Politics and Volunteering in Japan

A Global Perspective

Politics and Volunteering in Japan begins by painting a portrait of volunteering in Japan, and from this starting point it demonstrates that our current understandings of civil society have been based implicitly on a U.S. model that does not adequately consider participation patterns found in other parts of the world. The book develops a theory of civic participation that incorporates citizen attitudes about governmental and individual responsibility with societal and governmental practices that support (or hinder) volunteer participation. This theory is tested using cross-national and subnational statistical analysis, and it is refined through detailed case studies of volunteering in three Japanese cities. The findings are then used to build the Community Volunteerism Model, which explains and predicts both the types and rates of volunteering in communities around the world. The model is tested using four cross-national case studies (Finland, Japan, Turkey, and the United States) and three subnational case studies in Japan.

Mary Alice Haddad is Assistant Professor of Government and East Asian Studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in political science at the University of Washington in Seattle. She has been the recipient of several grants and fellowships, including ones from the Fulbright-A50 Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. She has published articles in *Comparative Political Studies* and an award-winning article in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

Politics and Volunteering in Japan

A Global Perspective

MARY ALICE HADDAD
Wesleyan University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521869492

First published 2007

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data
Haddad, Mary Alice, 1973–
Politics and volunteering in Japan : a global perspective / Mary Alice Haddad.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN: 978-0-521-86949-2 (hardback)
1. Voluntarism – Cross-cultural studies. 2. Voluntarism – Japan. 3. Social participation – Cross-cultural studies. 4. Social participation – Japan. 5. Community organization – Cross-cultural studies. 6. Community organization – Japan. 1. Title.
HN49.V64H33 2007
307.1′40952 – dc22 2006019640

ISBN 978-0-521-86949-2 Hardback

To My Parents

For my mother who taught me to love the family trade

and

For my father who taught me the value of perseverance and dedication

Contents

Tables and Figures

TABLES

FIGURES

Preface

Every day, millions of people perform a myriad of services in their communities for free. They might look after the elderly, clean parks, or risk their lives to put out a fire in a neighbor's house. These volunteers form the core of civil society, the organized element of society that lies between the family and the government. As such, they not only play an invaluable role in preserving and protecting their communities but, by acting as channels of communication with the government, also help keep democracies accountable to their publics.

Thus far, studies of comparative civil society have used three general approaches to explain why some communities or countries have much higher volunteer participation rates than others. They have examined how individual characteristics, such as education or income, increase the likelihood of individuals to volunteer; how social characteristics, such as levels of trust and social capital in a community, shape levels of volunteering; and how characteristics of government, such as levels of spending on social services, influence volunteer participation rates. All of these approaches have given us greater insights into volunteer behavior, but none of them can explain why volunteering is widespread in some communities whereas in others only a select few participate. Current approaches also cannot explain why one community might volunteer for organizations that work closely with their local governments, such as neighborhood associations or volunteer fire departments, whereas another might concentrate its resources on

advocacy or service organizations that tend to avoid significant government involvement.

This book takes a different approach to the study of volunteering. It argues that people do not volunteer in their communities because of their education level or level of social trust, or because the government spends a lot (or little) on social services. Rather, people around the world volunteer these valuable services for their communities because they think it is their civic responsibility to do so. Volunteers are performing a civic duty when they volunteer their time, their resources, even their lives for their communities. In the pages that follow, this book explores how this sense of civic duty is developed in different communities, and why it varies – in both content and intensity – from one community to another.

Ever since Robert Putnam's startling revelation in 1995 that Americans were "bowling alone," participating less and less in group activities, academics and the public have been reexamining democracy and the civic associations that were believed to be its immutable foundations. Although some of these inquiries took place in democracies outside North America, much of the understanding of citizen participation is based on an implicit model derived from the U.S. experience. This book joins in the dialogue about the relationship between citizen activities in voluntary and civic associations and the democracies they create. It does this, however, with a twist. Rather than taking the American democracy as its starting point, it begins its story in Japan. By placing the Japanese experience in a comparative perspective, the book comes to a very different understanding of volunteer participation, one that includes types, found across the globe, that go undetected or underappreciated in the American model.

Japanese have very high rates of participation in neighborhood associations, parent-teacher associations, volunteer fire departments, and other organizations that are locally based and work closely with the government. This type of volunteer participation, while present in the United States, is generally overlooked in favor of examining associational groups that build "social capital" (Putnam 2000), such as bowling leagues or book clubs; advocacy groups that promote particular political causes (Tarrow 1998; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), such as the AARP or NAACP; or nonprofit organizations that provide social welfare services (Salamon et al. 1999), such as nonprofit

hospitals or schools. By overlooking groups like neighborhood associations, which work closely with the government, civil society scholars have mischaracterized volunteer participation in Japan and have misinterpreted the nature of civil society itself.

This book begins with the premise that civil society exists at the nexus of state and society, so patterns of participation can be explained only by exploring how civil society is shaped by the interaction of state and society. To this end, it explains participation patterns across as well as within countries. Citizen attitudes about individual and governmental responsibility for dealing with social problems determine the *types* of organizations that are prevalent in a community, and the practices of social and governmental institutions determine the *rates* of participation in a community.

This examination of the nature of civil society highlights the prevalence and importance of civic organizations that target the bureaucracy, rather than politicians or the courts, in their attempts to inject citizen accountability into government policy making and implementation. Additionally, it demonstrates how community-level factors can encourage (or discourage) volunteer participation by contributing to the development and transmission of norms of civic responsibility. Civic organizations lie at the heart of the state-society relationship, and understanding why volunteering patterns emerge as they do provides important clues about the dynamic relationship between democratic citizens and their governments.

