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### Making and Unmaking of Transnational Environmental Cooperation

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## Abstract

There has been an ongoing debate about how (or through what mechanisms) global environmental norms have influenced domestic political debates that give rise to green policy choices. In particular, effective international environmental cooperation between transnational NGOs and domestic NGOs has been recognized as a reflection of how the principles of environmental norms have been successfully applied. As such, the key question guiding research in the politics of environmental norms is, under what condition or conditions would transnational cooperation of NGOs be more likely to achieve its goals? The case study on wetland reclamation projects in Japan and Korea have revealed that unlike the common top-down approach to transnational cooperation, domestic environmental NGOs with larger resources, challenging ideology, more contentious mode of protest to dominant paradigm are more likely to nurture, develop and sustain transnational cooperation for environmental norms. As will be seen in the paper, Korean NGOs are more successful in their cause than their Japanese counterparts because they are more organized and have a larger membership base with distinctive culture of protest. This paper argues that one of the mechanisms missing from the debate is a *bottom-up* approach where transnational cooperation of NGOs is forged by the initiation of domestic NGOs

Keywords: Environmental Cooperation, Norm, Environmental Movements, Civil Society, Japan, Korea

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## **Introduction**

In the last fifteen years, transnational NGOs have captured the attention of scholars and risen in prominence in the field of global environmental governance. In particular, constructivist literature which places emphasis on the role of norms<sup>1</sup> in shaping the outcomes of environmental politics at international and domestic levels highlights the contribution of transnational NGOs in environmental governance (Carpenter 2006; Florini 2000; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Haas 2002; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Reimann 2006; Lipschutz 1996; Wapner 1996). As carriers of ecological sensitivities and normative ideals of environmentalism, transnational NGOs act across national boundaries and provide legitimacy and new standards in pressuring states into environmentally sound action (Wapner 1996). Adopting this view, some scholars have suggested the formation of “global civil society” or “world civic politics” – justifying their proposition by arguing that transnational NGOs are creating and manipulating the interdependent global collective life to bring social and policy change when dealing with the environment (Lipschutz 1996). As such, it is not implausible to say that global environmentalism finds its expression in transnational NGOs’ activities.

In this theoretical and empirical context, there has been an ongoing debate about how (or through what mechanisms) environmental norms have influenced domestic political debates that give rise to green policy choices. In particular, effective international environmental cooperation between transnational and domestic NGOs has been recognized as a reflection of how the principles of environmental norms have been successfully applied. As such, the key question guiding research in the politics of

environmental norms is, under what condition or conditions would transnational cooperation of NGOs be more likely to achieve its goals?

This paper argues that one of the mechanisms missing from the debate is a *bottom-up* approach where transnational cooperation of NGOs is forged by the initiation of domestic NGOs. As will be discussed below in detail, most studies in transnational NGOs activities focus their theoretical attention on the development and application of the top-down approach and neglect the alternative bottom-up approach. This is untenable, given the growing number and importance of domestic grassroots-driven transnational cooperation (i.e., Caouette 2007). This paper aims to fill this gap by offering a theoretically informed account of domestic NGO-led transnational cooperation in environmental politics. Additionally, this paper also recognizes the fact that transnational cooperation initiated by domestic NGOs does not always result in a change in state environment policy. This would be illustrated in a comparative case study that the paper would examine in a later section – a less successful Isahaya environmental movement in Japan vis-à-vis a more successful Saemangeum one in Korea.

To explain the different outcomes, this paper makes a two-part proposition that the nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs are likely to increase or decrease sustained (sustainable) transnational cooperation, which in turn would affect the outcome of such transnational cooperation by mediating the influence of environmental norms. By sustained (sustainable) transnational cooperation, we refer to the degrees of duration and intensity of transnational cooperation in efforts to achieve original goals. More precisely, by the nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs, this paper comparatively juxtaposes locally organized, non-professional, service-oriented, and less contentious Japanese

NGOs against its nationally organized, professional, advocacy-oriented, and more contentious Korean counterparts. Drawing on social movement literature, the paper derives these differences from “state-society relationship” and “culture of group formation and collective action” within which domestic NGOs in Japan and Korea operate respectively. By taking into account the impact of the nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs, this paper aims not only to broaden the discussion concerning the ability of domestic NGOs to influence state policies, but also to lay bare some of the more intricate ways through which the global and the state interact in the politics of environmental norms.

In order to achieve these theoretical and empirical goals, this paper will look in-depth at two prominent developmental projects, the Isahaya Bay Reclamation Project (IBRP) in Japan and Saemangeum Reclamation Project (SBRP) in Korea. The two cases which caused unprecedented and acrimonious debates over ecological value of wetlands are selected for comparison out of thematic, theoretical, and methodological (in the tradition of “method of difference”) considerations. First, both cases have been considered the biggest and long-lasting environmental protests in the post-war history respectively and used as reference cases for other movements in the two countries. Second, both cases not only took place over a similar time period (1980s – 2000) and space (bay area) but also required a multi-level analysis to study the conflict and cooperation of transnational, national, and local actors on local environmental issues. Perhaps more important for the current purpose in this paper, the two cases are ideal for theoretical development (or hypothesis formation) and application of the impact of domestic NGOs. Unlike other successful environmental cases in Japan and Korea where

governments had been compelled to change their policies at the agenda-setting stage,<sup>2</sup> construction works were already substantially under way in both Isahaya and Saemangeum when domestic NGOs were ushered in. As such, the cases illustrate the conflict of interests amongst the respective governments and civil society arguably in a most intensive form. The fact that both projects were in mid-progress when the clash of materialistic concerns (i.e. economic interests, budgets, spill-over effects etc.) and normative value (i.e. conservation of natural resources) occurred not only makes it ideal for gauging the impact of domestic NGOs but also constitutes a hard test for the efficacy of environmental norm politics. Lastly, the comparative case study itself entails more than theoretical and empirical interests. It reveals *both* the growing significance and the limits of domestic NGOs in world politics. As rationalists complain, much of the existing research on norms focuses on how norms and transnational advocacy networks affect weak states in developing and transitional countries. What the current case study suggests is that norms and advocacy networks can also influence the domestic policies of well-established democracies with tradition of *strong* states like Japan and Korea to a substantial degree. By analyzing both the successes and failures of norms and advocacy networks' activities, this paper can contribute to existing literature by offering more nuanced and specified conditions for the efficacy of environmental norms in states' policy change.

One caveat is in order before proceeding. Our theoretical effort is limited to a hypothesis formation for further testing and specification, given the underdeveloped status of the bottom-up approach. In other words, we do not aim to develop a full-fledged deductive theory when we attempt to identify the conditions under which the domestic-

led transnational cooperation is sustainable to the extent that it can shape the outcome of environmental norm politics. Suspecting that there may be multiple causes and mechanisms of the domestic-led transnational cooperation producing sustainable cooperation-cum-state policy change (i.e., the role of charismatic leadership, NGOs' leverage politics with political parties, and coalition of domestic NGOs and local governments),<sup>3</sup> we seek to offer a process-oriented theoretical framework designed to link macro variables (the nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs) with micro sequence of events.

