**Is an Alternative Deliberation Space?: The Anti-Nuclear Movement and ICT Communication after 3.11 Disaster**

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**Abstract**
In this paper, we explore the role of the internet in anti-nuclear actions in Japan after the compound disaster of 11 March 2011. We investigate two features of the role of the Internet for activism with analyzing cases. Firstly, we show cases that the Internet plays a role of alternative media under circumstances with restricted freedom of speech of Japanese journalism. Secondly, we introduce the conflicts on the Internet on anti-nuke actions which revolve around a right to set the agenda, illustrating this via two cases.

**Keywords:** anti-nuke activism, the Internet, Twitter, alternative media, arguments on the Internet
Introduction
In this essay we explore the role of the internet in anti-nuclear actions in Japan after the compound disaster of 11 March 2011 (hereafter “3/11”). The current anti-nuclear movement draws on multiple strands and diverse levels of experience in political activism. Some participants draw on pre-existing political groups. Many groups were newly established after 3/11, for example MCAN (Metropolitan Coalition Against Nukes) which has been conducting major, long-lasting anti-nuke protest gatherings in front of the prime minister’s residence and is an influential civilian protest group.

We would like to argue the role of the Internet in anti-nuclear activism from two points of views, 1. the Internet as alternative media, 2. the Internet as an arena for debate, in which which the subversive use of computers and computer networks to promote a political agenda (della Porta ed. 2006).

We are interested in the way the Internet plays a role to shape a form of modern activism especially after 3/11 disaster as well as other east western countries like Taiwan’s Jasmin revolution, Hong Kong’s umbrella revolution and Korea’s campaign against candidates. Firstly, we describe how they use the Internet for dissemination of actions and organizing movements. We also mention how the Internet effected personal decision towards the actions. Secondly, we discuss how do they conduct arguments for movements on the Internet. We explore dynamism of human relationship for arguments on the Internet.

As one of the authors, Tamura, discussed in another paper (Tamura, 2015), the Internet is important to current social actions because the way people participate in the current anti-nuclear protests differs from an earlier generation of labor and socialist movements. In the immediate post-Second World War period individual participation in social movements was typically facilitated through membership of large hierarchical organizations such as political parties or their affiliated trade unions and cultural associations. In contemporary social movements, however, individual participation in particular actions is less likely to be a result of compliance with decisions made at the leadership level of a particular organization. It is more likely the result of individual decisions to attend particular actions and events. The struggle against the ratification of the U.S.–Japan Security Treaty (Anpo) in 1960 was something of a watershed in the development of a more individualistic style of movement participation. Although large organised groupings such as the Japan Communist Party, the Japan Socialist Party and their affiliates organised huge numbers of people to attend anti-Anpo demonstrations this period also saw the emergence of groups who emphasised their independence from established political parties and labour unions (Sasaki-Uemura, 2001, pp. 148–194). As Simon Avenell has argued, the philosophy of the “shimin” (citizen) which emerged out of these movements celebrated the political agency of non-aligned citizens as social movement actors (Avenell, 2010). As the large left-wing parties and smaller New Left groups declined in size and power in the 1970s and 1980s these citizen-based movements flowered. Jasper observes a similar trend in his studies of Euro-American social movements where he describes a shift from the predominance of movements such as labour movements (which often competed with each other because they had clearly defined constituencies) and the new movements which flow more easily into each other. He cites the environmental and feminist movements, for example, which together inspired the antinuclear movement of the 1970s, which in turn gave rise to the disarmament movement of the early 1980s in Europe (Jasper, 1999, p. 7).
The growth of internet communication technologies including email, the world wide web and newer social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Youtube has accelerated the trend away from monolithic organizational structures and towards more fluid forms of political participation.

