

Research report

A Review of International Comparative Studies on Interest Groups and Civil Society - History  
and Development of the Japan Interest Group Study (JIGS) Project

Yutaka Tsujinaka

Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Tsukuba

Yoshiaki Kubo

Associate Professor, Faculty of Law and Letters, University of the Ryukyus

1. What is the JIGS project

In 1997, the Japan Interest Group Study (JIGS) project was founded at the University of Tsukuba, and began its research. JIGS is an empirical, multinational comparative study of interest groups and civil society that collects survey data and takes Japan as its initial point of reference. Starting with the 1997 survey in Japan (J-JIGS1), have been conducted in 15 countries (including three waves in Japan, and two waves each in South Korea, the United States, Germany, and China) as of 2013 (Figure 1, Table 1).



Figure 1: Countries in which JIGS survey has been conducted (as of December 2013).

Table 1: Summary of JIGS projects

Country	Survey Period	Area	Population		Survey Method	Sampling Size	Valid Response	Return Rate
			Data Source	Size				
Japan	1997	Tokyo, Ibaraki	Telephone directory	23,128	Mail	4,247	1,635	38.5%
	2006 – 2007	Nationwide	Telephone directory	91,101	Mail	91,101	15,791	17.3%
			Registered organizations (NPOs)	23,403		23,403	5,127	21.9%
			Registered Neighborhood Associations	296,770	Mail, interview	33,438	18,404	55.0%
South Korea	1997	Seoul, Kyonggi	Telephone directory	11,521	Mail	3,890	481	12.4%
	2008 - 2009	Nationwide	Telephone directory	112,917	Mail, fax, e-mail, interview	29,422	1,008	3.4%
			Organization directory (NPOs)	7,030		7,030	425	6.0%
United States	1999	Washington, D.C., North Carolina	Telephone directory	7,228	Mail	5,089	1,492	29.3%
	2009	King County	Non-profit organization database made by research institute (SDRG)	8,000	Mail, web, phone	3,983	1,501	37.7%
	2010	Washington, D.C. metropolitan area	Non-profit organization database made by research institute (NCCS)	10,581		3,300	571	17.3%
Germany	2000	Berlin, Halle	Telephone directory and organization database made by business firm (Hoppenstedt)	4,806	Mail	3,100	885	28.5%
	2007-2008	Berlin, Halle, Heidelberg	Telephone directory	4,657		2,660	497	18.7%
		Nationwide	Registered lobbyist and organization database made by business firm (Hoppenstedt)	13,717		1,960	312	15.9%
China	2001 - 2004	Beijing, Zhejiang, Heilongjiang	Registered organizations (social groups)	9,536	Mail	8,897	2,858	32.1%
	2009 - 2010		Registered organizations (social groups)	22,991		2,120	1,252	59.1%
	2009-2011		Registered organizations (people-run non-enterprise units)	23,494	Mail and conference	2,021	1,271	62.9%
			Registered organizations (foundations)	329		277	118	42.6%
Russia	2003.12 - 2004.3	Moscow, Saint Petersburg	Organization database made by research institute (CESSI)	2,974	Mail	1,500	711	47.4%
Turkey	2004.3 - 2004.6	Ankara, Istanbul	Regional survey investigation based on telephone directory	12,124	Interview	3,146	841	- *1
The Philippines	2004.10 - 2005.2	Manila, Cebu	Organization Databases made by research institutes (SEC and PFC)	44,051	Interview	5,172	1,014	19.6%
Brazil	2005.11 - 2006.7	Belem, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Goiania, Recife	IBGE-FASFIL database, telephone directory and some local databases	34,437	Interview	2,609	2,014	77.2%
Bangladesh	2006.9 - 2007.1	Dhaka, Rajshahi	Registered organization directories	29,528	Interview	5,915	1,509	25.5%
Poland	2009.3 - 2009.11	Mazowieckie, Lubelskie, Dolnoslaskie	Registered organization directory (REGON)	22,361	Mail	3,004	261	8.7%
Estonia	2009.9 - 2009.12	Nationwide	Telephone directory	1,662	Web	1,662	344	20.7%
Uzbekistan	2007 - 2008	Nationwide	- (NPOs)	-	Mail	1,541	400	26.0% *2
			- (neighborhood associations)	-	-	-	602	-
India	2011 - 2014	Delhi, Varanasi	Registered organization directories	90,534	Mail, e-mail	7,874	990	12.6%
Thailand	2013	Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Lamphun, Lampang	- (CSOs)	-	Mail, Interview	2,996	369	12.3%
			- (neighborhood associations)	-		156	142	91.0% *2

