of public service delivery reform. The municipality introduced this model, after implementing several projects of collaboration among public sector, citizen, local business, social sector and NPOs in providing its public services of specific fields. The concept of governance was: 1) to rationalise public sector performance; 2) to reduce cost; and 3) to empower citizen, local business, social sector and NPOs. The concept referred to the introduction of new patterns of partnership in public domain, including the reviewing of the “public domain” itself. The concept of governance in Japan³⁾, thus, could be delivered from the reviewing of public domain. As governance model was introduced in order to implement public sector reform, the performance information of this performance measurement system is expected to become important resource to classify performances using criteria like “partnership” and “governance”.

The experience was one of the very first attempts of New Public Governance in Japan, although it was not recognised as NPG. Rather, they thought of introducing an original version of NPM (Imamura, 2002). The late introduction of Japanese NPM in its unique characteristics resulted in this interesting phenomena. NPM became one of the most important instruments to promote their public sector reform and at the same time, as

3) The word “governance” was first introduced in Japanese literature by Imamura (1993). He also used the term prior to this (1987) in a conference to express the need of new government system among local government.

learning and self-reforming process of public servants/public sector (Kudo, 2003). The system, thus, was not, and has not been considered as NPG, but as NPM in practice as well as in academic debates. The former can be explained through the fact that NPM was already widely accepted as reform instrument, while the latter, because there is literally no citation of NPG literatures among Japanese academic researches (Kudo, 2014). NPM has been dominant as public sector management techniques and is still the major concept.

Restructuring of government institutions and public organizations is one of the most classical methods of reform and implemented extensively in Japan. Reorganization and/or restructuring does not only mean merger among different institutions or rationalisation of organizations, but also includes outsourcing and/or privatisation of certain function of public institutions, creation of agencies, and introduction of different forms of public-private partnership. Modernization of budgeting process is another important reform for government and public institutions. Introduction of a more rational accounting system, including accrual accounting in the public sector has been combined with public management reform. Rationalisation of financial policy and its implementation has been recognized as crucial factor for more pragmatic and practical public sector management.

3. Co-production with Citizen Participation where Concept of Co-production does not exist and Citizen Participation is (considered) weak

The title of this chapter sounds contradictory; however the different characteristics of Japanese co-production and citizen participation from

their global standards could be one of the explanations for why there are very few attentions on co-production and New Public Governance among Japanese domestic literature.

3-1. Uniqueness of Japanese Participation in Unique Democracy

Japan is inevitably depicted as a highly specific country with unique peculiarities (Sugimoto, 2010; Nakane, 1967). While some scholars even raise doubts about the reality of democracy in Japan (Brown, 2003), others consider that although it obviously differs from western liberal democracies, Japanese democracy is effective but presents specific features due to its history and culture (Haddad, 2012; Avenell, 2010; Yamashita and Williams, 2002). As Haddad argues, Japanese democracy would be a “fusion of foreign liberal democratic values, institutions, and practices with indigenous Japanese political values, institutions, and practices” (Haddad, 2012).

Yet, the peculiarities of Japanese democracy are of the utmost importance when it comes to analyse participation. Indeed, some characteristics of Japanese society seem to be inappropriate with the practice of public participation. For instance, Confucian values would have shaped Japanese political tradition and remained to some extent even after the Second World War. Consequently, it is very often stated that Japanese people tend to prefer social order to individual freedom and an interventionist government to a small one; they would also be little suspicious about government intentions and pretty reluctant to protest publicly (Haddad, 2012). While Nakane pointed out a few decades ago the strength of hierarchy in social relations and the tendency to decide by consensus (Nakane, 1967), recent works assert that decision by consensus still holds a prevalent place (Haddad, 2012). Thus, participation in Japan would be little conflictual (Yamashita and Williams, 2002). According to Nakane, when attending an assembly, very

often Japanese people do not dare to openly express their opinion because of hierarchical power relations (Nakane, 1967). Matsuura shows that even today these characteristics seem to impede public participation since most participants remain silent or just nod their head, because they “can’t speak out in public” (Matsuura, 2006).