In Japan's Isahaya case, for example, Yamashita's charismatic leadership initiated and maintained transnational cooperation which in the end fell apart upon his untimely death, despite the institutional deficits in Japanese civil society. This shows the limits of leadership-dependent transnational cooperation. Counterfactually, the death of a leader would not have dealt the similar level of blow to Korean counterpart. As will be discussed in detail below, furthermore, the limited cooperation of Japanese NGOs with opposition party (Democratic Party of Japan) and local governments neither helped sustain transnational cooperation nor resulted in a desired outcome. In contrast, Korea NGOs were able to better sustain transnational cooperation in the absence of any partnership with other domestic actors for a relatively better policy outcome. As such, we view the nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs as *a crucial necessary condition* likely to increase/decrease sustainable transnational cooperation.

That said, this paper will proceed in the following manner. In the next section, we will develop the bottom-up analytical framework anchored in "state-society relationship" and "culture of group formation and collective action" within which domestic NGOs in

Japan and Korea operate respectively. This will be followed by the comparative case analysis of IBRP and SBRP. Lastly, the conclusion will summarize the main findings of this paper with reflection of alternative explanations. This section also will suggest future research in this direction with policy implications.

### **Making International Norms Work: Bottom-up Analytical Framework**

As environmental problems tend to be transboundary, there is a growing trend of environmental cooperation among neighboring countries or regions (Young 1997). Perhaps the most surprising aspect of global environmentalism would be the explosion of transnational NGOs committed to global environmental activism advocating states' environmentally sound developments (Wapner *ibid*). Since the late 1980s and 1990s, transnational networks of environmental activists have become agents of disseminating new norms, concepts, and standards developed at international conferences and treaties – for instance, the concept of “sustainable development” accepted at the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. International conferences and treaties also provide intellectual resources and ideas to activists blocked at the national and local levels (Haas 2002; Keck and Sikkink 1998).

Three mechanisms of norms influence are at work in this way of conceptualizing international NGOs' role. First, the normative power of international environmental NGOs is often in tandem with powerful states and/or international organizations (Reimann 2006). Second, the target state's domestic political/social structures mediate the impact of environmental norms advocated by international NGOs. This approach is used to comparatively explain domestic variation in accepting environmental norms (i.e.,



Checkel 1997; Gurowitz 1999; Kwak and Lee 2009). Lastly, international NGOs form alliances with national and local NGOs to force state governments to give political and financial support for NGO-initiated advocacy for environment or withdraw their original development plans. In all these accounts, the emphasis is to flesh out *how international NGOs' advocacy is thought to affect domestic environmental policy outcomes*. As such, this way of analyzing international NGOs' role in the making of national/local environmental policy is what Reimann (2006) describes as "top-down" approaches of environmental governance.

Although this top-down analytical framework explores the mechanisms by which international environmental NGOs influence policy, it suffers from three weaknesses that this paper will seek to address. First, as Kollman rightly observes, most works in this tradition have studied the degree and manner in which international NGOs influence policy in developing or transition states (or weak states). The limited coverage of international NGOs' activities thus leaves empirical hard test much to be desired (Kollman 2007:332).

The second weakness is associated with the top-down approaches' inherent analytical blind spot to national/local-led transnational environmental politics. The often neglected bottom-up movement has, in fact, resulted in the tremendous success of making international environmental cooperation. As domestic elites and activists become increasingly socialized into global environmental norms promulgated by international organizations and transnational actors, they strategically use environmental norms and initiate collaboration with international NGOs for domestic policy debates (Sell and Prakash 2004). In the last decade or so, transnational cooperation and activities for

environment in Japan and Korea have increased considerably. To illustrate, Japan has been making a conscious effort to improve domestic and global environment since the 1990s, after it was criticized for its tremendous consumption of natural resources as well as the involvement of Japanese companies in South Asian and African tropical deforestation (Schreurs 2004). The Japanese government has also given its support for environmental NGOs such as World Wild Fund for Nature Japan (WWF Japan, 1971), Nature Conservation Society of Japan (NCSJ, 1951), and Friends of Earth Japan (1979) that are internationally-oriented. In developing this from inside to out environmental activities, Japanese NGOs have played a crucial role. The government actively consults these NGOs when it has to make decisions on official development assistance (ODA) for developing countries and environment-related policies (Schreurs 2004).

Similarly, Korean environmental NGOs have been actively involved in establishing regional environmental cooperation networks such as Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE) by hosting of environmental NGO conferences and conducting joint research and investigation bilaterally or multilaterally with international NGOs.<sup>4</sup> Recently, Korean NGOs have also started to turn their eyes to environmental assistance in developing and neighboring countries. For example, several NGOs are working together to prevent deforestation (or desertification) in rapidly industrializing China and Mongolia, which has resulted in serious air pollution and yellow sandstorm problems in Northeast Asia. For this purpose, Korean NGOs such as the Northeast Asia Forest Forum (NAFF) and KFEM have held several international symposiums and conferences, trained Chinese and Mongolian NGO members as well as bureaucrats, and planted trees in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), Shāndōng Shěng, and the city of Xian (China).<sup>5</sup>

As such, the exclusive focus on top-down transmission unnecessarily limits the empirical universe of the impact of environmental norms.

Given that existing literature is theoretically silent on *conditions under which sustainable transnational cooperation of NGOs is possible in achieving its targeted goals*, this paper will attempt to explore this point to match theory and empirics (the growing number and importance of the domestic NGOs-led transnational cooperation). In general, scholars recognize that the domestic political system, such as state centralization and relative openness of policy-making process (i.e., Cortell and Davis 1996; Checkel 1999), filters the influence of international norms. However, scant attention is paid to spelling out the ways in which the sustained (sustainable) transnational cooperation of international and domestic NGOs can be facilitated. As a result, the understanding of when and how transnational cooperation of NGOs is likely or unlikely to produce desired outcomes is critically circumscribed. After all, the influence of environmental norms cannot be felt strongly in domestic policy debates without effective and sustainable cooperation of international and domestic NGOs in the first place. In this regard, Sell and Prakash (2004: 149) claim that “[S]uccess in influencing policy processes lies not in claimed moral superiority but in the [transnational] network’s superior abilities to create and make the most of the political opportunities by exploiting a crisis, constructing a problem, mobilizing a coalition, and grafting its agenda onto policy debates.”<sup>6</sup>

In order to fill this gap, this paper will borrow insight from social movement/contentious politics literature which views transnational activism as a continuation of domestic politics. The literature posits that (group) characteristics and modes of civil society activity frame the broad opportunity structure for sustainable

development of transnational cooperation. The term “group characteristics” refers to civic group’s resources and ideological orientation (Rohschneider and Dalton 2003; Zald and McCarthy 1987; Tarrow 1998) while the term “modes of civil society activity” refers to the ways in which civil society protests against state policies (or the degree and extent of contentious politics in a given state). The former is largely a function of broad “state-society relationship” within which domestic NGOs operate. The latter is derived from “culture of civic group formation and collective action” within which domestic NGOs operate. On this typological basis, this paper juxtaposes locally organized, non-professional, service-oriented, and less contentious Japanese NGOs against its nationally organized, professional, advocacy-oriented, and more contentious Korean counterparts. Building on social movement/contentious politics literature, this paper hypothesizes that Korean domestic environmental NGOs with larger resources, challenging ideology, more contentious mode of protest to dominant paradigm are more likely to nurture, develop, and sustain transnational cooperation for environmental norms. The case study on IBRP and SBPR would be used to empirically examine the validity of this hypothesis.