Acknowledgments

This project has been an inspiration. Writing a book is a grueling experience, but I have been privileged to study a subject matter that has constantly put me in contact with the often forgotten, often overlooked elements of humanity that keep societies running in a positive direction. These are the people who are getting things done for their communities. Although many of them are dealing with intractable problems such as poverty, aging, truancy, and fire hazards, the men and women that I met – many in their sixties and seventies – are identifying problems, crafting solutions, and making life better for their neighbors. They are quiet, humble people who are putting in long hours and hard work to improve their communities, and they are succeeding. In a world where the media overwhelm us with stories of misery and hopelessness, it has been wonderful to spend some time in places where people are doing right by one another by making their small corner of the globe better for each other and for the next generation.

As with all long projects, I have accumulated many debts, most of which I will never be able to repay. I hope that those many individuals and institutions that have helped me along the way can have some satisfaction and pride knowing that their contributions have been invaluable to the completion of this work.

I begin by thanking those organizations that have provided financial support for my research. The Japanese Ministry of Education (Mombusho) provided funding for a predoctoral research year during 1998–1999. The Institute of International Education and the A50

Program awarded me a Fulbright Graduate Research Fellowship to conduct fieldwork in Japan for the 2001–2002 academic year. All of the Fulbright staff in Japan were exceedingly helpful and supportive of my research, and their assistance went far beyond the considerable financial support. I was also the beneficiary of a Chester Fritz Grant for International Exchange from the Graduate School of the University of Washington, which allowed me to buy a much-needed laptop computer. Sponsorship by the Social Science Research Council and the Japan Foundation allowed me to attend the very helpful Japan Dissertation Workshop in December 2000 in lovely Monterey, California. The Society for Comparative Research provided me with the extraordinary opportunity to participate with exceptional students and faculty from around the world during a graduate student retreat in Budapest, Hungary, in May 2002. The Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies granted me a postdoctoral year in which I did most of the rewriting and revisions of the manuscript; time away from teaching and access to the superb faculty at Harvard were invaluable for the completion of this book. Finally, Wesleyan University, my current institution, has given me the support and encouragement necessary to see this manuscript into print.

I have been privileged to work with extraordinary faculty. Chief among those to whom I am indebted are the members of my dissertation advisory committee: James Caporaso, Margaret Levi, Joel Migdal, and T. J. Pempel. Without their insightful criticisms, thoughtful comments, and constant support, this project would never have come to fruition. Special thanks go to T. J. Pempel and Joel Migdal. T. J. Pempel served as the chair of my committee for the first half of my graduate career, guiding me through the pitfalls of coursework and encouraging me to "think outside the box" in choosing a topic to research. Joel Migdal was the chair of my committee for the second half of graduate school. Through his care, mentoring, and ever-insightful editor's pen, this book has greatly exceeded my humble expectations. While I was in Japan, Ikuo Kume at Kobe University provided me invaluable support as I struggled with language, theoretical dead ends, and research roadblocks. Additional thanks go to the wonderful faculty at Harvard, especially Susan Pharr, Robert Putnam, Margarita Estevez-Abe, Pippa Norris, and Theda Skocpol. All of them bent their extraordinary minds around my project, offering valuable criticisms and suggestions at

critical moments during my revisions. As I begin to embark on my own career as an academic, I cannot thank them enough for being living examples of what it means to be a good scholar. They have demonstrated the ideal to which I aspire.

In addition, my colleagues have also given me much needed advice and support. At the University of Washington I would like to thank Betsi Beem, Debbi Elms, Cynthia Horne, Turan Kayoglu, and the members of the Japan Reading Group (especially Michael Strausz, Yuko Kawato, and Hiro Sasada). In Japan, special thanks go to Ayako Kusunoki and to my "sempai extraordinaire," Robert Eldridge. At Harvard, Lara Deeb, Sherrill Stroschein, Conor O'Dwyer, Jonathan Marshall, and Kentaro Fukamoto have my everlasting gratitude.

I am also grateful to John Campbell, Tuomas Forsberg, Sky Hiltunen, David Leheny, Frank Schwartz, and Jenny White for their invaluable feedback on early versions of parts or all of the manuscript. At Wesleyan, Manolis Kaparakis, Bruce Masters, Jim McGuire, Don Moon, and Peter Rutland have all provided important assistance with various aspects of the final processes of the manuscript's preparation. Finally, special thanks go to John Chisholm for his valuable research assistance.

Perhaps my largest debt is to those inspiring volunteers and city employees who gave me the material necessary to write this book. Chief among those is Kanaya Syouji in Sanda. Kanaya-katcho not only set me up with the interviews I needed in Sanda, but he also provided the contacts I relied on in Kashihara and Sakata. His generosity with his time, resources, insights, and homegrown veggies were the mainstay of this project. I must also extend a huge thanks to Sugawara Tsukashi, my main contact in Sakata, who managed to book my schedule so full that I was able to complete the interviews and collect the documents that took me two months in Sanda in only one week in Sakata. The welcome shown to me by everyone in Sakata, complete with a sakura-viewing expedition, demonstrated the best that Japanese hospitality has to offer. Oka Shigeki and Murai Senyoshiko in Kashihara introduced me to the extraordinary range of vibrant voluntary activity in that city.

I conclude with an enormous thank you to my family. My parents, Perry and Sarah Pickert, have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and have supported my choice of an academic career. Because they both also have doctorates, they have sympathized with my agonies

and celebrated my triumphs as I have moved along this path. It is to them that I dedicate this book. I also thank my brother, Perry Pickert, who has offered wise words and encouragement and has also designed the beautiful cover. Finally, my husband Rami has made the past five years of this long journey the most joyful and fulfilling ones, even as our new son Tammer is bringing more laughter and love to our lives than I ever thought possible.