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Environmental Advocacy: Insights from East Asia

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Abstract:

Environmental advocacy in East Asia takes place in a context where there are few well-funded professional advocacy organisations, no viable green parties, and governments that are highly pro-business. In this advocacy-hostile environment, what strategies are environmental organizations using to promote better environmental outcomes? Using an original database of environmental organizations and interviews with activists and officials throughout the region, this paper investigates which strategies are most common and compares them to the advocacy strategies found in the United States. It finds, perhaps surprisingly, that (a) environmental organizations across East Asia employ similar advocacy strategies even though they are operating in very different political conditions, and (b) the strategies most favoured in East Asia are also the strategies most often utilized in the United States. It then argues that new theories of advocacy should be developed to pay closer attention to certain actors (academics and artists), and particular processes (organizational networking, government collaboration, and culture-making), that appear to play important roles in advocacy in countries around the world, irrespective of political context.

East Asia is a region of developmental states that have strong ties to business and are oriented towards economic development (Evans 1995, Woo-Cumings 1999,Wong, 2004). It is also a region of poorly institutionalized advocacy organizations, and civic organizations tend to be small, locally-based, and volunteer-run. Although most countries in the region have established Green Parties, their representation in national legislatures is insignificant (Alagappa 2004, Broadbent and Brockman 2010, Harris and Lang 2015). And yet, Japan has been leading the world in high emissions standards for decades, China has recently become the world's largest producer of photovoltaic panels and the world leader in renewable energy, and Korea and Taiwan have both embarked on major green initiatives that involve not just green business development, but also new national parks, widespread energy conservation, and comprehensive recycling efforts. Thus, East Asia presents the unusual opportunity to examine a set of countries that are particularly puzzling: the political opportunity structures are such that we would expect very poor environmental policy, and yet we find that governments in the region are among the world's most innovative in terms of pro-environmental policy development.

Utilizing an original database of environmental organizations and interviews with activists, academics, business leaders, and government officials in mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, I examine how the advocacy strategies of organizations in all of these countries compare to one another. The methods and goals of this paper are inductive: I aim to identify the strategies that environmental organizations in East Asia—an advocacy-hostile region—are employing to promote pro-environmental change on the part of the governments, corporations, and citizens in their countries, and examine those strategies comparatively.

Based on the academic literature emerging from both North America as well as East Asia, the expectations I had going into the research were that I should find two sets of identifiable patterns: 1) advocacy strategies should vary systematically according to how democratic a country was, and 2) advocacy strategies should vary systematically according to cultural background. Thus, I expected Japan and the United States as mature democracies to have different advocacy patterns from South Korea and Taiwan (newer democracies) and mainland China (not a democracy). Similarly, since all of the East Asian countries are export-oriented countries with strong Confucian cultural influences, I expected those countries to vary systematically with the advocacy pattern of organizations in the United States.

My goals in this paper were to determine empirically: 1) what strategies organizations in these countries were using to advocate for pro-environmental change, and 2) whether those strategies varied in some kind of systematic way. After determining what strategies were being utilized and identifying patterns of variation, I hoped to conclude with suggestions for ways that current theories of advocacy could be refined to account for my findings.

Contrary to my initial expectations, I discovered: 1) environmental organizations in East Asia use similar strategies even though they operate in very difficult political contexts, and 2) strategies commonly utilized by organizations in East Asia are also the ones most commonly utilized by organizations in the United States. As a result, rather than suggesting minor refinement of current theories of advocacy, I conclude that we need to question fundamental assumptions in the literature about the role of political context and culture in shaping the political opportunity structure of advocacy organizations. As a first step I suggest that we need to develop new theories of advocacy that incorporate the influential role of academics, artists, and citizen activists, and also to account for the common strategies of networking with other

organizations, government collaboration, and culture-making in political advocacy.

The article begins with an overview of the advocacy literature in order to identify the advocacy strategies that should be coded in the empirical study as well as to highlight the kinds of variation that the literature suggests should exist among the environmental organizations in East Asia and the United States. It then offers an overview of the methodology used in the analysis. The bulk of the paper describes the kinds of environmental organizations found in East Asia and compares their strategies to those used by organizations in the United States. The paper concludes by arguing that current theories of advocacy, which lead us to expect fundamentally different advocacy strategies and outcomes among East Asian and North American organizations, should be revamped to better reflect the actors and strategies that appear to be common across both regions, and may be common around the world.

Environmental Advocacy

Citizens around the world have long organized to protect and improve their environment. Starting with the early conservation organizations such as the Plumage League in Europe (founded in 1889), the Sierra Club in the United States (founded in 1892), and the Wild Bird Society of Japan, (founded in 1934) to more recent groups such as Greenpeace (founded in 1971) and 350.org (founded in 2007), individuals and groups have worked locally, nationally, and, increasingly, internationally to protect and improve the Earth's environment. Scholarship about these citizen activities began in the developed democracies of Europe and North America and built their theoretical frameworks and case studies from those regions. Whether scholars were more interested in advocacy as a form of social movement or as a component of policy development, theories tended to focus on differences in the dynamic interaction of agents, interests, and institutions. Key distinctions are made between the dynamics in democratic and undemocratic political contexts.