However, other narratives consider that public participation in Japan is not much different than that in western countries (Jain, 2011; Kikuchi, 2010). Indeed, all along the post-war era, not only have liberal democratic values unfolded in Japan; Confucian and other traditional values also adjusted to these new values (Haddad, 2012). In the wake of the citizen and resident movements of the 1960s and 1970s, progressive local governments started to deal with social problems with citizen inputs, bringing to a “change in the relationship between citizens and local administrations [that] signalled the development of participatory democracy” (Kawato *et al.*, 2011).

Although individual citizens and citizen groups were rather passive and mostly reactive in their relation with government and towards policy-making until the 1990s, they became much more proactive starting from the late 1990s (Haddad, 2012). Furthermore, due to financial constraints, local governments must increasingly strengthen their cooperation with citizens for policy-making and implementation (Katato *et al.*, 2011). Public participation would now be institutionalized and widely practiced, and most participatory mechanisms present in western countries are effectively also frequently used in Japan (Jain, 2011; Kikuchi, 2010). Public participation is particularly salient at the city level where *machizukuri* initiatives (“community-building”) are flourishing, especially since the 1990s (Sorensen, 2012).

Besides this debate about the peculiarity of participation in Japan, it is appropriate to analyse and to expect substantial citizen involvement in

Japan. It is important to understand that Japanese society's features appear to correspond to specific patterns of public participation, which, far from being essentially Japanese, exist all around the world as well. This being said, it is of interest to return to the aforementioned distinction between participation and co-production.

3-2. Tradition of Co-production?

Assuming Japanese citizens may not be made for discursive and conflictual forms of participation; Japanese society's characteristics appear to fit co-production pretty well. That is, Japanese society benefits from extremely strong social capital (Sorensen, 2012) and high civic engagement (Haddad, 2012). Sorensen and others argue that although social capital in Japan is strong, it focuses on cooperation and assistance rather than on debate and initiative (Sorensen, 2012; Yamashita and Williams, 2002). The relationship between state and society is also conceived as integrated and cooperative and is characterized by *a high level of mutual trust* (Haddad, 2012). These statements resonate with some success criteria for co-production such as strong social capital and citizenship (Taylor, 2003) and trust (Bovaïrd, 2007), suggesting that the Japanese co-production has been rooted in its community and society, because of its social capital and the culture of trust.

Moreover, Avenell pointed out that civic engagement in Japan progressively took the form of "symbiotic relationships with the state and the market" (Avenell, 2010). Finally, service provision (night watch, garbage collection, road and green spaces maintenance, for instance) has also been ensured by neighbourhoods associations within local communities for decades, working in more or less close collaboration with local governments (Sorensen, 2012; Kawato *et al.*, 2011). In addition, these

associations still disseminate information and directives from the local and central government at the neighbourhood level. This may explain the relative weakness of public participation and calls for carefully examining co-production forms of citizen involvement while analysing Japanese cases.

4. Surveys: Relationship between Local Governments and Citizens

Research group on Post-NPM (“Research on impact of public administration reform and development of Post-NPM”, JSPS Funding 2013–2017), in which the author take part, has conducted two extended survey among Japanese municipalities and citizens.

4-1. Local Governments Trust towards Citizens

The first survey conducted in 2014 focused on the managerial changes in local governments. The questioners were sent to mayors of all Japanese municipalities and we obtained 1129 answers (out of 1720 municipalities in total, 65.6%). Since the research group had previously conducted similar but slightly different surveys (“Research on governance and system reform of local public finance”, JSPS Funding 2007–2011, and “International comparison on diversification of public service delivery under financial reform”, JSPS Funding 2004–2007), asking the major motivations for public administration reform and methods of public service delivery during and after the period of municipality merger (1999–2006), the last survey focused on the impact of public administration and finance reform, especially that of municipality merger on public service delivery.