Through the comparative analyses, this paper aims to address the three weaknesses in existing literature on the mechanism by which transnational cooperation of NGOs effectuates policy change – developing/weak states’ bias; relative absence of theory of domestic-led transnational cooperation; and silence on the conditions for sustainable transnational cooperation. In particular, this paper will emphasize the characteristics and modes of civil society activity for sustainable and successful transnational cooperation which has implications for outcomes. This paper will now turn

to a detailed discussion on state-society relationship and culture of group formation and collective action that critically shape the characteristics and modes of civic activity.

### ***State-Society Relationship and Culture of Group Formation-Collective Action***

Prototypical strong states are not always the adversary of civil society. Instead, strong states like Japan and Korea are often important incubators of the social sector. Since the 1990s, civil societies have emerged to become a critical element in the governmental process of policymaking and implementation in many policy fields (Lee and Arrington 2008; Pekkanen 2006). For instance, Japanese social associations have partnered with local governments to become major social and welfare service providers. These social associations also contribute to economic performance and efficiency (Estévez-Abe 2003: 158-161). Similarly, apart from the democratic movement of the 1980s, Korean NGOs have been successfully institutionalized in democratic politics and various policy fields since the first election of the opposition party leader Kim Dae Jung (Kihl 2005).

[Insert Figure1 around here]

Despite the similarity in the development of civil society in Japan and Korea respectively, it must be noted that civil society in both countries are different in *distinctive* ways, which can lead to varying implications for the making or unmaking of sustainable transnational environmental cooperation. As indicated in Figure 1, the different nature and characteristics of civil society in Japan and Korea can be measure along two dimensions – institutional (state-society relationship) and cultural. Japanese civil society is often described as small, local-based, non-professional, and service-

oriented because the state has circumscribed the growth of civic organizations like big advocacy groups or professional associations. Moreover, since the small government movement motivated by Neoliberalism in the 1980s, civic organizations have become local agents of the state implementing administrative services that were curtailed by central ministries and agencies (Lee and Arrington 2008: 83-84). However, to manage the emergence and expansion of these organizations, the Japanese government has installed several regulatory frameworks which include the granting of legal status for civic associations (i.e. public interest person status, *kōeki hōjin*) and restrictions on fund-raising. Wielding both screening and supervisory power, the Japanese government has not only been able to promote small, localized civic organizations, but under the pretext of disqualification, weed out other large, professional and national-level civic organizations.<sup>7</sup> Needless to say, civic organizations whose statuses were not legally granted were all minimized in Japanese social movements, and mobilization of those active groups, which could be potential intimidation to state action, was discouraged.<sup>8</sup>

In the cultural dimension, factors such as the distinctive state-centric culture and the way of social communication and trust in Japan are critical in understanding the relatively lower level of advocacy coalition and cooperation. The norms of state superiority and state-centric culture are deeply entrenched in the daily lives of the Japanese people. As such, under this hierarchical culture, bureaucratic exercises of discretion and decision making authority have been considered “fallacy-free” (*mugobū*) or non-challengeable by the people (Igarashi and Ogawa 1997: 52; Schwartz 2003: 4-5). As a result, resistance to public works such as land reclamation or dam construction which were potentially dangerous to natural environment had been disregarded as

NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movements, malfunctioning democracy, or the rule of the mob by the government.<sup>9</sup> In addition, as Inoguchi (2002:389-390) had noted, the level of social trust in Japan is surprisingly lower than that of Western democracies as society as a whole. Their high-level of trust is mostly only shown among blood-related and small community groups. This double-sided social capital might make it harder for the Japanese to spread out or discuss social problems to outsiders (Masamura 1995).

In contrast, Korean civil society has been explosive and dynamic. It can be characterized as nationally organized, usually large, professional, and comprising of advocacy organizations (Kihl 2005; Lee and Arrington 2008). The historic origin of this vibrant civil society could be traced back to the intense and protracted movement for democracy in the mid-1980s. The movement resulted in the collapse of the authoritarian regime and its eventual surrender to the alliance of opposition parties and civil society. In 1987, Korea changed its Constitution and has held a direct presidential election since then. Proponents of the democratization movement then started to raise new social issues relating to the environment and anti-corruption. All these actions played an indispensable role in promoting civil society movement (*simin sahoe undong*) and democratic consolidation (Kim 2004). Moreover, the two civilian Presidents in the post-democratization period, Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun, encouraged civil society to participate in governmental processes. As Kihl (2005: 270) aptly puts it, “the new politics of Korean democracy is identified with a horizontal, participatory, and networking style of politics that is open broadly to civil society groups and based on promoting norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement.”

A horizontal, participatory, and networking style of politics and promoting norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement thus allow for civil society to influence policy (Kihl, 2005). For example, sizable civic organizations with membership in the thousands – the Citizens’ Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), and PSPD (People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy) became critical partners for political parties (Lee and Arrington 2008: 80-81). Engaged in legislative politics for launching political, economic, and social reform programs, most of civic organizations’ activities have been targeted to influence the national political world where major stakeholders reside (Jeong 2006). Although the movement for democracy in Korean civil society was not led by the bourgeoisie as did in the West (Kim 2000: 144), the leaders of contemporary politics of civil society include intellectuals, the middle-class, white-collar workers, professionals, and religious leaders who were committed to bring about social change through influencing several social policy areas (Kihl 2005). Korean civic organizations have managed to transform their characteristics and orientation from pro-democratic and people’s contentious politics to policy reform oriented advocacy movements aiming to social change for ‘public goods’ (Kim 2004: 467-468).

Compared to the Japanese case, the socio-cultural aspect of Korean civil society is somewhat contentious (confrontational) and based on collectivism. As described in sociologist James Coleman’s work, democratic movements under authoritarian regimes were led by dense networks among student, labor, religious and middle-class groups, and contributed to the circulation of democratic ideas (Coleman 1988). The national alliance of these groups and coordination with opposition parties constantly pressured the military



government and brought about democratic transition. As noted above, these allied powers armed with the legacy of “contentious” culture of democratization movements have continued to play important roles in the process of democratic consolidation since 1988, and a few gigantic civic organizations have led confrontational new social movements in various policy areas (Kim 2004: 148). Although the objectives of their activities were different by parcels, these ‘nationally-united’ umbrella organizations formed political and social coalitions to achieve their goals via pressuring the government into numerous reform projects and political events.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it must be noted that the legacy of oppositional culture in civil society is still prevalent in most cases, and mass mobilization through various tactics becomes indispensable to stand against the state (Jeong 2006).

From the divergent institutional and cultural development of civil society in the two countries, this paper hypothesizes that environmental organizations with concentrated material and ideological resources at the national level in Korea are more inclined to stand firmly vis-à-vis the state and take a position of strength by establishing and sustaining transnational environmental cooperation. However, this might not be the case in Japan where both the institutional and cultural constraints make Japanese counterpart less able to do so. The following reclamation cases, which have been appraised as one of the most successful environmental movements, retain the unique characteristics of civil society in making and unmaking of sustainable transnational environmental cooperation.