Authors coming from the social movement tradition emphasize the effectiveness of strategies such as public protests (O'Neill 1997, Broadbent 1998, Tarrow 1998, Dalton *et al.* 2003, Giugni 2004, Tilly and Tarrow 2006, Sherman 2011, Weldon 2011), lawsuits (Dalton *et al.* 2003, Libby 2011), and letter writing and media campaigns (Miller 2002, Switzer 2003, Poulos 2015). Those approaching the issue from the public policy tradition tend to focus on regulatory design (Eisner 2006, Prakash and Potoski 2006) and elite-level lobbying (Haas 1992, Bosso 2005, Berry *et al.* 2006, Libby 2011). Scholars from either tradition concerned with environmental policy in non-democratic countries generally assume that modes of political action aimed at persuading elected officials to act in ways that promote the interests of the public will be ineffective, and instead concentrate on studying various forms of elite lobbying. Some of these scholars examine how international epistemic communities are pressuring domestic elites (Haas 1992, Harris and Udagawa 2004), while others investigate the ways that domestic elites work with and through international networks to pressure policymakers in their own governments {Bouteligier, 2013 #1803;Fuentes-George, 2016 #1824;Rodrigues, 2003 #1637}. Other scholars study the construction of market incentives that promote pro-environmental behaviour (Gunningham *et al.* 2003, Kagan *et al.* 2003, Harris and Udagawa 2004, Busch *et al.* 2005, Potoski and Prakash 2005, Fung *et al.* 2007, Jiang 2009, Auld and Gulbrandsen 2010, Kraft *et al.* 2011).

Nearly all of the above scholarship is centred on the environmental politics of Western Europe and North America, or related to international organizations or multinational corporations that have headquarters located in those two regions. While a few scholars have

applied these theoretical models to East Asian contexts (Schreurs 2002b, Mertha 2008), many others have concluded that basic assumptions that undergird the Western-based theories of environmental politics do not hold in an East Asian context. For example, many East Asian societies lack a clear separation between state, societal, and business actors, with much of environmental (and other) forms of advocacy occurring through an 'embedded' structure, where the advocacy organizations take advantage of close personal and institutional ties with the government to engage in cooperative projects with governmental actors (Evans 1995, Ho 2007, Terao and Otsuka 2007, Haddad 2012). East Asian environmental advocacy literature also emphasizes the role of local, grassroots education efforts, local organization networks, and use of cultural assets such as art and music as methods to promote positive environmental outcomes, rather than the role of national organizations or political parties. These scholars emphasize that East Asian advocates draw on a fundamentally different set of cultural and political traditions, and therefore they employ a different set of advocacy strategies than those employed by their counterparts in the West (McKean 1981, Ku 1996, Reardon-Anderson 1997, Broadbent 1998, Hsiao 1999, Waley 2005, Xie and Ho 2008, Hildebrandt and Turner 2009). Table 1 summarizes advocacy strategies discussed above.

[insert table 1 here]

It should be self-evident to all readers that neither political behaviour nor the scholarly literature that studies it are culturally homogeneous. I am not trying to claim here that certain advocacy strategies are necessarily 'Western' and others are 'East Asian,' although there are scholars that do make that claim (Ho 2007, Broadbent and Brockman 2010). Certainly no scholar or ordinary citizen would try to claim that any given strategy is only used in one region and never in the other—clearly there are environmental organizations in the United States that engage in cooperative projects with the government and there are environmental organizations in East Asia that organize public protests and file lawsuits. Rather than trying to typecast theories or pigeon-hole strategies, my goal here is to use both scholarly traditions to identify a wide variety of strategies that activists around the world might use to promote pro-environmental outcomes in their communities and countries. Furthermore, I wish to investigate whether the variations expected by the literature: between organizations operating in democratic and non-democratic countries, and between organizations operating in Western and East Asian countries do, in fact, exist.

In addition to advocacy strategies, the literature leads us to expect advocacy organization leadership to vary by region. Both U.S.-based and East Asian literature emphasize the importance of elite connections in order to facilitate a variety of advocacy strategies, including policy papers, lobbying, and working with the government. Advocacy literature focusing on organizations in the United States emphasizes the roles of lawyers, business executives, and other NGO leaders among the leadership teams of environmental organizations (Bosso 2005). The Advocacy Coalition Framework developed by Paul Sabatier stresses the importance of long-standing connections among the elites in the advocacy sector, including academic and non-profit professionals, and those making policy inside the governmental bureaucracy (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). The US-based literature is lively and divided about the importance and role of government officials on NGO boards of directors, with many scholars (and advocates) raising concerns about the importance of organizational autonomy from governmental policy, while others tout the utility of institutional access that comes with having former government

officials on organizations' boards of directors (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, Smith and Lipsky 1993, Salamon 1995, Salamon 1999, Skocpol 2002, Bosso 2005, Minkoff *et al.* 2008).