\*1 It is not Interviewers had to look for CSOs since there is not complete address in the directory.

\*2 The survey report has not been completed yet.

The objective of JIGS is to elucidate the political structure of each country by identifying the activities of various groups operating within civil society.<sup>1</sup> By presenting the way in which civil society works in partnership with the state, it is possible to shed light on how the state interacts with civil society.<sup>2</sup> Civil society refers to “that sphere intermediate between family and state in which social actors pursue neither profit within the market nor power within the state”<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2).

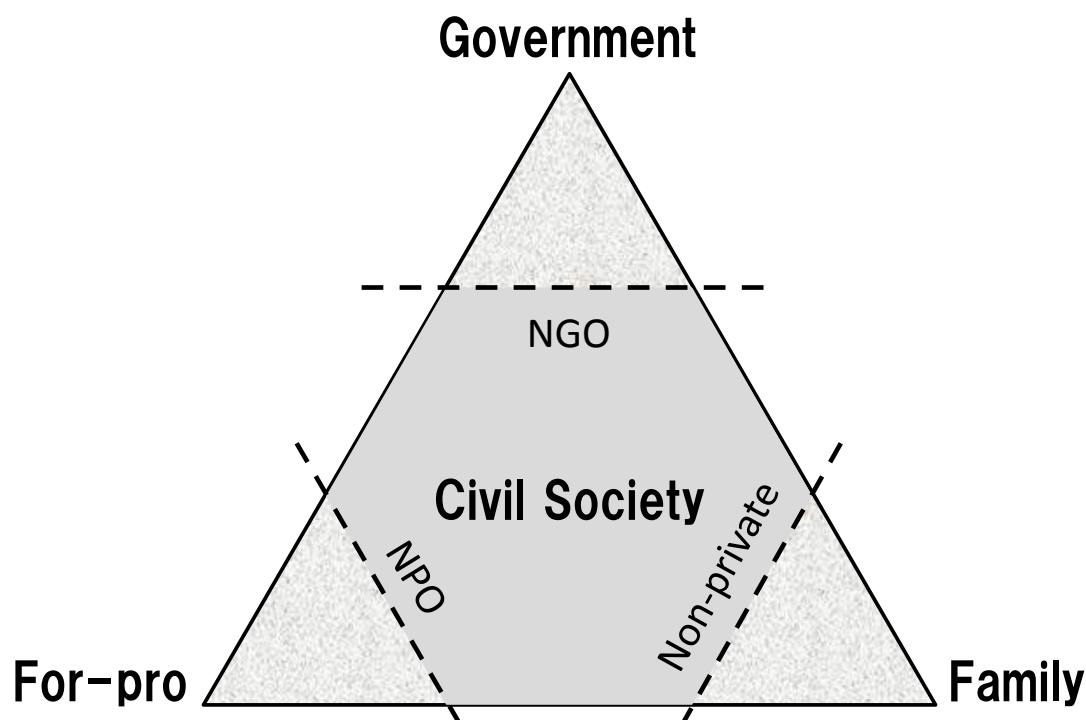


Figure 2: Relationship between government, private sector, family, and civil society.