## **Partnering Outsiders? A Comparative Analysis on Wetland Reclamation Projects in Japan and Korea**

Under the confrontational structure over environmental issues, both Japanese and Korean environmental groups have limited access to political parties and other allies. Thus, in order to elicit the government's environmentally sound actions, seeking transnational allies in both normative and materialistic ways since Rio Conference became one of the most popular modes of environmental activism in Japan and Korea. Yet, making and unmaking of sustainable transnational cooperation requires more detailed case analyses, as discussed below.

### ***Isahaya Bay Reclamation Project (IBRP) in Japan***

The lack of natural resources and urgency to increase food production in the 1950s and 1960s compelled the Japanese government to seek new agricultural areas. Amongst available options, reclaiming wetlands in the coastal areas appeared to be the most viable choice due to the high mineral content of the soil. Since the 15-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, Isahaya Bay, located at the western side of the Ariake Sea in Nagasaki Prefecture, has been considered the most suitable area for the creation of arable land via reclamation. In addition, the bay is known throughout Japan for its rich biodiversity and is home to more than two hundred types of migratory birds and three hundred species of marine life (Stanley 2002).

The IBRP was initiated in 1943 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF) and approved in 1952. However, for reasons like governmental budget for reclamation and compensation for the coastal fisheries, the actual reclamation work, named as the *National Isahaya Bay Reclamation Work Plan*, only commenced in 1985

(Shin 2000: 6-7). By piling up 293 metal slabs, the project aimed to construct a 7 km long sea bank and create about 800 ha of land for rice paddy and dairy farming.

However, after the water gate embanked the salt pan area in the southern part of Isahaya Bay in 1997, the sea bank had to be closed. Soon after, symptoms of contamination emerged. As the wetland in the bay started to dry up following the closure of the sea bank, the decrease in migratory birds and marine life became ostensible. The Ariake Sea was also affected by the foul water that emerged from the drains; the drainage system was part of the regulating reservoir which controlled the level of water. Due to the embankment, there was a drastic decrease in the area of wetland (mudflat) which compounded the contamination problem since the wetland functioned as a purifying mechanism of sea water. As a result of pollution, the laver (*nori*) industry and fisheries in Nagasaki Prefecture suffered.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the visible contamination of the wetland and sea water, it was not until a television broadcast commemorated the completion of the sea bank in 1997 that the mass media and general public became aware of the tragedy of Ariake Sea. Since then, environmental activists have embarked on a mission to save the bay by mobilizing public interests and attention.<sup>12</sup> Before the mass media turned their eyes to sea animals that were tortured in the drained bay, the governor of Nagasaki Prefecture and residents who supported the project was strongly opposed to any form of publicity with regard to the bay. They even declared that “[they would] resolve the problems by [themselves]” (Masamura 1995: 127-135).<sup>13</sup>

However, the increase in television programs focusing on the destruction of the bay allowed the locals to see the severity of the problem. Local fishermen and residents

subsequently launched a full-fledged campaign based on “environmental value.” Their campaign highlighted the damage inflicted on the environment and criticized the destructive nature of public works program initiated by the central government. While protests based on “the right to live” (*seijonken*) had occurred frequently before, their current campaign demonstrated the urgency for change and improvement.

Before the pollution gathered widespread attention, the anti-Isahaya movement was only led by a few activists. Yamashita Hirofumi, a local marine biologist and winner of the 1998 Goldman Environmental Prize, was one of the first few to bring together individual environmental activists (Reimann 2008). As can be seen from the attitude of the governor of the Nagasaki prefecture, presenting an opinion or a personal interest over public policy issues was not well accepted in Japan’s social structure.<sup>14</sup> However, as these local environmental activists recognized that they were powerless in saving the ecosystem and protecting their economic interests, they became more receptive to external help. They started to publicize local environmental issues to the supra-local sphere, hoping to gather allies from international NGOs. Yamashita and Japan Wetlands Action Network (JAWAN), established in 1991 led the second generation of social movements since the 1960-70s anti-pollution movement and contributed to disseminating new environmental ideas and garnering international spotlight on the pollution problem at Isahaya Bay.

The 1993 5<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in Kushiro marked a turning point in their campaign. The convention provided a platform for the activists to publicize the IBRP problem and form a coalition with other environmental groups at the national level. In addition, they were able to link up with other larger and more organized environmental

groups such as Friends of the Earth Japan and the Wild Bird society of Japan. At the end of the conference, the Kushiro Statement was formulated, which provided a new momentum as well as normative motivation for the “Save Isahaya Movement.” The statement essentially emphasized the wetland as a place of rich biodiversity and hence the need for the “wise use of wetlands.”<sup>15</sup> The conference also helped to better shape the course of action which the anti-IBPR activists would undertake to champion their cause. These actions included ecological investigations on the Isahaya mudflats, inauguration of international-national wetland tour events, and sponsoring of conference programs.<sup>16</sup> Through these various nationalized connections and events, the activists themselves also became more exposed to “outsiders” and begin to look toward cooperation with foreign NGOs which have accumulated an extensive knowledge and experience on diverse environmental issues.

Yamashita and JAWAN, for example, became more determined in partnering international NGOs when their campaign met with obstacles (i.e., difficulty in penetrating the governmental decision-making process). With connections established at the Kushiro Convention, some activists such as Maggie Suzuki, an international liaison at JAWAN, started to coordinate collaborative networks between domestic and transnational wetland activists. As a result, compared to the past, JAWAN led by Yamashita succeeded in forging a relatively solid network with international wetland experts from various countries including the United States and South Korea. These transnational groups such as Wetland International, Friends of Earth International, Australian Wetlands Alliance, and so forth joined forces to pressure the Japanese government into halting IBRP by presenting their concern about the exclusion of citizen groups in the decision-making

process, raising questions regarding the validity of the project from ecological as well as financial perspectives, and sending appeal letters to prime minister.<sup>17</sup>

Based on this expanded cooperative network among local-national-international environmental groups, activists against the IBRP could pressure the government through various ways. By coordinating with opposition party leaders (Democratic Party Japan's Diet members) and governors (i.e., Nagano governor Yasuo Tanaka), the environmental groups orchestrated a nationwide petition and sent 300,000 signatures to the Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Yamashita organized and ran the Isahaya Tidal Flat Emergency Rescue (Tokyo and Isahaya Offices) and encouraged street protests in Tokyo (i.e., Saving Wetland Day in 2000). He also invited many transnational activists and foreign public officials such as Jon von Hees, a Dutch official at the Ministry of Transport, Public Works, and Water Management, to testify to the widespread support for preserving the wetlands in Isahaya (1997).<sup>19</sup> The collaborative efforts of domestic and international NGOs successfully demonstrated to the Japanese government the importance of protecting Isahaya bay (Reimann 2008). In the end, the government did not have a choice but to respond to the mounting pressure from civil society by designating additional sites such as Fujimae as wetland protection area.

[Insert Table 1 around here]

While the anti-IBRP movement illustrated increasing transnational cooperation, however, it also revealed the weakness of these international collaborations. For example, as these networks were developed and maintained by a small number of activist groups, local and transnational cooperation remained at a shallow level. The problem was made apparent following the sudden death of Yamashita in July 2000. With his death, the anti-

IBRP movement lost the glue which held the several civic organizations together. The movement also failed to recruit the younger generation as members because the organizations were often led by the “old-security generation” of the 1950-960s. Furthermore, recruitment was mainly based on personal networks or friendship.