In contrast, East Asian scholarship emphasizes the importance of 'embedded' connections with the government, which are most easily achieved by having current or former government officials on the board of directors. While acknowledging the practical necessity of these connections, many scholars (and advocates) deplore the practice of populating boards of directors with former government officials, concerned that close connections with government could compromise organizational autonomy. This literature also emphasizes the importance of public credibility and legitimacy, which is often achieved by having university professors (who are also sometimes former government officials) on boards of directors (Hsiao 1999, Wu 2002, Alagappa 2004, Yang 2005, Ho 2007, Hildebrandt and Turner 2009, Kim 2009, Haddad 2012). Based on these differences, the literatures lead us to expect lawyers, business leaders, and other NGO professionals on the boards of directors of organizations located in the United States, while government officials, academics, and business leaders should be heavily represented among East Asian organizational leaders.

The following section uses an original database of environmental organizations to examine which strategies are the most common in mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, and what the most common governing board structure is within each country. It begins by describing the methodology used to create the database and then investigates which advocacy strategies are more common where. The concluding section of the article uses these findings to suggest some new directions for theoretical development.

Methods

The research presented here is based on two primary sources: five months of fieldwork in East Asia and an original database of environmental organizations in the region. I conducted research trips to Beijing, Seoul, and Taipei in 2010, with trips to Tokyo and Beijing in 2011 and 2015. The bulk of the research presented here was gathered from interviews conducted with nearly one hundred advocates, journalists, government officials, business people, grassroots volunteers, and academics.

Data from interviews was then supplemented with a database of environmental organizations in the region. With the assistance of native speaking research assistants, I gathered approximately 100 environmental organizations in each of the four countries[1] (China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan), and then added organizations from the United States for comparative purposes. The goal was to capture in the database: (1) the most influential environmental organizations in the country, and (2) a semi-representative sampling of the remaining environmental organizations in the country. In all cases I worked with capable native-speaking research assistants to help with the collection and coding of organizations for the five countries.

For three of the five countries in the database I was able to begin with a handful of influential organizations and then populate the bulk of the dataset with a random sample of organizations. The Unites States, Japan, and South Korea all had official lists of environmental organizations that I could use to build my database. For the U.S. groups, I began with the oldest and most influential groups as identified by Christopher Bosso in *Environment Inc.* (Kansas, 2005), and then supplemented by random sampling of organizations registered with the IRS that list environment as a core mission, for a total of 105 US environmental organizations.[2]

For Japan, the first five organizations were included based on the author's knowledge, and an additional 100 groups were added using the NPO Hiroba (Non-profit Organization

Forum), a list of all the registered non-profit organizations in Japan.[3] There were 3,597 organizations in the database that included 'environmental protection' as one of their focal areas. In order to create a dataset of approximately one hundred groups, I sampled every 36th organization listed in the output, which was organized according to the prefecture in which the organizations were registered. This methodology helped ensure geographically proportionate sampling (because of the disproportionately large number of organizations in Tokyo a purely random sampling methodology could have further overrepresented that geographic region). Two of the randomly sampled groups were already in the database, resulting in 103 groups total.

For South Korea, the database began with seven organizations that the author knew to be highly influential. The South Korean Ministry of Environment publishes an online list of non-profit organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and social cooperatives related to the environment.[4] The list contained 373 organizations. We randomly selected 100 groups to include in the dataset. For about thirty of the organizations we could find no additional information, so additional groups were randomly selected until we had a total of 100 environmental groups about which we could code information.

For organizations in the United States, Japan, and South Korea, organizational websites (especially annual reports when available), government reports, and media coverage were used to gather information about the organizations, their membership, and their activities, which were coded and added to the database. Please note that for all three of these countries, this search methodology biased the dataset against all-volunteer groups that may be actively engaged in environmental activities but are not officially registered as non-profit organizations. This bias is less of an issue in the United States, where the requirements to file for and maintain 501c3 status are relatively simple, and the tax benefits are significant, creating strong incentives for all organizations, even small ones with no paid staff, to register. However, for Japan and South Korea, the barriers to becoming registered as a non-profit organization are high, resulting in fewer registered organizations, and biasing the dataset against the all-volunteer, non-registered groups that constitute the majority of civil society in these two countries. Although the dataset has this limitation, it still is able to offer a portrait of registered environmental groups and their activities, even if it cannot claim to be as representative of all environmental groups.

I could not find comparable official lists of environmental groups for either China or Taiwan. For those two countries, I did my best to follow the spirit of the data collection for the previous countries. I began with a short list of the environmental groups that I knew to be influential. Native research assistants combed the Internet to find the names of and information about as many environmental groups as they could find.[5] Once the lists were compiled, I circulated the lists to several prominent scholars and national environmental leaders who were familiar with the environmental groups active in their countries to see if I was missing any important groups and if the list I had developed appeared to these local experts to be fairly representative of environmental groups in their countries. In the end, I was able to include 108 groups from China and 32 groups from Taiwan. As was the case for the sampling method in Japan and South Korea, this search methodology required that the groups be sufficiently well resourced to afford a website in order for us to find them, again biasing the results against local all-volunteer groups. However, the local experts that were consulted assured me that the list we generated included all of the most important groups and was fairly representative sample of the others.