As Slater et al. have noted, after the 3/11 disaster social media played an important role in disseminating information about the Fukushima nuclear disaster and facilitating anti-nuclear activism (Slater, Nishimura, & Kindstrand, 2012). Social media not only facilitates the flow of information in real time across national borders (Lotan et al., 2011). It also influences the way in which people participate in a social movement (Bennett, 2012). The loose, non-hierarchical and open structure of new social movement organizations in Japan facilitates the participation of individuals and does not require them to subscribe to any broader organizational agenda. Individual patterns of engagement are visible on social media as activists Tweet, blog and chat about their involvement in different movements and demonstrations. Political scientist Gonoi Ikuo describes the way information is shared through the internet in contemporary forms of grassroots political engagement in terms of the “cloudification” of social movements. According to Gonoi, the web acts as a kind of “cloud” which people access in order to exchange information easily. Internet communication technologies have decreased the cost of sharing information and have taken the hassle out of organising events. Activist groups no longer reply upon specific physical locations or centres in which to organise but only some symbolic information centre. Instead they can download designs for placards, find a meeting point, or check the route of a demonstration online (Gonoi, 2012, p. 15).

In Japan, citizen movements, NPO&NGO and social actions have used the Internet for a long time. NPO named JCAFE has started to offer share hosting service to these organizations and actions since 1995. The 4th World Conference on Women held in this year and they used the digital network for their communication. However, according to Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC, hereinafter) , only 13.4% of Japanese individuals had experience to use the Internet in 1997. In such situation, any movements could not reach the masses via the Internet. However, the Internet gradually penetrated Japanese society. At the end of the 2011, the year for triple disaster, 79.1% of individuals had experience using the Internet — a figure that reached 82.8% in 2013 (Figure 1).
The MIC pointed that fewer percent of older generation used the Internet. According to a report by MIC, the ratio of use of the Internet by 60-64 years old people was 76.6% and by 65-69 years old people was 68.9% However; a graph of absolute numbers of internet users by age gives one a different impression because Japan is an ageing society (Figure 2). The biggest numbers of Japanese internet users are 40s who could have a chance to meet Anti- Iraq War movement. Numbers of 60s who belong to Anti-Anpo Movement generation are almost the same to 20s. Today anti-nukes organizations can reach the masses from this point of view.

The Internet and Anti-nuke Activism

The Internet as alternative media for information

The Internet is playing an important role for people to achieve information on both nuclear power plant and anti-nuke actions. As McLelland et al. (McLelland et al., under review) described this is because after the 3/11 earthquake disaster and the incident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, Japanese people realized that Tokyo

1 This graph is based on the data from MIC, Japan.

http://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/field/data/gt010102.xls

Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), the owner of the plant, was able to influence the media coverage of the incident due to the high advertising revenue it paid to various media outlets. Other cultural factors that have limited the diversity of expression in Japan include the specific newsgathering techniques of Japan’s journalists. Unlike in some other developed nations, Japan has relatively few freelance journalists, most professional journalists are members of ‘journalist clubs’ (kisha kurabu) set up by major media outlets which have restrictive rules for membership.

When various government or industry bodies hold press conferences they are often open only to members of specific kisha kurabu who, in exchange for the exclusive information, agree to a specific framing of their reports. This system gives a monopoly of information to specific media companies and makes it easy to manipulate information (Freeman 2000).

Consider a record of interview for an anti-nuke participant on 13 April 2013, conducted by Tamura. The participant is a company employee in Tokyo. Having grown up in a rural city of Japan in a rather conservative family, She had never thought about participating in political protests prior to 3/11. After 3/11, she received numerous emails from abroad with links to reports from the BBC and CNN. These international broadcasters ran stories that showed the seriousness of the nuclear power plant accident, and provided more information than did the media in Japan. She started to study the effects of radiation exposure via the internet.