28.0% of the respondents answered that the sound financial situation has

the major priority in their local government, followed by the revitalisation of local economy (21.3%), and counter measure for declining population (17.9%). Other pointed out the importance of welfare policy for aged, and disabled, and counter measure for declining population. The answers vary from austerity measures to growth strategy, many points out the necessity to invest into crucial issues like ageing society and declining population. Most fear that in ten years their financial situation would worse (75.9%), because of the change in subsidy system (37.8%), the increase of social welfare related expenditure (23.1%), and the decrease of local tax revenue (21.5%). 67.7% think that it is better to increase their own financial resources from local tax revenue, which never succeeded in the past, despite various attempts with governmental policies, including that of “trinity reform”, or “three-in-one reform” (Kudo, 2008).

The evaluation of the impact of municipality merger varies: while 66.5% declare that it saved their expenditures; 45.5% think that enabled administration of wider area; 33.0% noticed that their policy-making capacity has improved; 27.6% believed that their service standard has improved; while 15.9% think their service standard has worsened; and 13.4% declared that their expenses has increased. The results confirm the analysis of most literatures on decentralisation and agglomeration/merger in relation to service delivery. The evaluations are divided, especially in terms of service delivery. This might be the reason why many local governments have been concentrating their reforms on service delivery.

In order to measure the trust of local governments toward citizens and society, we asked how they would like citizens to be (ideal image) and how they really perceive citizens' attitude in relation to their organization and their activities.

77.5% think that citizen should collaborate with public administration to

resolve problems; while 9.8% think that issues should be resolved mainly by public administration. This is the sign that the Japanese local governments have followed the NPM driven reforms and believe in the importance of co-production. At the same time, this also shows that many mayors trust citizen as partner of collaboration.

As the role of citizen, 80.8% of the mayors think that they behave as beneficiary of public services, 63.5% see them as contributor, 49.0% as clients, and 73.9% as partners of collaboration. 16.2% do not see the citizen as clients in reality: while when they were asked how they see the citizen in carrying out their policy, 84.0% as beneficiary of public services, 77.1% as contributor, 58.8% as clients, and 92.3% as partners. Again, role as clients gained fewer consensuses with 15.3%; however the co-production and partnership are recognised as important concepts by most mayors, confirming that the NPM and somehow NPG-driven concepts have rooted in municipalities. The fact, that most (92.3%) mayors consider citizens as partners of collaboration, as well as large majority (73.9%, much more than client or contributor) of them perceive citizens as real partners, also confirms the strong trust of the mayors to citizens.

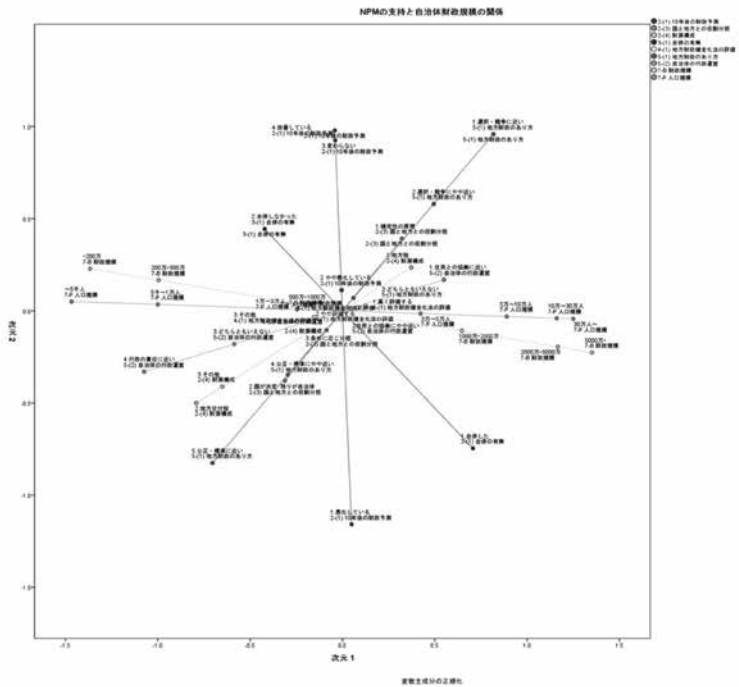
Interviews conducted at several selected municipalities with their mayors and managers revealed, however, that since the definition of the terms were not specified in the questioner, especially the terms client and partner are interpreted in slightly different ways among the respondents. Some mayors indeed mentioned that they feel uncomfortable with the term “client” to describe the citizen. Thus, the general unpopularity of “client” could be the result of the choice of this term and many mayors could have answered “beneficiary” to describe who actually “clients” are.