In order to discover whether there were systematic differences in the boards of directors, we coded information about the background of board of director members for the organizations

in the dataset. We were able to obtain board of director information for about half of the organizations in the dataset, usually from annual reports or links on organizational websites. This information was not evenly distributed. All of the Japanese organizations had this information publically available while information was harder to find for Chinese, Korea, Taiwanese, and U.S. organizations.

For all groups, we coded a wide range of information including their founding dates, the types of issue areas in which they were active, the advocacy strategies they employed, their budget and staff, and characteristics of their board of director members.

Environmental Advocacy in East Asia and the United States

Contrary to the expectations of the advocacy literature discussed above, there was no systematic variation according to the extent of democracy, nor were there discernible regional differences. Perhaps surprisingly, the advocacy strategies touted as most important by the East Asian advocacy literature were also the strategies found most commonly in the United States. Public education and networking with other organizations were by far the most common strategies across all organizations. Policy papers, partnering with government, and media campaigns were also common. The use of public art was fairly common, with twenty percent or more of organizations in each country utilizing this strategy. The more overtly political strategies of letter writing, public protests, lobbying, and lawsuits were much less common everywhere.

To the extent that any country was an outlier in the dataset, it was South Korea. South Korean organizations were much more likely to employ policy papers, government partnerships, and protests than organizations found in other countries. Along with counterparts located in the United States, environmental organizations in South Korea utilized media campaigns, letter writing, and lawsuits in much higher rates than groups in China, Japan and Taiwan. It is likely that the highly active environmental organizations in South Korea are a result of a long history of protest politics and the close ties between environmental organizations to that country's pro-democracy movement and subsequent liberal political parties.[6]

[insert figure 1 here]

The relative similarity in advocacy strategies among East Asian organizations and those of the United States is particularly surprising because of the dramatic difference in financial resources. Groups in the United States benefit from a relatively easy process for registering as non-profit organizations, and corporations and individuals who donate to non-profit organizations receive generous tax benefits, resulting in large philanthropic giving in that country. In contrast, East Asian non-profit groups face more difficult legal registration processes and fewer tax benefits, so they are not able to rely on large individual or corporate donations as a primary source of income. Instead, East Asian groups rely primarily on fees for services, membership dues, foundation support, and volunteer labour (Lee 2000, Schreurs 2002a, Choi 2010, Haddad 2015).

These financial constraints limit all areas of organizational activity in the region, from staff to programming. To offer some numbers for comparison, in my dataset of 336 organizations in East Asia, there were only eight organizations total who reported a staff of more than fifty people (one in Taiwan, three in China, two in South Korea, and two in Japan). Only

fourteen percent of groups in the database had more than ten people on staff, while forty percent reported that they had no staff or did not report any paid staff. Budget information was not systematically reported by organizations outside of Japan, but to offer an overview of the top of the range, Table 1 lists the wealthiest environmental organizations in the database from each of the East Asian countries.[7]

[insert table 2 here]

These resources are miniscule when compared to the wealthiest U.S. organizations. Just for contrast purposes, in 2015 the US branch of the WWF had a staff of nearly 600 and an annual revenue exceeding $200 million, of which the largest proportion, $98 million, came from in individual contributions.[8] That same year The Nature Conservancy employed almost 4,000 people, had more than $900 million in revenue, and received more than $400 million came from individual dues and donations.[9] Thus, The Nature Conservancy's budget was nearly fifteen times the combined total of all the richest environmental groups in East Asia; it had more scientists on staff than the total employed staff of any group in the region.

Although the advocacy strategies did not vary as expected by the literature, it remained possible that organizational leadership might conform to expectations. Table 3 lists five different types of board members and the percentage of organizations in each country had members of that type represented on their board. Percentages may add up to more than one hundred because many organizations had board members whose biographies fit into in more than one category.

[table 3 here]

Once again, there are not huge differences between the boards of directors in U.S.-based organizations and those in East Asia. However, some of the results do conform to the expectations of the literature. China and Japan, both of which have political systems that historically dominated by a single political party, have, as expected, more government officials on their boards than South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States, all of which have political systems that are either explicitly a two-party system (the United States), or have clear alternations in power across two main political coalitions (South Korea and Taiwan). Similarly, all of the East Asian organizations have a higher percentage of academics on their boards of directors than the United States, although the difference among the East Asian countries (highest is 51 percent found in Japan as compared with 25 percent in Taiwan) is much larger than that between the East Asian countries and the United States (20 percent). The proportion of business executives varied perhaps more widely than expected. The high proportion of executives on Japanese boards (50 percent) can largely be explained by the relatively large number of non-profit business associations (e.g., Japan Environmental Facilities Manufacturers Association) among the Japanese organizations in the dataset. Given the rising wealth of the Chinese and the rapid increase in corporate philanthropy there, I was surprised by the relatively low number (19 percent) of business executives on Chinese NGO boards (Yin 2004, Su and He 2010).