The fact that the IBRP was already in progress was also a challenge to the continuation of the transnational network. As the project could not be halted at the agenda-setting stage, the options available to remedy the situation were to either demolish the Isahaya sea bank or provide monetary compensation to the local residents. As the movement led by Yamashita was normative-oriented, it eventually became a sticking point: since his death, there were disagreements amongst the various stakeholders (i.e. natural scientists in national universities, neighborhood associations comprising of farmers, construction businesses, and fishermen) with regard to the future direction of the movement.<sup>20</sup> The future of the laver and fishing industries in particular took an extremely contentious position which threatened to split the already fragile cooperation. Eventually, the interest-based concern was brought back into the anti-IBRP movement.

Although the economic aspect was not the top of the agenda for Yamashita when he led the anti-IBRP movement, this was a very real concern for the local residents and especially those in the laver and fishing industries. It was thus of no surprise when this group of people resisted both governmental policies as well as normative-oriented groups. Meanwhile, a number of fisherman groups which were voluntarily aided by the Japanese Environmental Lawyers Federation filed lawsuits to the Saga District Court in November 2002. They insisted on the suspension of the construction and implementation of

appropriate investigation of ecosystem in Isahaya Bay.<sup>21</sup> Their major concern was that the bay had the worst laver production amongst the four prefectures. In response to these various compensation requests, the government (MAFF) tore apart the civic alliance for the anti-IBRP movement by providing monetary compensation for a number of fisherman groups through the *Special Law on the Water Quality of Ariake Sea* (Shin, 2000). Realizing that the carrot and stick approach was effective, the central government increasingly adopted this method to curb the anti-IBRP movement and eventually completed the sea bank. Although the Saga District Court decided to suspend the construction temporarily in 2004, the upper level courts were ultimately in favor of the government.<sup>22</sup> As a result, the Isahaya sea bank was completed on November 2007. The plaintiffs were fisherman groups in Isahaya Bay, seeking the causal relationship between the IBRP and the failure of *nori* industry. The litigations themselves were real advancement in environmental movement, but those were rejected for difficulty in revealing the causality. Furthermore, their main concern was material compensation instead of ecological value of the wetland.

Undeniably, the relentless efforts of the environmental activists did mobilize citizens and civic organizations into realizing the importance of environmental preservation and brought about somewhat meaningful changes: the designation of wetland protection area; the establishment of citizen-government co-investigation committee; and partnerships with major transnational environmentalists such as Wetlands International. However, at the same time, several factors deterred the development of sustained transnational cooperation. The formulation of transnational networks had been heavily dependent on only a small number of local activists, and the loose coalition under



their leadership was quite subservient to material interests. Yamashita and JAWAN gained reputation in this type of environmental protests, but their weak institutional and organizational capacity ended in subordination to government regulations. Local residents held back in getting help from outsiders. Therefore, the “iron-triangle” coalition among the Diet members, regional politicians, and ministers from the central government remained too strong to be surmounted by the environmental coalition. Transnational environmental cooperation inevitably failed because the formation and cooperation of transnational networks lacked momentum and continuity. It operated on an ad hoc basis and was limited to legal information exchange for environmental litigation without a weak level of sharing environmental norm or value.

### ***Saemangeum Bay Reclamation Project (SBRP) in South Korea***

It was not until the late 1990s that Korean civil society started to concern with environmental issues. Civil society was preoccupied with democratization, which was the matter of primary concern at that time, and environmental problem itself was regarded as unavoidable by-products in the course of economic growth and industrialization and were kept out of the public eye except for a few pollution cases (Kim 2000: 289). However, since the late 1990s, civic organizations and the general public have begun to see environmental issues as one of major problems waiting to be resolved.

A few environmental incidents in the 1990s were critical in triggering civic organizations into action. Delighted over the fall of the authoritarian regime, civic organizations ceased their activities until they were hit by several environmental disasters,

such as the contamination of Shiwaha Lake. The reclamation of the lake by building 12.7 km long Banwŏl seawall around the bay area was announced in 1985 and completed in 1994 with devastating damage to the environment. The damages included drastic decline of the number of rare marine lives, decrease of mudflats, and rapid degradation of water quality. But when the case of Shiwaha Lake surfaced, environmental organizations were substantially weak and were not aware of the importance and danger of the project until the mid-1990s. The Shiwaha Lake case was significant, as it garnered the attention of civic organizations and roused them into action. The following Anti-Yŏngwŏl Dam (Tong River Dam) movement that successfully led to the cancellation of the project in 2000 was also a catalyst in terms of banding environmental activists and epistemic communities under the same roof. Prior to the 1990s, governmental projects such as dam constructions and reclamations had been the stronghold of the development-oriented bureaucracy, and the developmental coalitions of which consisted ministries and businesses pushed for these projects to serve their vested interests (Lee 1999). Yet, the civic organizations were provided with a shot in the arm when the government withdrew the Yŏngwŏl Dam project. Along with the growth of well-organized environmental organizations such as Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM) and the Green Korea United (GKU), the government's inclination to commence these projects became a point of contention. The environmental groups learned how to bring about policy change and several movement strategies were successfully implemented (Jeong 2006: 65-66). For example, civic organizations diffused the problem of the dam to the general public through nation-wide petition campaigns, street protests, and various cultural activities including performing plays, press conferences, and the exhibition of pictures and

paintings of natural environment of the river. Based on these successes and failures, environmental groups could turn their eyes to the normative perspective on natural environment and strongly opposed another massive Saemangeum reclamation commenced in November 1991.

Saemangeum is located in the southwestern side of Korea (North Chŏlla Province) and is considered one of the five most ecologically important mudflats in the world. The mudflats are located between Mankyŏng and Tongjin rivers, which enrich the mudflats and support a variety of life forms. For example, snipes spend winters in Australia, summers in Siberia but visit the mudflats every spring and fall for feeding and nesting. However, from the government's perspective, Saemangeum has also great economic value, since the region possesses one of the largest 41,000 ha of wetland. Thus the region has been considered as the most suitable land for reclamation, which would add 28,000 ha of arable land and 12,000 ha of artificial lake by constructing a 33 km long seawall, the longest in the world. In a natural way, two contrasting perspectives created another sharp political cleavage between environmental groups and the government in Korea.

The anti-SBRP movement was mobilized based on the experience of the above two major environmental incidents. The government, fearing strong resistance from below as in the Tong River case, publicly promised that the reclamation would not be of a destructive nature. The development agencies which included the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF), Korean Agriculture, and Rural Infrastructure Corporation (KAIC) – a public enterprise, and North Chŏlla Province suggested putting together a “joint civic-government research team” with civic groups in April 1999.<sup>23</sup> In

addition, the Prime Minister's Office and the Sustainable Development Committee held several public hearings to gather diverse opinions on the project in 2001. They also opened a portal website to publicize their development plan and even published numerous reports with an emphasis on environmentally-friendly development in Saemangeum Bay. At the same time, the ruling New Millennium Democratic Party also launched a public-private special committee (Saemangeum Special Committee) to persuade both public and expert groups. *What the government wanted to do was to legitimize the project.* Yet, regardless of these efforts, the government failed to coordinate the different voices from within the government and the various civic organizations. In the end, they decided to resume the SBRP in May 2001.