We analysed the mayors' perception of citizen in relation to size (population and finance), financial condition, merger experience, and degree

of NPM orientation of the municipalities, using categorical elements analysis

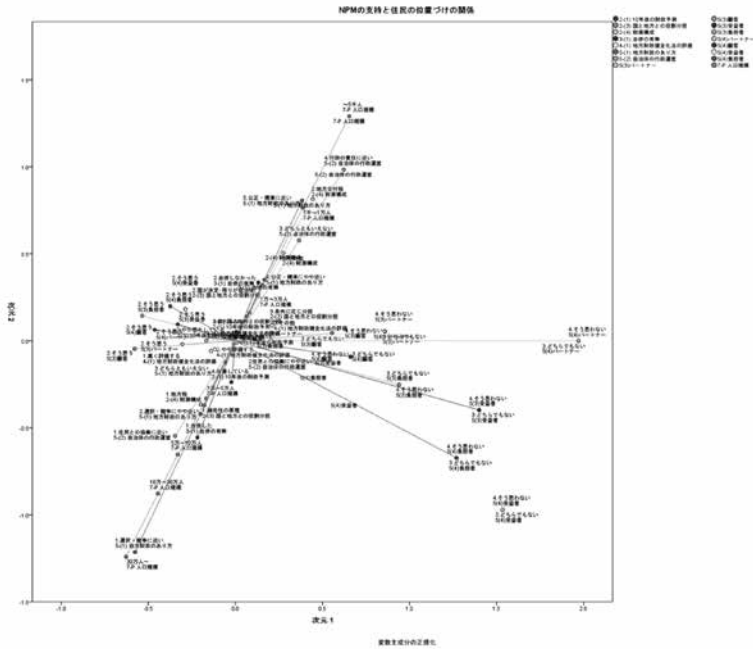
There are no significant differences in their perception in relation to the size of the municipalities, while the NPM orientation positively correlates to the size of the municipalities. The financial size correlates less to NPM orientation than the population size does (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Relationship between size of municipalities and degree of NPM orientation