The advocacy literature does not offer expectations for the types of issues that organizations in each country might favour. However, since systematic variation the issues pursued by environmental organizations could exist, I tested this possibility as well. Table 4

offers an overview of the prevalence of eight different environmental issues promoted by organizations in each country. Percentages add up to more than one hundred because most organizations are involved in more than one issue area.

Perhaps not surprising given the intensity of the current environmental crisis in China, among all the countries, China had the highest or second highest proportion of organizations in the pollution, conservation, climate, and recycling issue areas. Also not surprising given the political climate, China had the lowest proportion of organizations engaged in environmental justice—although its 6 percent was not that much lower than Japan's 10 percent, or the United States' 25 percent. The United States had the largest or second largest participation in only two areas, conservation and biodiversity. Japanese organizations were relatively evenly distributed across issue areas, with most causes engaging about one quarter of all groups; only two areas had higher participation—pollution and conservation, and in both cases the 38 percent was the lowest engagement level of any country. South Korea had very high participation rates in pollution (77 percent) and conservation (69 percent), with the remaining issue areas all engaging about a third of all organizations. Taiwan's organizations had the greatest variation in participation rates, ranging from 75 percent involvement in biodiversity to a low of only 13 percent in transportation. Once again, although we find considerable variation across countries, there are no discernible systematic patterns in participation rates across the countries by issue area.

[table 4 here]

Similarly, all countries had organizations advocating for a full range of policy goals—from wholesale change in national policy to the preservation of a local park/river/pond. All countries had a full range of organizational types, goals, and strategies. With the exception of a high proportion of well-resourced professional environmental advocacy organizations found in the United States (a direct result of its tax code), there were no systematic differences in the pattern of organizations or their advocacy goals or strategies across the countries.

In sum, in spite of the different historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts for environmental organizations operating in East Asia as compared with those based in the United States, organizational differences are much less than expected. Environmental organizations in East Asia and in the United States engage in similar types of activities, utilize similar advocacy strategies, and call on similar types of people to join their leadership teams. These findings are surprising given the literature, which suggest that resources, political opportunity, and cultural context should play a large and predictable role in shaping the structures and strategies of environmental organizations. I am not arguing here that resources, political opportunity, and cultural context do not play a role in shaping the organizational structure and activities of environmental organizations—clearly they do. Rather, I am suggesting that these factors influence environmental organizations in ways that do not appear to have the organizational ramifications that are frequently assumed by the literature. The following section offers some new directions for theoretical development to help us better understand how environmental advocacy is and should be carried out around the world.

Conclusion

This article has been in empirical inquiry into the variations in organizational makeup and strategies among East Asian environmental organizations as compared with those in the United States. The findings suggest that the intra- and inter-regional variation is less than the

literature would lead us to expect. In order to promote further theoretical development, in this section I would like to draw readers' attention to two strategies and two sets of actors that these findings suggest should be incorporated into new theories of political advocacy. The two strategies are networking with other organizations and collaborating with the government, and the two actors are academics and artists.

With rise of new communications technologies in the past twenty years, and especially the dramatic spread of social network applications in the past decade, organizational use of networks for advocacy purposed has been a growing area for research. The high incidence of 'network with other organizations' as an advocacy strategy around the world strongly supports the idea that organizations are working together to improve environmental outcomes and change policy in their communities, countries and around the world. It has often been noted that organizations operating with few financial or professional resources frequently rely on networks with other organizations in order to make-up for their lack of professional staff (Smith 2000, Pekkanen *et al.* 2014). Thus, it is somewhat surprising to find that this strategy was just as prevalent in the United States as it was in East Asia, even though organizations in the United States have far greater access to financial resources and professional staff.

It may be that the networks in the two places are operating rather differently. It seems likely that networks in the United States may be following the logic of an 'advocacy coalition' where professionals inside the government, the NGO sector, and academia have longstanding, dedicated interactions in a policy 'subsystem' (Sabatier 1988). In East Asia, however, where bureaucrats commonly rotate out of their job after a three-year term and NGOs seldom have more than a handful of professional staff, a 'policy subsystem' cannot take on the same character in terms of substance or personnel. In East Asia it is likely that the networks among advocacy organizations and individuals are more ad-hoc and based on personal connections rather than professional expertise (Schreurs 2002b, Ho 2007, Kim and Thurbon 2015). Since 'network with others' appears to be a popular strategy irrespective of political context or access to resources, more work should be done to discover if the networks take the same shape in different places and how they might operate to influence policy.