The government's decision led to fierce debates over the validity of the SBRP which inevitably developed into a confrontational relationship with the social sector. Unlike Japanese cases, from the onset, domestic mobilization was both extensive and intensive throughout the country. Such mobilization was initiated by prominent national-level civic organizations. As such, it could be argued that the growth of environmental organizations in terms of size and resources was the basis of the anti-SBRP movement. For example, KFEM, which led the movement since the beginning, now has 85,000 individual memberships, over 40 local branch offices, its own research center (Citizen Environmental Research Institute), and the Environmental Litigation Center. Another big environmental group, GKU, too became one of the largest environmental organizations with over 15,000 members. In addition, prominent environmental activists such as Choi Yöl, who was a former democratic movement activist and spent several years in prison, exercised formidable influence over environmental affairs.<sup>24</sup> The presence of affluent

resources, expertise, and nationalized networks allowed Korean civic organizations to challenge government policies.

With the physical growth of civic organizations, it was possible for several environmental organizations to form the *Life and Peace Alliance for Saemangeum Tidal Flats* in 2001. In particular, their activities increasingly focused on the normative value of nature. The focal point of the anti-SBRP movement was the accumulation of the general understanding of the ecological value of wetlands and environmental rights for future generation, instead of rights of residents. For example, Green Korea United has been operating an educational program for citizens with regard to ecospecies in Saemangeum wetlands since 1994 (Nam 2005: 40). Moreover, religious organizations based on Catholic and Buddhist ideologies have expressed their sympathies for the loss of marine life at Saemangeum Bay through symbolic activities, such as marching from Saemangeum to Seoul (over 300 km) for sixty days while praying for nature conservation and the famous “Sambo Il-bae March” (three steps and one bow).<sup>25</sup> This normative value became the main-spring of the anti-SBRP movement for over 10 years in Korea.

Given the antagonistic relationship with the state, it is easy to imagine that forging cooperative networks with transnational NGOs became a significant breakthrough. It was not until participation at a 1992 Rio Conference that domestic environmental NGOs became interested in transnational cooperation. Even before the Tong River and Saemangeum cases, those NGOs had been involved in various international environmental issues, such as Kyoto Protocol, Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty, Taiwan’s export of nuclear wastes to North Korea, and so forth.<sup>26</sup> These international activities and networks have provided new information and a normative framework about

natural environment. Yet, the relatively weak internal structure and capacity of domestic groups during this period made disseminating domestic environmental problems or learning from international society on a regular basis an unrealistic option.

Although on an ad hoc basis, the commitment as well as enthusiasm that the Korean civic organizations possessed was ostensible. As can be seen from the Tong River Dam case, they approached transnational actors who could help present their concerns internationally and provide invaluable information pertaining to the devastating consequences should the dam be constructed.<sup>27</sup> In the case of the anti-SBRP movement, transnational cooperative networks became more stable and consistent in providing long-distance support and pressurizing the Korean government. Also, in order to collect relevant information, many staff members in KFEM and GKU participated regularly in international environmental meetings and conferences such as the Ramsar Convention in 1996, and disseminated the information on the SBRP to international counterparts.<sup>28</sup> In May 1999, international participants at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Convention in Costa Rica collectively expressed their concern about the Korean government's abuse of developmental power and environmental damage on Saemangeum wetland. They also discussed counter measures which could help to prevent further damage to the ecosystem. By the end of the convention, the Declaration of San Jose was drawn up, namely "People and Wetlands: a Vital Link," and the government was asked to stop the reclamation.

Based on the networks and connections built at international events, a considerable number of transnational environmental organizations and activists showed support for the anti-SBRP movement. As Table 2 indicates, international environmental groups which were well-informed about Saemangeum by domestic groups have sent

letters to urge the Korean government to stop the SBRP.<sup>29</sup> These groups including Friends of Earth UK, WWF Australia, and the American Bird Conservancy even visited the Korean embassy in their respective countries to protest against the SBRP.

Widespread internet use also contributed to the extension of anti-SBRP sentiment across the globe through the dissemination of project details to the international community. Numerous websites such as WWF International also organized petitions and forwarded them to the president and ministers. In addition, several publications such as Birdlife International, BBC wildlife magazine, and Dutch Birding covered the SBRP related-issues and the Seoul Administrative Court's decision in 2003.

[Insert Table 2 around here]

It is also noted that a number of international environmental activists were participated in the anti-SBRP movement in a more direct way. Ricardo Navarro, the Chairman of the Friends of the Earth International, Bob Brown, an Australian Senator of the Green Party, and the Japanese Lawyers' Group have visited Korea several times to support the movement. Moreover, an American-based environmental group called the Global Response also organized four rounds of letter-writing campaigns at different stages of the movement to stop the construction of the seawall over a period of four years.<sup>30</sup> Global Response later organized the Three Steps and One Bow movement for Saemangeum in Colorado in 2003. Notably, Japanese NGOs, such as JAWAN, Yamashita and JELF working for the anti-Isahaya movement were also one of the most important international partners for the domestic NGOs of Korea. Japanese groups donated funds to the anti-SBRP movement, exchanged correspondence regularly with them, and introduced the Saemangeum case to Japanese NGOs.<sup>31</sup>

These transnational cooperative networks that consolidated in the anti-SBRP case resulted in positive changes in environmental governance in Korea. For example, practices of government-led developmental programs become more and more inclusive, as well indicated in recent environmental cases such as deciding the location of Kyōng-ju nuclear waste disposal facility.<sup>32</sup> The Seoul Administrative Court's decision in 2005 on temporary suspension of construction work and several Higher and Supreme Court judges' concern on environmental destruction and ecological values reflect increasing these changes. Although the courts pronounced in favor of the government by commanding the resumption of the construction work for Saemangeum in March 2006, the decisions also recognized the position of environmental groups by granting plaintiff position to environmental activists and highlighting "environmental rights" in the decisions. Despite the loss in the courts, this movement was appraised by international community because it highlighted the importance of environmental value in typical strong-state led developmental programs and succeeded in domestic and international as well as legal mobilization under the confrontational structure between the government and civil society. This transnational network would be impossible without the intensity and solidarity of among domestic environmental groups and become an indispensable mode of mobilization in Korean environmental movement in efforts to stand firmly against the state policies. In this regard, Korean case was more successful in pursuit of original norm-based goal than Japanese ad hoc-basis transnational environmental cooperation, which turned into victim-centered conservatism and materialistic compensation.



## **Conclusion**

Three interrelated theoretical and empirical claims have been made in this paper. First, we had systematically explored and developed a bottom-up analytical path for the efficacy of transnational cooperation in the politics of environmental norm – an alternative to the top-down theorization of how transnational cooperation developed to bring about changes. Second, the paper expanded upon this bottom-up theoretical insight by specifying the conditions under which the domestic-led transnational cooperation is more likely to sustain and achieve its goals. We also argued that domestic environmental NGOs with larger resources, challenging ideology, more contentious mode of protest to dominant paradigm are better positioned to nurture, develop, and sustain transnational cooperation for environmental norms. Lastly, the paper compared wetland reclamation projects in Japan and Korea to empirically demonstrate the validity of the hypothesis. We showed that despite the similarity in political opportunity structure (the absence of coalition and/or leverage politics with other domestic actors, such as political parties and local financial backing and the similar level of media coverage/exposure) and event characteristics (the size, timing, and content of environmental protests), it is Korean NGOs' Saemangeum case where a bottom-up sustainable transnational cooperation was observed in contrast to Japanese NGOs' less successful effort for the preservation of Isahaya bay.