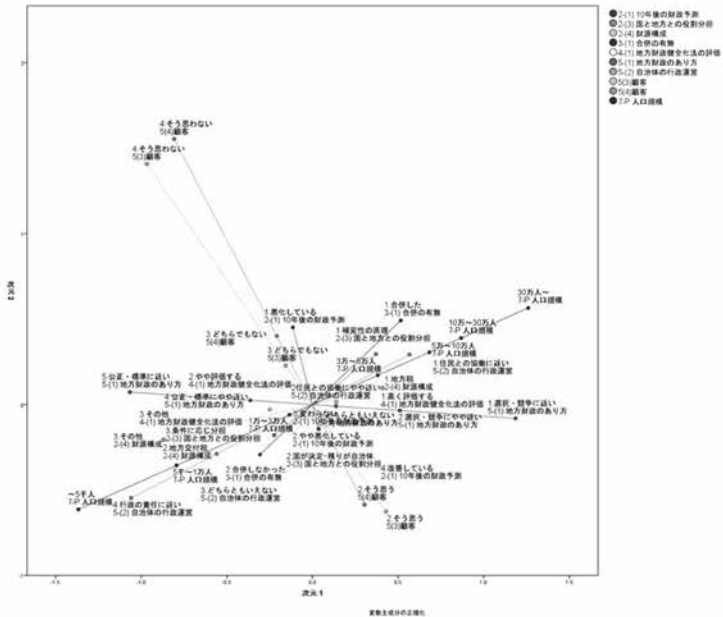
Figure 2



Relationship between mayors' perception of citizen and other elements

Figure 2 shows that the perception has relatively weak correlation to the degree of NPM orientation of the municipality. A closer look, however, reveals that the municipalities with mayor who perceives their citizen as client and/or partner show stronger correlation with higher degree of NPM orientation and municipality merger experience, while municipalities with mayor who sees their citizen as contributor and/or beneficiary show weak correlation with NPM orientation.

Figure 3



Relationship between mayors' perception of citizen as client and other elements

Mayors' perception of citizen as client in their ideal image and their perception of citizens' attitude as client are strongly correlated and both correlate to the mayors' perception of their municipalities with better economic situation in 10 years. The correlation between mayors' perception of citizen as client and NPM orientation of the municipalities can be detected, but is rather weak.

The survey shows that the concepts of NPM are recognised by most of the mayors, although how they perceive the reality vary. Co-production and partnership are their policy priorities, although many of them have not yet realised to which extent they want them. However, the overall perception of the mayors shows that they strongly trust in the role of citizens as

effective partners of collaboration, although the concepts of collaboration, participation, and co-production are not yet established and thus shared by the major actors. NPG-driven reforms have been introduced; although they are just not recognized as NPG.

4-2. Citizens Trust for Local Governments

The second survey was conducted on-line among 3,100 samples of Japanese citizens. The samples were chosen to balance: the number of respondents who live in big cities (Tokyo Metropolitan Area and all designated cities) and those in other areas; gender; and five age groups (twenties, thirties, forties, fifties sixties and more), thus 155 samples for each cell. The data were gathered through on-line questioners in March 2015.

While only 4.6% of the respondents have directly consulted political representatives or administrators about local problems, 49.1% voted the latest local election. While only 10.3% participate in voluntary activities or in activities of NPO, 55.0% belong to neighbourhood association or residents' association. Both confirm the tendency of passive, and not conflictual or active participation, which many literatures identify as characteristics of Japanese society.

In terms of attachment of loyalty to the community, 15.7% would like to continue to live in the municipalities where they live and 44.9% hope to live there, while 2.8% want to move out as soon as possible and 10.0% eventually want to do so. 26.6% expressed neutral. This figures show rather strong attachment to the place they live in, which could explain the trust of residents towards municipalities and strong social capital of the society.

How the residents perceive services of local governments showed interesting features: while about 70 to 80 % of the respondents answered that there are no significant changes in major public services in the last

few years, 23% observed that the garbage collection has improved; 18.1% improvement of the disaster prevention measures; and 17.7% the public library; while 22.6% observed that the shopping district activation policy has not been functioning. This reflects the major efforts and issues of public administration reform among local governments in the last decade and the fact that the residents properly perceive them.

In terms of trust, around 60% of respondents expressed their neutrality towards their mayor, local council legislators, and public administration. 20.3% trust mayor and 15.9% public administration, while 31.2% do not trust legislators, 22.8% public administration, and 22.1% mayors. It is interesting to note that 8.2% answered that they do not trust legislators at all, followed by 6.4% of total distrust towards mayor. Even both mayors and legislators are elected; this result shows that many citizens see mayors as top executer of public services, while many scandals related to expenses, incapacity and ignorance of local council legislators lead citizens to distrust them. Public administration does not enjoy especially high trust, but at the same time it is the less distrusted institution.