A second strategy common in both the United States and East Asia that needs further theoretical development is 'work with government.' In the United States, the literature has generally conceptualized this strategy as 'work for government,' with a strong emphasis on privatization dynamics where public sector work is sub-contracted to nongovernmental entities (Kramer 1981, Smith and Lipsky 1993, Salamon 1995, Agranoff and McGuire 2001). In East Asia, the idea of 'embedded' relationships with government was first coined by Peter Evans in *Embedded Autonomy* (1995) to describe the business-government relationships that were crafting economic development policy in the region and has since been applied to other policy areas including social welfare and the environment. Scholars of East Asia have been less concerned with private entities sub-contracting services from the government and more interested in studying the development of a mutually dependent relationship where there is co-development of policy and co-delivery of services. In these 'embedded' relationships the government and the non-profit actors working together to accomplish the delivery of public goods and services (Evans 1995, Lee and So 1999, Estevez-Abe 2003, Haddad 2006, Ho 2007, Terao and Otsuka 2007).

The U.S. literature about sub-contracting emphasizes clear delineation between the public and private sectors, with clear legal relationships and channels of financial responsibility and policy accountability across the policy actors. In contrast, the East Asian literature emphasizes

ambiguous and porous public-private boundaries and informal relationships among the various players. However, U.S. organizations also experience ambiguous and porous public-private boundaries and informal relationships among policy actors (as evidenced by the fact that former government officials can be found on the boards of directors of U.S. environmental groups—especially on the boards of the larger and better resourced groups). Similarly, East Asian groups also perform significant sub-contracting for their governments and are often constrained by reporting requirements that are even more formal and onerous than their counterparts in the United States. In all cases service-delivery and advocacy are intimately intermingled.[10]

Thus, the two literatures offer different emphases related to setting the policymaking agenda depending on the regional focus of the inquiry. The North American-focused literature assigns agenda-setting responsibility to either the government (contracting out) or to civil society (advocacy). In contrast, the East Asian-focused literature generally assumes co-production of policy. However, practically speaking, the conceptual distinction between "work with government" and "work for government" is not as clear as it should be, especially when trying to compare similar activities of advocacy, policy making, and service delivery in different cultural contexts.

While it may very well be the case that a one-size-fits-all theory for policymaking is neither possible nor desirable given the multitude of factors that influence the process, the current theoretical landscape has glaring holes. By over-emphasizing certain components of a policy process (e.g., partisanship in a U.S. context, or *guanxi* (informal social networks) in an East Asian context) current theories are missing critical elements of the policy processes no matter what context they study. A theory that is able to account for both formal and informal processes simultaneously or at least one that is able to distinguish clearly the conditions under which certain processes are likely to be more important would give us a much better understanding of how nongovernmental entities interact with governmental policy makers and the ways in which service-delivery by nongovernmental organizations influences the content and form of their advocacy efforts.

In addition to highlighting the importance of two under-studied strategies, this study also identifies two actors in environmental politics that have not been systematically included into theories of advocacy: academics and artists. More than twenty years ago Hank Jenkins-Smith and Paul Sabatier wrote, 'If researchers and policy analysts wish to have a significant impact on policy, they generally must abandon the role of "neutral technician" and instead adopt that of an "advocate"' (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). This study suggests that this transformation has happened.

While there are numerous studies in which university professors play the role of 'experts' and 'counter-experts' in policy-making debates, the emphasis has usually been on their technical expertise rather than their roles as political actors (Hager 1995, Fischer 2000, Easterly 2014). However, the widespread presence of academics on the boards of directors for environmental organizations suggests that academics are not merely technical consultants, but rather are advocacy leaders. These professors/board members are helping to shape the missions, directions, and strategies for environmental organizations around the world, exercising far more influence than a technical expert. Since these same academics also frequently sit on governmental advisory boards, they may be playing a vital role in the political processes related to policy making, not just providing technical expert advice intended to justify policies that have already been developed. In organizations across East Asia, it was very common to find academics founding environmental organizations and utilizing their governmental contacts to

promote policies favoured by their NGO. Academics are frequently involved in transnational environmental organizations, some of which, like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), are globally significant in terms of policymaking (Keck and Sikkink 1998, Rodrigues 2003).

A note of caution is warranted, however. While some may be leveraging their social position and intellectual capacity to champion an environmental agenda, others are 'used' by governmental officials to promote a policy option already favoured by policymakers. One high-level policy insider I interviewed in Tokyo said, 'You could probably draw a map of the top 30 academics and plot their positions vis-à-vis different ministries and issues. … You would expect that the Environmental Ministry to have different academics than the METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry) academics' (interview, 2011). Thus, which 'technical' expert gets called depends on which ministry organizes the meeting. Therefore, academics' role in policymaking is mixed—some academics may be acting as leaders of an independent policy agenda, while others may be legitimizing decisions made by other policy actors.

The small number of interviews I conducted in the United States suggests that academics in that country are also exercising policy leadership and are not merely tools used by policymakers to legitimize previously made decisions. Their common role as founders of organizations, their frequent appearance on organizational boards of directors, and their key roles in government advisory panels suggests that academics may be playing a far more important role in advocacy than current theories allow.