Going beyond theory development and empirical testing, we also makes the case for the growing importance of norm-based transnational cooperation in influencing domestic as well as world politics by proving its efficacy even for polities with the tradition of strong states. In particular, the bottom-up approach unmistakably shows a

great promise for future analysis when one considers the increasing internationalization of environmental norms in non-Western societies through diffusion and socialization processes. As such, the proposed bottom-up approach, which is developed and applied in this paper for the likelihood of success and failure of the domestic-led transnational cooperation, merits further empirical testing in similar environmental politics in other parts of the world. In this regard, we take our theoretical effort as *a first cut* subject to further theoretical specification and empirical scrutiny.

In this vein, we would like to shed light on further theoretical specification for future research on the factors that would influence the sustainability of the domestic-led transnational cooperation. We do so by reflecting on the case study presented in the paper. On closer examination, the case study on Japan hints that transnational cooperation for Isahaya Bay reclamation could have fared better had its leader, Yamashita, not passed away in the midst of the movement. This highlights the importance of strong leadership as complementary to the weaker, less contentious domestic NGOs for sustainable transnational cooperation. Additionally, although less salient in our case study, another source of augmenting domestic base for sustainable transnational cooperation is a coalition possibility of domestic NGOs with political parties (including both ruling and oppositional parties), local governments and the media, which may or may not be supportive of (central) government policy.<sup>33</sup> As such, for a fuller account of the making or unmaking of sustainable transnational cooperation, more analytical attention should be paid to the process of domestic contestation of environmental policymaking between NGOs and government for public support. If our theoretical framework is valid, the task is how to systematically connect macro variables

(nature and characteristics of domestic NGOs) with leadership and coalition politics in terms of specifying complementary and supplementary relations. As for domestic NGOs, the specific content of their norm-based alternative and their ability to partner with (like-minded) political parties, local governments, and the media particularly matters, as they compete for public support with the government's vision for immediate material gains.

Future research should also pay due attention to the increasing role of the judiciary branch in environmental politics for the outcome of environmental politics. As shown in our case study, NGOs often bring lawsuit against the government, and the court tends to become a final arbiter in environmental politics. This exercise of hypothesis formation, testing, revising, and reformulating will enrich the current debate on the questions of when and how norm-based environmental transnational cooperation can shape policy outcomes.

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Figure 1. International and Domestic Dimension of Environmental Movement

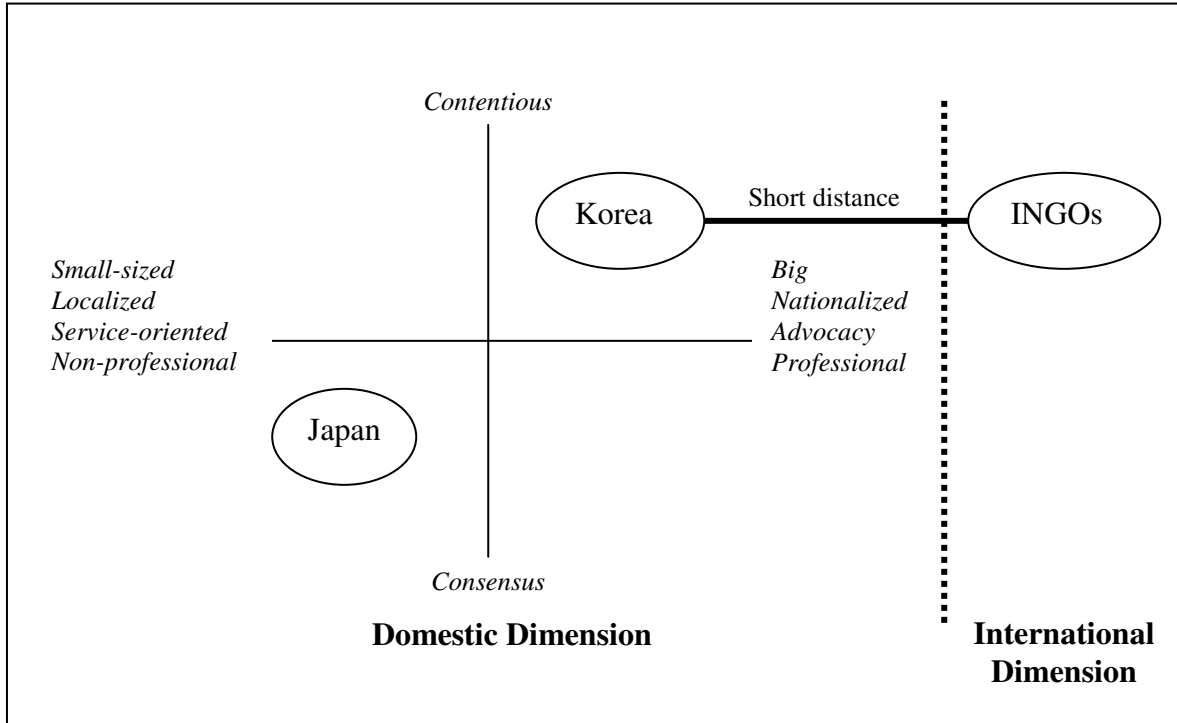


Table 1 Major International Activity in Isahaya Bay

Events	Activities
<i>Ramsar Convention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member states (NGOs) sent letters to their minister of environment asking the preservation of wetlands</li> <li>• Ecological-oriented residential movements</li> </ul>
<i>Saving Wetlands Day 2000</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Isahaya Tidal Flat emergency Rescue and Tokyo Office (2000) – Adopted a declaration</li> </ul>
<i>Visiting Saemangeum, Korea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funded by Toyota’s citizen activity support program (2000)</li> <li>• Visited Saemangeum Korea: Exchange with Korean Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM) and co-investigation activities. Published a co-authored report on wetland</li> </ul>
<i>International Wetland Symposium</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held in Fujimae (1998), Okinawa (2000), Tokyo (2001), etc.</li> <li>• Foreign cases were reported and asked smart wetland management</li> <li>• Japan-Korea environmental NGOs exchange</li> <li>• Made a cooperative relationship with Environment Agency</li> </ul>

Source: JAWAN (2000); Friends of the Earth Japan website (Available at <http://www.foejapan.org/about/history.html>)



Table 2. Major International Activists in Saemangeum Case

Groups	Activities
<p><b><u>United Kingdom</u></b>  <i>Birdlife International</i>  <i>Friends of the Earth UK</i>  <i>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)</i>  <i>Oriental Bird Club, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing news about Saemangeum on their websites</li> <li>• Writing letters to Korean President</li> <li>• Signature campaign</li> <li>• Visiting Korean Embassy in the United Kingdom</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Australia</u></b>  <i>WWF Australia</i>  <i>Wetland International Australia</i>  <i>Birds Australia</i>  <i>Etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saving Saemangeum Signature Campaign</li> <li>• Visited Korean Embassy in Australia</li> <li>• Pressured Australian government to make a treaty with Korea on the protection of migratory birds</li> <li>• Green Party Senator Bob Brown interviewed with BBC on Saemangeum problem (2003)</li> <li>• Writing letters to Korean president and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (WWF Australia)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>United States of America</u></b>  <i>Friends of the Earth US</i>  <i>The American Bird Conservancy</i>  <i>Sierra Club</i>  <i>Global Response</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Letters opposing Saemangeum Project</li> <li>• Visiting Korean Embassy</li> <li>• Global Response: Organized “Sambo-Ilbae” movement (Three steps and one bow) in Colorado (August, 2003).</li> <li>• Sent letters to Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Others</u></b>  <i>Friends of Earth International</i>  <i>Royal Forest and Bird (NZ)</i>  <i>Ramsar Secretariat</i>  <i>Wetland International</i>  <i>WWF International</i>  <i>JAWAN, Japan</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure membership governments to persuade Korean government</li> <li>• Advertised the danger of nature in Saemangeum Area through signature campaigns, conferences, various types of publications</li> <li>• Maintaining websites containing information on Saemangeum</li> <li>• Directly visit Korea and support domestic NGOs</li> </ul>

