Roles And Functions Of Intermediary Organizations In Collaborative Governance: The Case Of Japan

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This paper will advance and debate the following proposition.

Abstract

In recent years, “collaboration” among third sectors, governments, and business sector has become popular term in Japanese society. However, in many cases, the term is used in a normative and ideal discourse. The reality is that the “partnerships” are more top-down approach by government. For instance, local Governments have been keen to contract their services out to local NPOs to reduce the cost of social services (Tsukamoto & Nishimura: 2006). Why it doesn’t work and how to make the collaboration successful?

There are several studies of trying to answer this question. However, many of them focus on dyadic relations between NPOs and government or NPOs and business. Yet in practice, collaborations are more complex where multiple stakeholders interact each other. From this viewpoint, the definition of collaborative governance needs to be broad so we follow the definition by Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T., & Balogh, S. (2012): “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished.”

Making the collaborative governance successful requires functions to equalize power, solve conflicts, and build trust among stakeholders (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone:2006). Intermediary organizations often play such facilitation role. One of the functions of intermediary organizations is to build relationship, lead interactions and provide support among principal stakeholders (Anheier & List:2005). In this study we mainly focus on this aspect of intermediary organizations in collaborative governance and try to explore their roles and functions.

[Theoretical framework]

[Methodology]
We will conduct case studies. The aim is, to (1) examine the validity of the framework, (2) analyze obstacles for the organizations in the collaborative process, and (3) refine the model if necessary.
Focus of the case study is on environmental & sustainable development. Collaborative governance in environmental protection & sustainable development often experience serious conflicts among stakeholders.

We will conduct the research on intermediary organizations in Kawasaki City, Yokkaichi city, and Kobe city in November and December in 2013.

References