<sup>1</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka (ed.), *Gendai Nihon no Shimin Syakai • Rieki Dantai* [Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan] (Bokutakusha, 2002), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka and Hiroki Mori (eds.), *Gendai Syakaishudan no Seiji Kinou: Riekidantai to Shiminsyakai* [Political Functions of Social Organizations in Contemporary Japan: Faces of Interest Groups and those of Civil Society] (Bokutakusha, 2010), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr (eds.), *The State of Civil Society in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Cf. Shinichi Shigetomi, “NGO no Supēsu to Gensyō Keitai: Dai 3 Sekutā Bunseki ni okeru Ajia kara no Sikaku” [NGO’s Space and Phenomenon Forms: Asian Point of View in the Analysis of Third Sector], *Leviathan*, Vol. 31 (2002), pp. 38–62; Victor A. Pestoff, *Beyond the Market and State: Social Enterprises and Civil Democracy in a Welfare Society* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, 1998) (translated by Akio Fujita, Kiyofumi Kawaguchi, Hideo Ishizuka, Kenichi Kitajima, Nobuki Matoba as *Fukushi-shakai to Shimin-minshushugi: Kyoudou-kumiai to shakaiteki-kigyō no yakuwari*, Nihon Keizai Hyouronsha, 2000).

The design of JIGS surveys is based on two analytical perspectives: interest group theory and civil society theory. This coincides with the trend in research on postwar Japanese politics. Previous studies in Japan focused on the roles played by economic or industry groups in relation to state authority, a link deemed to have contributed to Japan's economic development.<sup>4</sup> Starting in the 1990s, civil society theory began to attract greater attention.<sup>5</sup> The JIGS project, established in the latter part of the 1990s, built on these two perspectives and conducted surveys in other countries using a common framework.<sup>6</sup> Our intention was to elucidate the state of social groups through comparative research that takes Japan as its point of departure.

Significant information has already been obtained through comparative analysis. By introducing the characteristics of Japan as the basis for the project, we see that whereas many groups that were established in Japan between the late 1940s—immediately after World War II—and the 1960s, still exist today, the formation of groups in many other countries reached a peak in the 1980s and 1990s. Also, many Japanese groups are profit-oriented, such as economic or labor groups. In terms of organizational resources, similar to cases in the United States, these Japanese organizations have a large number of organization affiliates, but have fewer individual members and full-time staff.<sup>7</sup> These groups exert moderate political influence.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Chalmers Jhonson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982) (translation supervised by Toshihiko Yano and published as *Tsusansho to nihon no kiseki*, TBS-Britannica, 1982).

<sup>5</sup> For example, Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr (eds.), *The State of Civil Society in Japan*; Robert Pekkanen, *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members Without Advocates* (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2006) (translated by Hironori Sasada as *Nihon ni okeru shimin-shakai no niju-kouzou*, Bokutakusha, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka and Robert Pekkanen, "Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.80, No.3 (2007), pp.419-421; Tsujinaka and Mori (eds.), *Gendai Syakaishudan no Seiji Kinou: Riekidantai to Shiminsyakai* [Political Functions of Social Organizations in Contemporary Japan: Faces of Interest Groups and those of Civil Society], ch. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka, Hidehiro Yamamoto, and Yoshiaki Kubo, "Nihon ni okeru Dantai no Keisei to Sonritsu" [Formation and Existence of Groups in Japan], Tsujinaka and Mori (eds.), *Gendai Syakaishudan no Seiji Kinou: Riekidantai to Shiminsyakai* [Political Functions of Social Organizations in Contemporary Japan: Faces of Interest Groups and those of Civil Society], pp. 33–64; Yutaka Tsujinaka, Jae-young Choe, and Yoshiaki Kubo, "Nihon no Dantai Bunpu to Risōsu: Kokka Kan Hikaku to Kokunai Chiiki Kan Hikaku kara" [Group Distribution and Resources in Japan: From International Comparison and Regional Comparison within the Country], Yutaka Tsujinaka and Hiroki Mori (eds.), *Gendai Syakai Shudan no Seiji Kinou: Rieki Dantai to Shimin Syakai* [Political Functions of Social Organizations in Contemporary Japan:

Why and how did JIGS develop into a large-scale international comparative research project that contributes to uncovering this type of information? What will be JIGS's future course? In this paper, we would like to reflect on JIGS's prospects while at the same time presenting its historical development.