This person had no previous intention to participate in protests. Far from it, she thought that if she went to a demonstration she would be arrested or treated roughly by the riot police. In her imagination, a demonstration was a dangerous place. She hesitated, but ultimately participated in an anti-nuke demonstration. One of popular singer Saitō Kazuyoshi’s songs was a decisive factor in her decision. Saitō uploaded a song “Zutto uso datta” (It Was Always a Lie) to the video sharing site YouTube. This song was a reworking of one of his earlier songs “Zutto suki datta” (“I always loved you”). The song charged that the government and the nuclear power industry had been lying to the Japanese people about the dangers of nuclear power. The video was deleted soon after, but somebody kept uploading it persistently. She thought Saitō might encounter serious difficulties in his career because of this but she recognised that he was fighting, nevertheless. His determination to speak out inspired her and pushed her to participate in movements.

Though the Internet plays an important role for anti-activism, we found limitation of it. MCAN’s organisers, too, came to realise these limitations. They were able to reach fewer people than they had expected via the Internet (Oguma 2013: 321–2). So, MCAN had to find ways to contact greater numbers of people. For this purpose, they established the No Nukes Magazine. We cannot specify precise reason for limitation of dissemination of information via the Internet but suppose that mechanisms

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3 TEPCO paid 26.9 billion yen as advertisement fee in 2010 although all electricity power companies were monopoly firms and no competitors (Nikkei Kōkoku Kenkyūjo, 2011).
identified in previous research — such as cyber cascade (Sunstein, 2001) and filter bubble (Pariser, 2012) — help us to understand these kind of situations which imply dynamisms which reduce space and capacity available for internet users.

**Verbal Communication: Arguments on the Internet**

To provide a context for these kind of developments and uses of the Internet, it is helpful to consider the recent history of the concept of the “public sphere” in Japan. There has been a cluster of discussions about relationship of the digital network and the society borrowing concept of “public sphere” of Habermas, in Japan (Hoshikawa, 2001; Yoshida, 2000). Famous, the public sphere, as an ideal type, is social network where citizens rationally discuss issues in the society to develop a public opinion (Yoshida, 2000, p. 8). In Japan, and elsewhere, theorists have tried to apply a concept as “public sphere” of Habermas (Habermas, 1992) to the Internet communication and desired to develop democratic communication sphere on the Internet. These literatures have merely attempted to find proof for the existence of a classic Habermasian public sphere, and yet have not found much evidence for this. However, revival of protest style social actions and penetration of the Internet after 3/11 request reconsideration of the public sphere issue and further speculation on debates on the Internet.

Before we provide an analysis of cases, we need to consider a theoretical criticism to relationship between Habermas’s concept of public sphere and absence of common pre-understanding on discussion on the Internet. One of remarkable criticism for this “information public sphere” was written by Kitada (Kitada, 2010). Kitada claimed that we should understand that public sphere of Habermas not as product of universal human rationality but as an effect of specified social relationship and information technology, namely, bourgeois discussion circle and rising print capitalism. Participants were classified people who could have common rule for discussion that coordinated interaction inside a circle. According to Kitada, that rule for modifying communication was the concept of “public” of Habermas.

One can hardly apply this rule to the Internet discussion because they do not share pre-understanding and context to interpret meaning of messages, according to Kitada. In communication in mass media, newspaper publishers or broadcasters of TV retain a right to decide which was appropriate interpretation of messages. However, Kitada said, on the Internet, there is no transcendental position to certify true interpretation of the situation. Interpretation of the message always depends on a reader there. It implies that, on the Internet, they always argue rules of discussion which are pre-understanding and presupposition of the discussion. They struggle the order of priority among agendas and/ authority to set the agenda. Though public sphere of Habermas was established rule of the discussion and it expected people to discuss based on the rationality, a framework for rational discussion is a problem to discuss on the Internet. Thus the most keen point for arguments is “who decide the agenda and a rule of discussion there.” Kitada expressed this situation, borrowing a phrase from Max Weber, “struggle of gods with one another.” Thus, it becomes more like political demonstration than rational discussion.