The NPM reforms of local governments have brought positive impacts on their management, which are accurately perceived by the citizens. 30.8% see that the local government informs its objectives and outcome to the citizen; 19.3% that it respect procedure and right of residents; and 18.5% that it put effort in improving public services. Among the negative perceptions, 31.2% think that public administration is not saving and trying to ensure the revenue; 27.7% recognize that the leadership of mayors is not exercised; and 26.5% do not see that local government is managed as service sector considering residents as clients. This confirms the perception of local governments in the first survey. While many residents acknowledge the efforts of their municipalities to improve transparency and public

service, they do not see that there are considered as clients, and indeed, municipalities often do not see citizens as clients, although they are trying to improve service delivery.

26.8% of the respondents see that their municipality offers good public services, although the tax burden is high, while 30.8% think that the local government should be managed in this way. 35.0% see that it respects fairness and standard, while 42.3% think that it should be so. When it comes to collaboration, 18.1% see that residents collaborate with municipality, 23.6% think they should. Many still prefer the Welfare State model and small government type of local government is not popular. Citizens prefer that the local community guarantees fairness and standard, rather than introducing competition and choice; this may explain the attitude of citizens towards public administration as well as the community and their trust towards them, explored among the literatures.

As for the same questions of the role of the citizens, 41.9% see themselves as contributor/tax payer, 33.4% as beneficiary of public services, only 15.4% as partner of public administration, while 22.6% do not see them as partner of municipality. The perception of citizen as partner of public administration is the most divided one, confirming that this perception is rather new to the majority of citizens that they do not yet share a common view. For the what-should-be questions, there were no significant differences among various roles, with slightly stronger preferences in traditional roles as beneficiary and contributors.

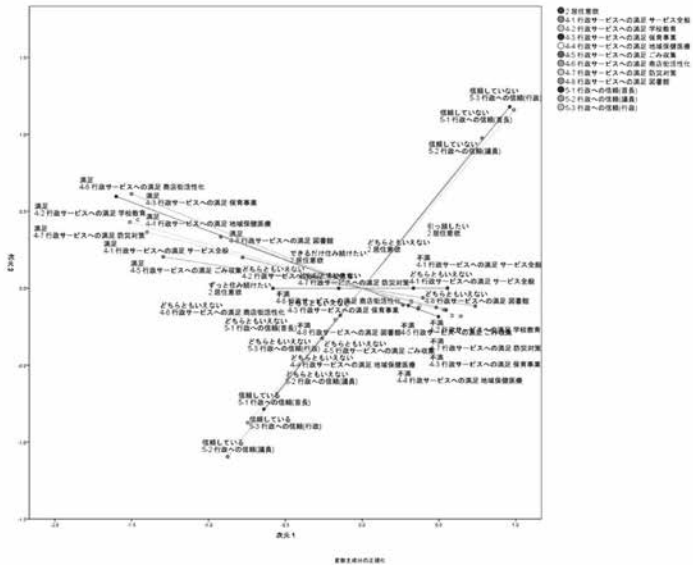
32% see that the municipalities do not take into account the voices of residents, compared to positive answer with 21.8%, however when they are asked for the solution to improve this situation, interestingly, 24.0% think that the residents should interest more in public policy, followed by 17.6% claiming that mayors (and legislators) should hear the voice of

the residents better, and 16.2% considering that the residents should vote with more consciousness. It is interesting to note that many citizens think their voices are not considered in public policy, not necessary because of administrators, but because of their own attitude. This could be interpreted as the citizens' trust towards local governments, since many do not blame public administration, but themselves.

In some questions, because certain terms were used without definition, respondents seemed to have answered based on their own understanding of the concepts, thus the answers were sometimes contradictory among them. This is one of the limits of the questioner on public management to general public.

More detailed analysis reveals several interesting features as follows.