A final group of actors that are generally ignored by current theories but which this research suggests are important are artists. While public art was not among the most popular advocacy strategies, it was commonly found in all the countries, and in nearly every country it was employed more often than the strategies of letter writing, protests, lobbying, and lawsuits, all of which receive frequent attention in the advocacy literature.

Twenty years ago in *From Art to Politics*, Murray Edelman wrote, 'In a crucial sense, then, art is the fountainhead from which political discourse, beliefs about politics, and consequent actions, ultimately spring'(Edelman 1995). Most how-to books about advocacy discuss the use of art to capture the public's imagination and stir emotional connection to the subject. Whether it is a flower show put on by a local garden club or a rock concert at a clean-the-park event, artistic expression and the involvement of artists have become integral to environmental advocacy around the world. With the spread of digital communications, photographs, documentary films, poems, short stories, and even dance performances can cross boundaries easily, stirring the emotions and connecting audiences to environmental problems that may be very geographically distant.

While there is recognition that sophisticated use of media can sway public opinion, academics have not systematically included the role of artists or artistic expression into theories of advocacy. Similar to the role of academics above, it is likely that in some cases the artists and their artistic products are 'used' by environmental organizations to promote the group's cause. Organizations commonly hold photo contests and then use the winning images in their publicity materials. They recruit celebrity actors and ask them to champion an organization's cause.

However, in other cases the artists themselves are taking the political initiative. In 1987 Robert Glenn Ketchum published a collection of exquisite photographs in *The Tongass: Alaska's Vanishing Rain Forest* and delivered the volume to all members of Congress. Three years later President Bush signed the Tongass Timber Reform Bill into law and invited Ketchum to the White House in recognition of his role in the passage of the law. Ketchum explained the

different kind of contribution that arts and artists can make to advocacy in an interview with me in 2011. 'When you're reading it is difficult to have reflective thoughts. … When you're standing in front of an artwork, it is embracing it as a creative object. … You can use art to make people willing to read words.'

Academy Award winning film director Ruby Yang, whose short film *Warriors of Qiugang*[11] documents the successful struggle of a rural Chinese village against the pollution in their town, expressed similar ideas during a 2011 interview with me in Beijing. 'Reporting and journalism is about stating the facts, but we use broader strokes and draw people into the story and characters. We present the facts in a way that people can relate to so that they say, 'I want to do something' when they get to the end of the film. And also they ask questions. We give voice to people that don't have voice—orphans, gay men, villagers.'

Some artists pay a steep price for their political engagement. In 2008 Ai Weiwei was a darling of the Chinese government for his spectacular design of the Olympic Stadium that showcased the rise of China to the world. One year later an earthquake in Sichuan killed nearly 70,000 people, and Ai joined the public outrage when it came to light that many of the school children deaths could have been avoided had corrupt officials not pocketed money that had been intended for school construction. His activism led to police beatings that landed him in the hospital, the demolition of his studio, and house arrest. In spring 2011, while activists in the Middle East were engaged in overthrowing their authoritarian governments, Ai was arrested on charges of tax evasion. He was held for three months. He was released in June 2011, and has been allowed to leave Beijing, but not the country, and he remains under heavy surveillance and has his movements restricted. He has continued his advocacy even under these limitations. His website now hosts #aiflowers, 'a project by Ai Weiwei inviting everyone to create a flower in memory of the child victims of the devastating Sichuan earthquake on May 12, 2008' as well a the sound track to his first heavy metal single, 'dumbass.'[12]

While some might call Ai a 'force of nature,'[13] theories should stop treating artists and their artistic contributions to advocacy as exogenous forces akin to earthquakes. Environmental organizations around the world have recognized their importance and systematically incorporate art and artistic expression into their advocacy. Artists themselves are important actors who play influential roles in shaping both public opinion and public policy. Scholars should pay closer attention to the role of artists and incorporate them explicitly into their theories of advocacy.

In sum, when examining the advocacy strategies of environmental organizations in East Asia and the United States, we find fewer differences than would be expected by the academic literature on advocacy. It appears that organizations around the world are employing similar sets of strategies in order to promote better environmental outcomes. In their study, which used data from the 1998 Global Environmental Organizations Survey, Russell Dalton and colleagues also found that networking with other organizations and working with the government were common strategies while more confrontational strategies such as protest, direct action, and lawsuits were not common globally. They also found, 'only weak evidence that national political contexts shape movement strategies'(Dalton *et al.* 2003).

In view of my findings, I challenge scholars to refine their theories of advocacy and develop new ones. In particular, I maintain that we need to do a better job of including two common advocacy strategies—organizational networking and working with the government— into our theories of political advocacy. Additionally, academics and artists demonstrably play influential roles in environmental advocacy around the world. We should no longer assume that

these men and women and the work that they produce are merely tools to be used by others. We need to include these important actors and their intellectual and artistic products into our theories of how advocacy works and what makes it effective.