Source: Korean Federation for Environmental Movements website,  
[http://www.kfem.or.kr/kbbs/bbs/board.php?bo\\_table=eninfo&wr\\_id=856](http://www.kfem.or.kr/kbbs/bbs/board.php?bo_table=eninfo&wr_id=856)

<sup>1</sup> We define “norms” here as standards of appropriate and legitimate behavior.

<sup>2</sup> The Tong-River Dam case in South Korea was, for example, cancelled at the agenda-setting stage. Additionally, for most successful environmental protests in Japan and Korea, transnational NGOs’ role and governments’ collaboration were relatively strongly presented so that it is *methodologically* hard to tease out the relative importance of domestic NGOs’ impact, which is the focus of this study. In the case of Tong-River Dam, prominent transnational NGOs, such as Sierra Club, World Watch Institute, and Friends of Earth pressured the Korean government in 1999 to abandon the risky construction of big dam around Tong River in Gang-won Province. This protest eventually brought about the cancellation of the project in 2000. Similarly, when Taiwan Power Company (TPC) attempted to export domestic nuclear wastes to North Korea in 1997, Greenpeace, one of the biggest transnational environmental organizations, worked closely with South Korean environmental groups and government for the successful blockade of the TPC’s shipment. In Japan, many domestic environmental groups have been taking advantage of the Japanese government’s move to expand its leading role in supporting sustainable developments in many developing countries to proactively champion their causes. One prominent example would be the successful resistance to Nagara River Estuary Dam construction (1968-1988). The domestic NGOs have collaborated with international partners, such as the Friend of Earth and Sierra Club. This case is recognized as an

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inauguration of a new type of environmental activism in Japan, featuring transnational cooperation. See Reimann (2008) and Schreurs (2004) for Nagara case.

<sup>3</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this important insight to our attention.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the Korean National Commission for UNESCO hosted International Workshop on Environmental Peace in Asia in 2000 and proposed the establishment of ECO-Peace Network for peaceful resolution of environmental conflicts in Northeast Asia. The collaboration for the protection of tidal mudflats between Korean environmental groups and Japan Wetland Network was the most recent case which demonstrates increasing interdependence.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the NAFF (<http://www.neaff.org>) and KFEM (<http://www.kfem.org>) official websites.

<sup>6</sup> Similarly see also Bennett (2005).

<sup>7</sup> Pekkanen (2006) dubbed this double-sided civil society in Japan “dual civil society.”

<sup>8</sup> Even though the NPO Law (*Tokutei hieiri katsudō sokushin hō*, 1998) was passed as the product of long deliberation among civic organizations, Japanese NGOs still face strong bureaucratic discretion in getting legal status (Estévez-Abe, *ibid*).

<sup>9</sup> Imai (2000), p.188. The exceptions in postwar period include progressive and environmental movement in 1960-70s, yet even those protests exploded at the local, not national level.

<sup>10</sup> The collaborative activities include campaigns for social reforms and monitoring National Assembly in Kim Dae-Jung administration (Kim, 2004). In addition, there have been dynamic interaction and interpersonal relationship among prominent NGO leaders in promoting democratic consolidation (Lee and Arrington 2008: 81-82).

<sup>11</sup> As a major industry in the Ariake Sea, the laver culture industry consisted of about 80% of gross production in Japan, but after the completion of embankment, the production sharply decreased by 75%. The production of other sea foods also fell of by 80% (Shin 2000).

<sup>12</sup> Shin (2000). From the moment, the IBRP became a well-known symbol of Japan’s wasteful public works program (JAWAN November 7<sup>th</sup> 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Raising issues over public works and construction projects were quite unlikely in Japan. Interview, Waki Yoshisige, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Interview, Asakura Taku, November 12, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> See the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands, “Kushiro Statement.” Available at [http://www.ramsar.org/res/key\\_res\\_5\\_la.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_5_la.htm).

<sup>16</sup> JAWAN, Friends of Earth Japan, and WWF Japan jointly sponsored wetland-related symposiums including the events at 6<sup>th</sup> Ramsar Convention in Brisbane (1996), and also invited several migratory bird specialists from several countries (Russia, Japan, Australia, etc.) to show important habitat in 1995 (East Asia Migratory Bird Route Tour). See JAWAN website available at <http://www.jawan.jp/old/jawan/wahtsjawan.html>.

<sup>17</sup> The total budget for the IBRP was originally 135 billion yen, but it was increase to about 250 billion yen by the end of 2000. *The Japan Times* (April 14<sup>th</sup> 2000).

<sup>18</sup> JAWAN (1999), p.29-30.

<sup>19</sup> *The Japan Times* (2000)

<sup>20</sup> Indeed Yamashita by himself did not have a good relationship with Isahaya residents groups because his priority was to advocate the natural value of the bay, instead of residents’ survival issues. Interview, residents in Isahaya, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001; January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> JELF was member of Yamashita Coalition for anti-IBRP. This group has spoken up for victims of Minamata disease in 1960-70s and its members were mostly affiliated with Japan Communist Party, which had a sense of distance from the general public.

<sup>22</sup> Fukuoka Higher Court’s and the Supreme Court’s decision in May, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> The team was composed of thirty experts, bureaucrats, and scholars. Among them ten members were recommended by environmental movement groups.

<sup>24</sup> He was also the winner of 1994 United Nations Environmental Program’s Global Environmental Award and the 1995 Goldman Environmental Award.

<sup>25</sup> According to monk Su-Kyōng, an environmental activist, three steps symbolize overcoming greed, ignorance, and anger, while one bow means apologies for the destruction of the environment.

<sup>26</sup> Interview, Choony Kim, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> The groups included prominent environmental groups such as Greenpeace, Sierra Club, Friends of Earth, World Watch Institute, and International Rivers Network USA.

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<sup>28</sup> Interview, a KFEM officer, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Choony Kim, an international liaison officer at KFEM, testified to the fact that she received about 2,000 letters from international activists when the Seoul Administrative Court decided a provisional suspension of the SBRP in 2003. Interview, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Interview, Paula Palmer, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Interview, a KFEM officer, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>32</sup> For example, residential vote for environmentally harmful facility was introduced in this case.

<sup>33</sup> In both accounts, there may be a threshold of possibility that domestic NGOs may not seek transnational cooperation: domestic NGOs figure out they develop enough domestic support base for fighting against state policy. Specifying the timing and content of such a threshold is promising but is beyond the scope of this paper.