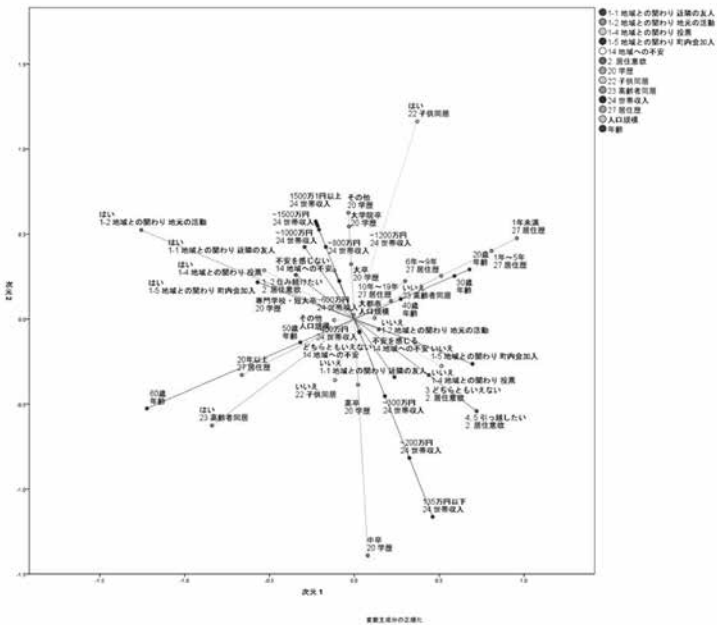
Figure 4



Relationship among willingness to stay, satisfaction with the municipality, and trust in the municipality

This clearly shows that who are satisfied with their municipalities and trust in their municipality want to continue to live in their municipalities. On the other side, the element which correlates most with the willingness to stay is “satisfaction with general public services”.

Figure 5



Relationship between willingness to stay and other elements

Figure 5 shows the reason why residents want to continue to live in the municipality or want to move out. Who has strong relationship with the local community, for example, participating in neighbourhood community, shows stronger correlation to the willingness to stay. Who does not feel safe and secure in the community, however, tends to show their willingness to move out.

5. Findings

From the two surveys, especially the second one on the citizens' perceptions, it is possible to confirm some of the characteristics of Japanese community, citizen participation, and co-production (or collaboration), which were explored in the literatures: rather strong mutual trust between local governments and their residents; accurate and proper perception of the situations, which confirm the strong social capital; willingness to collaborate, but rather timid attitude in active participation; and belief in traditional Welfare State type of public administration.

Japanese local governments have followed the NPM driven reforms and believe in the importance of co-production and many mayors trust citizen as partner of collaboration. Co-production and partnership are recognised as important concepts by most mayors and are indeed their policy priorities, confirming that the NPM and somehow NPG-driven concepts have rooted in municipalities, although the perceptions vary. The fact, that most (92.3%) mayors consider citizens as partners of collaboration, as well as large majority (73.9%, much more than client or contributor) of them perceive citizens as real partners, also confirms the strong trust of the mayors to citizens. The overall perception of the mayors shows that they strongly trust in the role of citizens as effective partners of collaboration, although the concepts of collaboration, participation, and co-production are not yet established and thus shared by the major actors.

International and domestic literature reviews have identified some characteristics of Japanese participation and co-production, which are essential to understand Japanese NPG and its peculiarities. Two surveys confirm the Japanese reform practices match international literatures

and practices, while some concepts have been modified and developed in the domestic context, thus diversifying from the original ones. Survey results also reveal that many features explained in literatures can be observed in real society, among the citizens and their relationship with local administrators.

Among the results of the second survey, the following features need particular attentions, thus require more investigations: 1) that public administration does not enjoy especially high trust compared to mayors and local legislators, but at the same time it is the less distrusted institution; 2) that both public administration and the citizens acknowledge the improvement in public service delivery, without considering citizens as clients; and 3) that Welfare State model is still preferred by most citizens and market orientation seems not popular; 4) that trust issue is related to the satisfaction with public services, but also strongly correlated to the community.

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