At the same time, after developing various kinds of software for communication for the Internet, we should clarify feature of communication driven by architecture of software. Communication on Twitter, which is quite individual based, can be different from one on community based mode communication media like BBS, where they
have community. Baym (Baym, 1994) has argued that social context of online community consists of reflexive interaction between given resources and actions by participants. Baym pointed five resources for online community, shaped by factors such: 1) external context, 2) temporal structure, 3) system infrastructure, 4) group purposes; and 5) participant characteristics. With those resources, participants create social meaning like: 1) forms of expression, 2) identity, 3) relationship, 4) behavioral norm. In community mode communication on the Internet can have mutual context and norms for discussion. On the other hand, when it comes to communication on Twitter, it is rather difficult to find such shared norms because Twitter is a micro blog and all owners has their own rules and context. Therefore, we easily find argument around agenda setting issue on Twitter communication.

The followings are cases for argument around priority or agenda setting on Twitter about anti-nuke activism. After 3/11 disaster, many groups and activities protesting nuclear power plants have appeared. These include small groups protesting in rural prefectures as well as a national Diet members’ coalition for anti-nuclear power in the nation’s capital. However, these diverse groups have experienced difficulty in forming a unified front against pro-nuclear groups because some anti-nuke groups have attacked the legitimacy of other anti-nuke groups to speak about these issues. One reasons for this lack of unity is the contention around priority and initiative of agenda settings. We deal with topics on those discussion which are arguments between anti-nuke group vs anti-radiation exposure group and on Japanese flag (Hinomaru). Our case study involves the disagreements that have emerged between the most influential civilian protest group, the MCAN, and anti-MCAN. Much of the debate among conflicting anti-nuke groups is carried out via social media such as Twitter.

**Anti-Nuke vs Anti-Radiation Exposure group and “You don’t do it” claim**

Firstly, we focus on anit-nuke vs anti-radiation exposure argument. It had a debilitating effect on attempts at galvanizing mass protest against the nuclear power industry in Japan. In this argument, a group of anti-nuclear actions criticized MCAN that MCAN did not emphasize problems of radiation exposure and relief of victims in Fukushima. One reasons for this lack of unity is the contention around “who has legitimacy to assert opinions about the matter” (in Japanese, tōjisha). According to Mark McLelland, since the 1970s, the tōjisha-sei (the sense of being a tōjisha) has emerged as a major rhetorical strategy in arguments about self-determination for “parties concerned” facing discrimination or difficulties and has now become a central concept for all self-advocacy groups in Japan. Tōjisha is a culturally specific concept for which finding an appropriate English equivalent phrase is difficult (McLelland 2009:193).

Hence our methodology involves a close reading and text mining of Twitter debates around this issue from March 17, 2011 to Feb 7, 2013. We chose 453 tweets through search results from [http://topsy.com/](http://topsy.com/) with key words “radiation exposure” and “MCAN.” We coded the text with the software, KH CODER, with a coding rule that consisted of words related to the concepts “tōjisha,” “radiation exposure,” “MCAN,” “censure” and “solidarity.” For example, “tōjisha” coding rule includes a word for
Fukushima, mother and children. The asterisk mark means a name of a code here in after. One Twitter message can be coded under plural codes. Table 1 shows the matrix of co-occurring ratio of codes calculated by Jaccard Coefficient. It indicates high co-occurring of *Radiation Exposure and both *MCAN (0.371) and *Censure (0.338), *Victims and both *Radiation Exposure (0.323) and *MCAN (0.246), *MCAN and *Censure (0.331). This matrix is visualized on Figure 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Tōjisha</th>
<th>Radiation Exposure</th>
<th>MCAN</th>
<th>Censure</th>
<th>Solidarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tōjisha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.323</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Exposure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>0.338</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAN</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Censure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Co-occurring ratio of codes in Twitter text on “radiation exposure” and “MCAN.” Numbers are Jaccard Coefficient.