## 2. Origin of JIGS viewed through interest group theory

Yutaka Tsujinaka, leader of the JIGS project, was interested in the politics of civil movements at the start of his research career. From the late 1960s to the 1970s, terms such as “civil movement” and “citizen” came into wide use. However, it was not possible to conduct empirical research on civil society during that period, since it was only in the mid-1970s that Keiichi Matsushita proposed civil autonomy theory on urban society and Michitoshi Takabatake explored the politics of social movements.

Tsujinaka's area of specialization in his graduate work was the theory of political process. Starting from the political process theory of Arthur F. Bentley<sup>8</sup>, he conducted diverse theoretical research on V.O. Key, Jr., Mancur Olson, Arend Lijphart, Robert Prethus, and Philippe C. Schmitter, as well as survey research on top-level pressure groups.<sup>9</sup> He conducted these studies based on previous group and organizational research by Japanese political scientists.

Since the end of World War II, the Japanese constitution has guaranteed freedom of association. As a result, numerous groups were established or reorganized, such as labor unions and agricultural cooperatives. Having witnessed this explosive phenomenon of group formation, political scientists began to conduct case studies on individual organizations. Researchers engaged in this endeavor included Masao Maruyama, Kiyoaki Tsuji, Yoshitake Oka, Takeshi Ishida, Fukuji Taguchi, Jun'nosuke Masumi, Younosuke Nagai, Bakuji Ari, Keiichi Matsushita, Hajime Shinohara, and Naoki Kobayashi. They focused on how those groups founded after WWII could be modernized (i.e. westernized) and how Western style democracy could be established.<sup>10</sup>

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Faces of Interest Groups and those of Civil Society], pp. 65–89.

<sup>8</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka, “Bentorī Seiji Katei Ron no Seiritsu · Zassetsu · Tenkai” [Formation, Setback and Turnaround of Bentley's Theory of Political Process], (1) (2), *Handai Hōgaku* [Osaka Law Review], 1979.

<sup>9</sup> As academic books, Michio Muramatsu, Mitsutoshi Ito, and Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Sengo Nihon no Atsuryoku Dantai* [Pressure Groups in Post-war Japan] (Toyo Keizai, 1986); Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Rieki Dantai* [Interest Groups] (University of Tokyo Press, 1988).

<sup>10</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Rieki Dantai* [Interest Groups] (University of Tokyo Press, 1988), pp. 35–38.

From the 1960s to 1970s, advocacy groups aiming at post industrialization were founded in fields such as welfare. Researchers who were involved in studying these groups include Ichiro Miyake, Hideo Ōtake, Michio Muramatsu, Ikuo Kabashima, and Mitsutoshi Ito. Tsujinaka also participated in these research projects. They conducted empirical studies on how the structure of the political process in Japan, which went through rapid economic growth, had been transformed into “something new” that could not be fully accounted for by the ideological polarities of conservatism versus progressivism and capitalism versus socialism.

The most prominent characteristic of research from this period is an attempt to overcome the limitations of case studies by utilizing surveys and data analysis. For example, Ichiro Miyake and others conducted elite surveys, which included leaders of major groups, as part of an international project led by Ronald F. Inglehart and others.<sup>11</sup> Michio Muramatsu and others conducted surveys on approximately 250 groups that were active at the top level of society based on the theory of pressure groups.<sup>12</sup> Muramatsu et al. conducted the first round of surveys on pressure groups in 1980, followed by further rounds in 1994, 2003, and 2012, the last of which was administered by a research team at University of Tsukuba.

