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Author(s)	Yukinaga, Yoshiko
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<Book Review>

Transnational Civil Society at Work

目加田説子著『国境を越える市民ネットワーク』

東洋経済新報社、2003年（¥3400）

Motoko Mekata, *Transnational Civil Society*

(Tokyo, Toyo Keizai Shinposha, 2003) ¥3400

Yoshiko YUKINAGA*

In recent years, non-state actors have come to play a prominent role in international affairs. The active participation of NGOs in international conferences and their coverage on news media is increasingly common. Likewise, NGOs and related individuals are able to express their opinions through “NGO forums”, the Internet, and other venues.

Motoko Mekata, the author of *Kokkyo o Koeru Shimin Nettowaaku* (Transnational Civil Society), uses the term “Transnational Civil Society (TCS)” to describe the activities of such non-state actors. Examining three cases where TCS played an important role, Mekata skillfully clarifies the activities and influence of TCS in negotiations for multilateral treaties.

This insightful book is comprised of six chapters. In chapter one, the author defines TCS, describes its historical context, and illustrates the theories behind TCS. The next three chapters are case studies: the activities of Climate Action Network (CAN), International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC). Chapter five compares the three case studies, and demonstrates how TCS has influenced the negotiation process of treaty-making. In chapter six, the author considers how TCS will operate in international affairs in the future.

* Graduate Student, Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University.

There are two distinguishing points in this study. The first is that the author uses the idea of "transnational network of civil society" instead of NGOs. During the Cold War, there were only a limited number of NGOs using their own networks and specialties. However, in the post Cold War era, not only NGOs, but also ordinary citizens and informal and formal groups share this network together and come to participate in "NGO forums" held parallel to inter-governmental conferences. TCS is a useful concept, therefore, when mapping the growing activities of today's non-state actors.

The second uniqueness of this research is the author's extensive use of important primary materials. NGOs and their networks, which are the practical actors of TCS, may not necessarily keep records of their daily activities, let alone the proceedings of the negotiations and discussions with governments which are often based on personal connections or informal meetings. The author, who was also a participant of many of these discussions, was able to vividly reconstruct the negotiating process by using original materials and interviewing those directly involved.

Mekata, who earned her Ph.D. at the School of International Public Policy at Osaka University (OSIPP), is a member of the steering committee of JCBL (Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines). She has attended international conferences on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Third Destruction (Mine Ban Treaty) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Rome Statute). Her direct involvement in this and other forums has placed the author in an unrivaled position to compare the role of TCS in treaty negotiations.

Indeed, the author has identified six shared features among the three cases of different background she looks at. The first feature is a loose but transnational nature of TCS network-building. TCS does not work without an organically associated collaborative network, as the activities are composed of the diverse actors interacting with each one. The second feature is that their activities are based on a "Global Consciousness." That is to say, people actively working in TCS are motivated far beyond one's own national perspective. For example, ICBL's goal is the total ban on anti-personnel landmines, which represents the desire of the people living among land mines. It is this global mindedness that links the network. The third feature is the TCS's role in "re-framing" issues themselves as global ones. ICBL, for example, defines the landmine issue as a global problem requiring the total ban through an international framework,

and publicizing the fact that land mines are manufactured in a large number of countries and transferred transnationally. "Re-framing of the issue" significantly enhances public attention and attracts the interest of the press.

The possession of its own sources of information is the fourth feature of TCS. The information here could be divided into two types. The first one is the "information from the heart of the problem," such as the voices from the mine field and the data about the transfer of land mines. By using this information, TCS, stressing the actual condition of the issue and its urgency, are able to urge governments to deal with the issues more actively. The second one is the inside information of the treaty negotiations. This information is acquired by the participation in conferences and contact with government officials, and is introduced by TCS with its own publications, such as *eco* issued by CAN. TCS uses these tools to introduce the status of discussions and, as a result, the participation promotes transparency of the negotiation process.

The pursuit of accountability in governments is the fifth feature. By raising questions on current debates in their publications and by querying the delegates at conferences, TCS make the negotiation process more "democratic" (p. 166). The final feature is the TCS's function to promote "advocacy" by introducing counterproposals and policy recommendations. They cooperate with governments and scholars who have similar objectives to improve the ability to disseminate their views and, at times, they act as an advisor to delegates by holding briefings about the situation of the negotiation.

As the author correctly points out on page 169, the participation of TCS has caused a "revolution in process" in three ways. First, TSC improved the transparency of the process by participating in it in various ways. Transparency is important to prevent closed room dealings. Second, TCS diversified the negotiation procedure. For example, the Mine Ban Treaty was a result of "Ottawa Process" which was undertaken outside the framework of the United Nations. Third, TCS cooperated with governments having similar objectives. Since the main actor in treaty negotiations continues to be governments, such cooperation leads to the enhancement of the negotiation power of TCS.

To have a better understanding of this important research, it is important to know that because TCS is a broad concept containing actors, TCS can be both an "agent" and a "structure." Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, who used "Transnational Advocacy Network" as the similar concept to TCS, point out the difficulty of the use of such an idea. "Part of what is so elusive about networks is how they seem to embody

elements of agent and structure simultaneously.”¹⁾ That is to say, when one writes “TCS did something”, one is describing it as an agent. When one talks about structures, one is describing the movements of components of TCS such as NGOs and involved individuals. In this book, though the author tried to use the concept only as an agent, TCS is sometimes in fact used as an agent and sometimes as structure. This represents the difficulty of studying the dynamic nature of TCS.

One more difficulty is the situation of TCS following the “9.11” tragedy. Mekata argues that in general there will be an increasing shift “from the rule of power to the rule of law”. Does this expectation still hold true now? International politics have changed following the terrorist attacks. Examining how the influence of TCS changes after 9.11 will be crucial for future studies of TCS.

1) Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1998, p. 5