Figure 3: Cluster analysis for Twitter text on “radiation exposure” and “MCAN.” Bars under the code names represent sum of messages coded ( *Victims 126, *Radiation Exposure 366, *MCAN 218, *Censure 156, *Solidarity 38, No code 19, n= 453).

Via this text mining and reading the text, we discovered that in the case of anti-nuclear activism, the “people of Fukushima” are considered by some to be the real Tōjisha and thus have legitimate privilege to assert their opinions on anti-nuclear issues because they or their families have directly experienced the consequences of the accident. Those speaking as Tōjisha or groups for Tōjisha claim that MCAN neglects the voices of Fukushima victims, for example by not sufficiently emphasizing the fear of radiation. In short they claimed “You don’t do it.” This is an effective rhetoric because all other things than you have done are things you have not done.

Through our analysis we show that MCAN has so far focused on a “single issue policy” that emphasizes only an anti-nuclear stance and requires no other affiliation or commitment from its participants. This broad-based platform is one reason why MCAN has seen the protesters numbering in the thousands. However the fact that MCAN is open to all comers based only on their anti-nuclear stance, has led to the
movement’s organizers being criticized by those positioning themselves as tōjisha – those who assume the most authority to speak on the issue because of their personal involvement in the disaster. Hence we show that debates over tōjisha-ness have emerged as an impediment to developing a united front against the pro-nuclear campaigners in Japan. Our analysis further shows that the use of social media such as Twitter has heightened awareness of debates over tōjisha-ness among Japanese in general.

We focus our analysis on Twitter in particular because of its archive of discussion among groups. We discovered that Twitter plays an essential role as arena for debates around tōjisha-ness. Twitter has amplified controversies over the concept of tōjisha-ness and who has the right to set agenda in the anti-nuclear movement.

Japanese flag and “You do it” claim

The nuclear plant accident drew a nationalist reaction from many Japanese, not only rightist but also non-political citizens. We refer here to nationalism in the widest sense of the word. Nationalism is a polysemous word and does not directly mean aggressive imperialism. Consideration about national policy cannot avoid being a part of nationalism. The accident stimulated people to reconsider their nation, Japan, thorough finding differences of Journalism and attitudes of Japanese government for other countries, for example Germany. This is because Japanese TVs and newspapers did not provide enough information about NPP accident and journalism in other countries, like CNN or BBs, broadcasted much information on it. At the same time, Japanese government and so called “nuclear village” tried to cover danger of the accident in an opposite manner to German government which decided to abandon NPP in Germany because they learned from disaster in Japan. This situation prompted people who participated in anti-nuke actions to trial to change Japan better. Through content analysis of three kinds of peoples messages, that is twitter messages from an organizer and participant and speeches of general participant who joined anti-nuclear protest in front of prime minister’s residence conducted by MCAN (Figure 4). The <Japan> category is one of major components for all three messages which is consisted by words like, Japan, Germany, world, etc. Horie called this kind of nationalism as “pessimistic nationalism” for his finding from a question survey for anti-nuke action participants around the prime minister residence and the diet (Horie, 2013).
Figure 4 Frequent Categories in Anti-nuke Activists Messages

Some rightist groups started anti-nuke actions because they were worried about people, soil and nature that belong to the country. In protest actions conducted by MCAN, there are a few of people who bring Japanese flag to the actions. MCAN has a policy of “single issue politics” and announces the following policy about flags and placards.

Please do not show signs which are unrelated to nukes issue. A staff may ask you haul them down. Being unrelated means any statements which are not instantly comprehensible as matters of nukes.

This is the same to signs as any names of organizations which represents any other political issue.

We are not going to ask to haul down other flags and signs of any other organizations than those mentioned above, but we do not welcome them. We insist that “Appeal anti-nuke opinions instead of places you belong!”

We will apply these guidelines as loosely as possible. We ask participants’ understanding and cooperation.