The origin of the JIGS project can be traced back to these previous studies on Japanese groups and organizations. In particular, one study that can be regarded as its direct predecessor was an examination of pressure groups by Muramatsu et al. JIGS surveys draw on various original approaches in designing the questionnaire for the pressure group study, including the understanding of group politics, survey items, the wording of questions, variable manipulations, and conclusions.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the subjects of the pressure group surveys were limited only to entities that were active at the top level of civil society. How many groups exist in Japan? What characteristics do these groups have? What proportion of these groups is politically active and engages in activities aimed at exerting pressure of policymakers? How many of these groups are politically inactive? What type of access and attitudinal characteristics can be seen in their activities? Although these questions are directly related to problems of social and political systems and structures, no research has been conducted to answer them. The JIGS project is therefore an attempt to fill this important vacuum.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ichiro Miyake and Joji Watanuki (eds.), *Byōdō wo Meguru Erīto to Taikou Erīto* [The Elite and Opposing Elite over Equality] (Soubunsha, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Michio Muramatsu, Mitsutoshi Ito, and Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Sengo Nihon no Atsuryoku Dantai* [Pressure Groups in Post-war Japan] (Toyo Keizai, 1986).

<sup>13</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka (ed.), *Gendai Nihon no Shimin Syakai • Rieki Dantai* [Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan] (Bokutakusha, 2002), p. 47.

<sup>14</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka (ed.), *Gendai Nihon no Shimin Syakai • Rieki Dantai* [Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan] (Bokutakusha, 2002), p. 51.

### 3. Origin of JIGS viewed through civil society theory

About 10 years passed following the publication of *Pressure Groups in Post-war Japan* (1986) and *Interest Groups* (1988), which used the data from the first round of pressure group surveys, before the JIGS project could finally be launched in 1997. During those years, it was not possible to conduct broad research on civil society because there was a problem of defining “what constitutes reliable data” in an effort to reach a comprehensive understanding of pressure groups, interest groups, non-governmental organizations/non-profit organizations (NGOs/NPOs), and civic movements.

During this time, Tsujinaka participated in several international collaborative studies. As a visiting researcher at Cornell University from 1989 to 1991, he explored Japanese national defense and internal security policy (antiterrorism policies and policies against radical social movements) with Professor Peter J. Katzenstein, by conducting comparative studies between Japan and Germany. In collaboration with Professor David Knoke and others, he conducted research on labor policy networks in Japan, the United States, and Germany. In a collaborative study with Takeshi Inagami and others at the Japan Institute of Labor, he conducted basic quantitative analyses as part of a comparative study on neo-corporatism.<sup>15</sup> Between 1992 and 1997, he served as the director-general of the project “Conflict between Globalism and Regionalism—The Changing International System and Japan’s Role,” led by Hideo Sato. Based on this experience, he started to work on a comparative study of global environmental networks targeting Japan, the United States, Germany, and South Korea in the mid-1990s, under the title “Global Environmental Policy Network Project” (GEPON).

Around the same time, Tsujinaka had an opportunity to study the “politics of civil movements” through his participation in the Study Group on New Organizations and Group for the Next Generation in Japan (chaired by Professor Norihiko Narita of Surugadai University) at the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA). As part of the study group’s report, he

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<sup>15</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein and Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Defending the Japanese State: Structures Norms and Political Responses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); David Knoke, Frantz Urban Pappi, Jefferey Broadbent, and Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Comparing Policy Network: Labor Politics in the U.S., Germany, and Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Takeshi Inagami, H. Whittaker, Tōru Ōmi, Yoshihiro Shimodaira, and Yutaka Tsujinaka, *Neo-Kōporatizumu no Kokusai Hikaku: Atarashii Seiji Keizai Moderu no Mosaku* [International Comparison of Neo-Corporatism: Searching for a New Sociopolitical Model ] (Japan Institute of Labor, 1994). Ikuo Kabashima (currently serving as the governor of Kumamoto prefecture), who was a colleague at the time, opened the way for collaborative research with Knoke et al.

conducted research on newly established NPOs, NGOs, and civil activity groups in Japan.<sup>16</sup> The origin of the JIGS project can be traced to this NIRA study group.