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[1] I use the word 'country' for heuristic ease. It is not intended to be a statement about the status of Taiwan as independent or not from mainland.

[2] The US groups were created by searching the IRS's cumulative list of environmental organizations found here:
http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/charitablestats/article/0,,id=97186,00.html (search conducted between July 1-7, 2012; link is no longer active). We first selected 501c3 organizations that had missions related to the environment (all the C codes, and then D20, D30-34, and K25), which generated 29,498 organizations. We then randomly selected 100 organizations and added them to the database. Organizations for which we could find no information were eliminated, resulting in a total of 105 organizations.

[3] NPO Hiroba http://www.npo-hiroba.or.jp/search/ (accessed Jan. 1-12, 2012).

[4]
http://www.me.go.kr/home/web/policy_data/read.do?pagerOffset=0&maxPageItems=10&maxIndexPages=10&searchKey=&searchValue=&menuId=10260&orgCd=&condition.code=A1&seq=6330 (Accessed October 4-25 2014).

[5] An important resource for China was the China Development Brief's NGO Directory, which allows for searching by sector. http://chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/directory/ (accessed July 2011).

[6] Ku, D.-W., 1996. The structural change of the korean environmental movement. *Korea Journal of Population and Development,* 25 (1), 155-180, Lee, S.-H., Hsiao, H.-H.M., Liu, H.-J., Lai, O.-K., Magno, F.A. & So, A.Y., 1999. The impact of democratization on environmental movements. *In* Lee, Y.-S.F. & So, A.Y. eds. *Asia's environmental movements.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Lee, S.-J., 2000. The environmental movement and its political empowerment. *Korea Journal,* 40 (3), 131-160, Schreurs, M., 2002a. Democratic transition and environmental civil society: Japan and south korea compared. *The Good Society,* 11 (2), 57-64, Choi, J.J., 2010. The democratic state engulfing civil society: The ironies of korean democracy. *Korean Studies,* 34, 1-24..

[7] In Japan the very richest groups were business associations that had an environmental focus, such as Japan Container and Packaging Recycling Association, which had a budget of 643 million. For Japan, the table lists the richest environmental groups that are not business associations in the dataset.

[8] http://www.worldwildlife.org/about/financials (accessed July 24, 2016); see also WWF 990 report http://assets.worldwildlife.org/financial_reports/26/reports/original/990_PI_WORLD_WILDLIFE_FUND_INC.pdf?1458236238&_ga=1.53148588.563395197.1469367823 (accessed July 24, 2016).

[9] Nature's 990 form for FY2015 http://www.nature.org/about-us/our-accountability/annual-report/2014-form-990-fy15.pdf (accessed July 24, 2016).

[10] Pekkanen, R., Smith, S.R. & Tsujinaka, Y. eds. 2014. *Nonprofits & advocacy: Engaging community and government in an era of retrenchment,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

[11] Yale's Environment 360 hosts a web version of the film: http://e360.yale.edu/feature/the_warriors_of_qiugang_a_chinese_village_fights_back/2358/ (accessed February 5, 2015).

[12] http://aiweiwei.com (accessed February 5, 2015).

[13] http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140401-the-most-important-artist-alive (accessed February 5, 2015).

Tables

Table 1: Common Environmental Advocacy Strategies as Expected by Western-based and East Asian-based Theories of Advocacy

	Western-based Theories	East Asian-based Theories
Public Protest	X	
Lobbying	X	
Lawsuits	X	
Letter Writing Campaigns	X	

Policy Papers	X	X
Media Campaigns	X	X
Joint Projects with Government		X
Grassroots Public Education		X
Public Art		X
Organizational Networks		X

Table 2: The Wealthiest Environmental Organizations in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (data collected from organizational websites and annual reports)

China	Revenue (US$)
Greenpeace	7 million
Air Asia	1.8 million
WWF China	1.3 million
Japan	
Japan Wildlife Research Center	14.4 million
Japan Wild Bird Society	13.7 million
International Lake Environment Committee	12.3 million
South Korea	
Forest for Life	3.5 million
Green Consumer Network	3.1 million
Green Korea United	2.6 million
Taiwan	
The Society of Wilderness	1.4 million
The Homemakers Union and Foundation	234 thousand

Table 3: Board of Directors of Environmental Organizations
(% of organizations in country with each type of board member)

Country	Current/Former Government Officials	Academics	Business Executives	Lawyers	NGO Leaders
China	27	32	19	7	13
Japan	29	51	50	17	48
South Korea	13	40	32	22	35
Taiwan	6	25	13	13	3

Country							
USA	16	20	34	21	34		

Table 4: Advocacy Issues for Environmental Organizations in East Asia and the U.S.

Country	Pollution	Transportation	Conservation	Climate	Bio-diversity	Energy	Recycling	Env. Justice
China	64	26	75	37	56	43	35	6
Japan	38	2	38	20	25	22	23	10
South Korea	77	26	69	33	45	48	30	34
Taiwan	50	13	44	13	75	28	16	34
USA	51	10	81	23	70	27	21	25