MCAN do not stop participants to bring Japanese flag but they do not refer to Japanese flag officially as mentioned above. Noma(Noma, 2012), an organizer of MCAN, wrote that they have not even set Japanese flag issue as an agenda in any official meetings because they did not care it at all (Noma, 2012, p. 177).

Some left activist groups have antipathy to the Japanese flag as we introduce a case of a left wing activist as mentioned below.

Present anti-nuclear actions have a problem to exclude ethnic minority in Japan. Especially, most of activists get nervous to carrying Japanese flag in social movements. In a meeting, I asked a question a racial minority activist. “To be frank, what do you think about anti-nuclear movement after 3.11?” She answered that “We can’t participate into the movement because it excludes non-Japanese. We have regarded Japanese flag as exclusive symbol.

Left activists regard Japanese flag as not only a symbol of exclusion but also the representation of “Great Imperial Japan”. They challenge MCAN and made arguments on Twitter. This is again an argument around agenda setting right and also an argument on interpretation of a sign, Japanese flag.

Scholars of social movement discussed the movement symbol like Japanese flag in this case. They constructed a concept of “repertoires” (Traugott 1995). Repertoires mean the tactics, tools and other means protesters use in their action (e.g. lobbying, advocacy, demonstration, banners protesters carry and music activists play etc.). Moreover, activists use their repertoires as perform their identity. (Clemens 1993, 1996; Bernstein 1997) MCAN had chosen a repertory, single issue politics, that insisted focusing on one issue they set as an agenda and neglect any other differences of political thoughts and opinions. MCAN intends to de-politicization or deideologize their movement to recruit more participants who have allergy to political and/or ideological movements. Activists who challenged MCAN try to obtain a right of

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4 Translation by author, Tamura

5 Interview with an author Tominaga, August 3, 2013

interpretation of the sign and re-politicize or re-ideologize the movement, claiming that “You do it though you say you don’t.” This is because their repertory was their identity and criticism is a way to reinforce the identities reflexively.

For MCAN, Japanese flag is not an agenda to discuss. On the other hand, some left activists regard Japanese flag is a symbol of exclusion for minorities like Korean and Chinese residents who live in Japan due to historical reason. Left activists try to obtain authority to set it as agenda of anti-nuke actions. Internet and SNS like Twitter and Facebook empowered this trial of left activists whose numbers are quite smaller than MCAN and its supporters. The Internet visualized it and records it so that many other unrelated audiences could read this trial. It is one of the features in social movement at present. Discussion is one of the repertoires and it presents their own identity for external actor of social movement.

Conclusion
We explored the role of the internet in anti-nuclear actions in Japan after the compound disaster of 11 March 2011. We investigated two features of the role of the Internet for activism with analyzing cases. Firstly, we showed cases that the Internet plays a role of alternative media under circumstances with restricted freedom of speech of Japanese journalism. Secondly, we introduced the conflicts on the Internet on anti-nuke actions which is around a right to set the agenda with showing two cases. First one was a conflict between anti-nuke group vs anti-radiation exposure group and the second one was Japanese flag issue. From these cases, we could understand that online communication have a features of tactics and battles among protesters around frames of discussion and the order of priority of agenda.

Social movement scholars have conducted the research for discussion and they argued that discussion is the deliberation space and alternative public sphere (Wood 2012, Polletta 2002, 2005). However, online discussion is not only deliberation but also “battles” around who has a right to set framework for the deliberation. The Internet plays a role this struggle by visualizing them and recording them so that unrelated audiences could observe arguments even though one of between a small group and huge one. The Internet equalizes the voice of speakers and it allows conflicts around agenda setting trial to keeps rising.

In this paper, the authors mainly focused on alternative media and ICT communication among the activists after anti-nuclear movement after 3.11 Disaster. Of course, protesters use the internet other ways also. Hacktivism (a portmanteau of hack and activism) is one of the movement on Internet space. In anti-nuclear social movement we could not find obvious evidence of hacktivism, but it is an important case for further research and discussion of on-line activism.

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