Through these experiences, he began to rethink about the state of NGOs and NPOs in social processes and their political significance in the mid-1990s. He considered conducting comprehensive research that would lead to a cross-sectional understanding of civil society. Thus, in spring 1997, the JIGS project was launched, comprising young researchers who gathered at the University of Tsukuba, and J-JIGS1 was administered.<sup>17</sup> The study of civil society was conducted through a survey method, using telephone directories where the individual groups listed are categorized by occupation.

At that point, it was not foreseen that this research would develop into international surveys, since J-JIGS1 began with a budget of several hundred thousand yen, supplemented by manual effort, and there was little prospect of further funding for subsequent projects. However, over time, as J-JIGS1 yielded more results than expected, the research team obtained sizable research funding along with GEPON and developed into a comparative research project.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka, “Seijuku gata Shimin Syakai to NPO · NGO · Shimin Katsudō Dantai” [Mature Civil Society and NPO/NGO/Civil Activity Groups], , *NIRA Policy Research*, Vol. 11, Issue 9, (1998), pp. 16–23.

<sup>17</sup> The group members included Yoshito Ishio, Jae-young Choe, Hiroki Mori, and Hiroki Miwa. For J-JIGS2, Robert Pekkanen and Hidehiro Yamamoto joined the group as new members.

<sup>18</sup> “Comparative Empirical Study of Interest Groups and Civil Society Organizations Mainly in Modern China” (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [(A)] overseas, 2000–2003), “Systematic Comparative Study on Public Policy and Policy Process in Japan and South Korea” (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [(B)] 2002–2004), “Reorganization of Knowledge towards a Pluralistic Cooperative Society: International Comparison Concerning Pluralistic Cooperation” (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Humanities and Social Sciences project, 2003–2007), “Special Project on Comparative Civil Society, State and Culture” (University of Tsukuba, Special Project, 2003–2007), “A Comprehensive Empirical Study on the Three-Level Civil Society Structure and Governance in Japan, South Korea, the United States, Germany, and China in Comparative Perspective” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Grant-in-Aid for Specially Promoted Research, 2005–2009)), “Comparative Empirical Study on Change in Political Structure and Pressure Groups, Policy Networks, Changes in Civil Society” (Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S), 2010–2015), etc.



#### 4. Prospects of JIGS

As mentioned above, the methodological characteristics of JIGS projects can be summed up in the following three points: (1) empirical research using surveys, (2) elucidation of political structure by analyzing social groups, (3) comparative research that takes Japan as the point of departure. The origin of JIGS can be traced back to two analytical perspectives: interest group theory and civil society theory. The relationships between JIGS (basic structure of civil society and groups) and the pressure group surveys and policy network surveys that are its direct predecessors can be expressed in graphical form as shown in Figure 3.

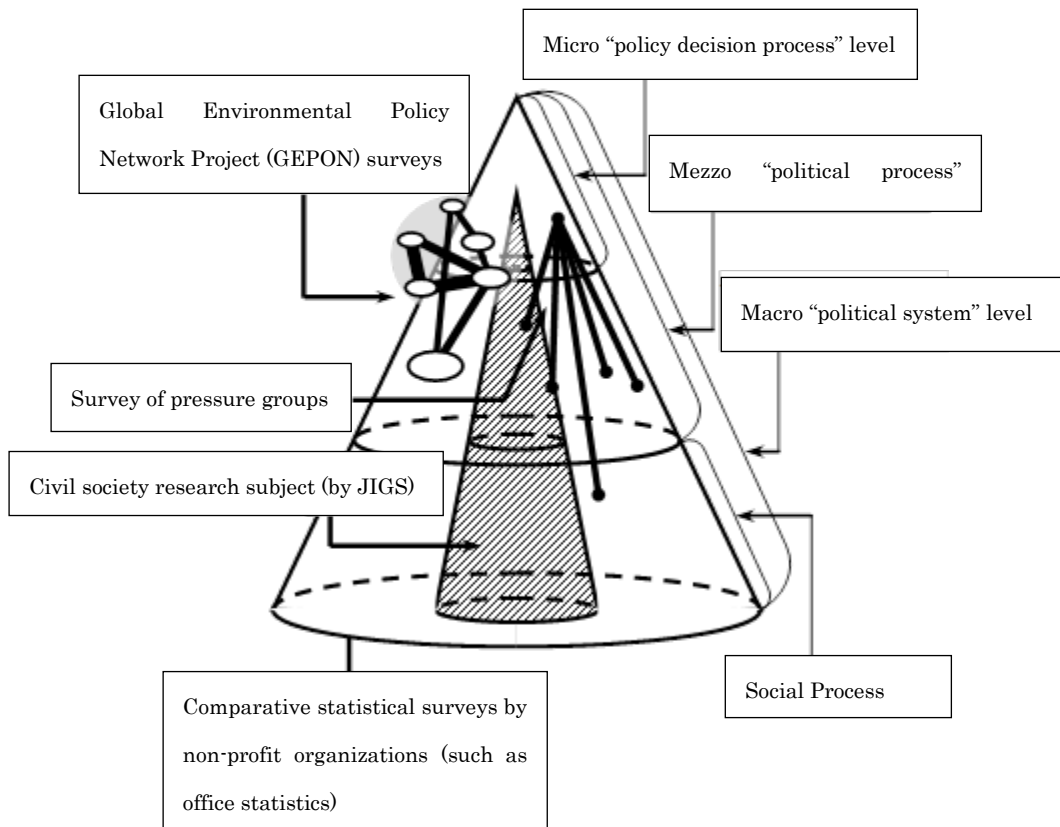


Figure 3: Relationships among three related surveys.

Keeping this in mind, we would like to conclude with three theoretical prospects for further research.

The first prospect is to model qualitative aspects that cannot be completely captured by the conventional theory of political systems by modeling patterns for interactions between civil

society and government. Previous survey investigations have demonstrated that various combinations are possible in terms of political institutions, the degree of centralization, the distribution of various types of civil society groups, relationships between groups, subjects of lobbying, and so forth among countries that have the same political system, such as a liberal democracy. One future task would be to narrow down similarities and differences between possible combinations of these factors.

The second prospect is to model the mutually causal relationships between social and political changes.<sup>19</sup> JIGS has conducted multiple surveys in Japan, South Korea, the United States, Germany, China, and Russia. By combining data collected at multiple points in time with political changes in these countries, it will be possible to understand the mutually causal mechanisms between social and political changes. In addition, we would like to elucidate the relationships between social and political changes by capturing the aforementioned combinations of different factors across multiple points in time.

The third prospect is to isolate the effects of globalization on civil society. Since the end of the Cold War, the globalization of politics, economy, and society has had a considerable impact on civil society in each country. As mentioned above, the JIGS project set the objective of clarifying the political structure by examining civil society. Meanwhile, relationships between the market or international relations and civil society have not been sufficiently investigated. These relationships need to be analyzed in greater depth.

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<sup>19</sup> Yutaka Tsujinaka, “Nidai Seitō Sei no Atsuryoku Dantai teki Kiso” [Pressure Group Foundations of Two-Party System], Michio Muramatsu, Ikuo Kume (eds.), *Nihon Seiji Hendō no 30 Nen* [30 Years of Political Changes in Japan: Structural Changes Seen in Surveys of Politicians, Bureaucrats and Groups] (Toyo Keizai, 2006), pp. 299–323; Shinsuke Hamamoto, “Seiken Koutai no Dantai – Seitō Kankei he no Eikyō: Futatsu no Hikaku ni yoru Kenshō” [Effects of Changes of Administration on Group-party Relations: Analysis based on Two Comparisons], *Nenpō Seijigaku* [The Annuals of Japanese Political Science Association], 2012, Issue II (2012), pp. 65–87.

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