

Kita-josanjima Intersection Improvement Process

The first experiment of “importing” consensus building processes to Japan



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Research question

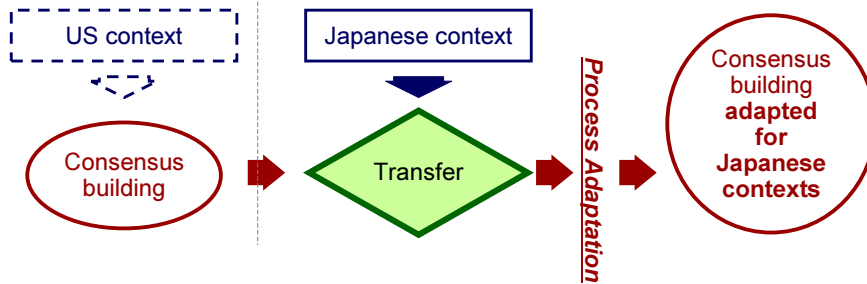
- Can **consensus building**, as practiced in the US, be used to resolve infrastructure disputes in Japan?
- What kind of **adaptations** are necessary to make it useful in the Japanese **context**?



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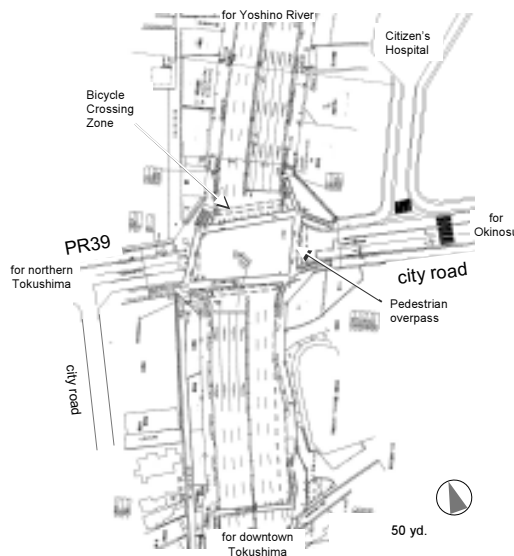


Context-sensitive adaptation model



Kita-josanjima Intersection

- MLIT had to improve the Intersection in the next FY for reducing traffic accidents
- There was a potential for public disputes between different kinds of local stakeholders and government agencies.
- Suitable for experimenting with consensus building.



Kita-josanjima Intersection



(reproduced from TAT (2005, Sept. 2) *Kita-josanjima Kōsaten no genjō to kōsaten no kaizen jirei*)



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Organizing for the experiment

- Organizers
 - MLIT (Tokushima River and Road Office): Convenor
 - Commons (NGO): Neutral Facilitator Team
 - ◆ Sato Yukiyooshi
 - ◆ Kita Junzo
 - University of Tokushima: Neutral Facilitator Team and Technical Assistant
 - ◆ Hideo Yamanaka (organizer)
 - Oriental Consultant: Technical Assistant
 - Masa Matsuura: Advisor (provided information on consensus building as practiced in the U.S.)



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Timeline

2005.1~3: Stakeholder assessment

- Commons and Univ. of Tokushima functioned as the independent third-party neutral.
- They interviewed 54 individuals. Based on the results, they prepared a report summarizing their interests in the improvement of the intersection.

2005.7~2006.2: Stakeholder dialogue

- 21 participants, representing government agencies, citizen groups, and local communities.
- Commons serves as the facilitator for the negotiating group.



Timeline

2005.07.22 1st Meeting: Agreement on the process

2005.09.2 2nd Meeting: Agreement on the issues to be addressed by the committee.

2005.10.6 3rd Meeting: Understanding possible options for addressing the issues (presented by “neutral” consultants) and eliminating long-term options

Between the meetings: Survey on concerns about suggested options

2005.11.18 4th Meeting: Evaluating possible options

Between the meetings: Interagency negotiation between MLIT and local police department

2006.02.10 5th Meeting: Final agreement



Stakeholder representatives

Local residents	Community leaders (3) and rep. of condo assoc (1).
Local businesses	Restaurants (2) and car dealer (1).
Stakeholding organizations	City hospital, high schools, safe driving assoc., handicapped person's assoc., transit authority (Total 8).
Government agencies	MLIT, prefecture government (including police department), city government (Total 6).

Stakeholder dialogue



Stakeholder Dialogue



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Stakeholder Dialogue



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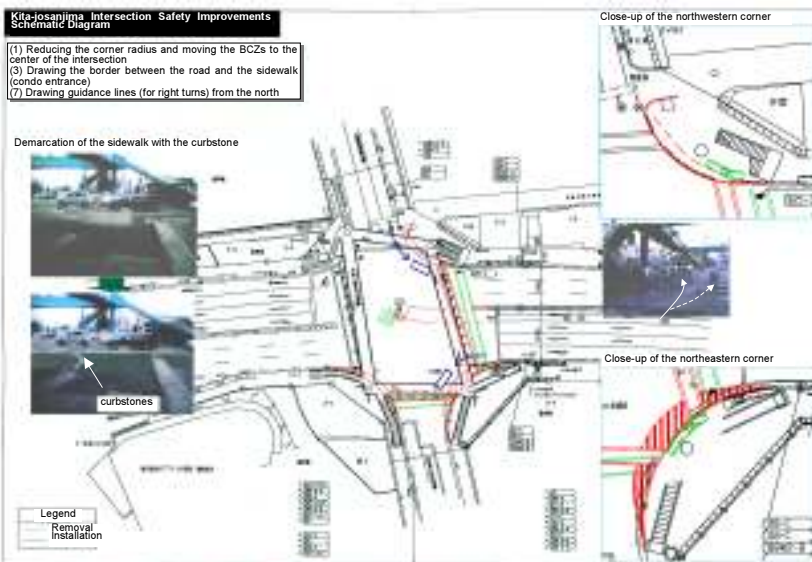
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Outcomes

- **Eight schemes were agreed by all stakeholders.**
 - Reducing the corner radius and moving the bicycle crossing zone to the center of the intersection;
 - Installing night lighting equipments;
 - Drawing the border between the road and the sidewalk (condo entrance);
 - Adding a sign “Time-Lagged Signal (*jisa-shiki shingō*)” next to the signal (from the west);
 - Installing a signboard to warn drivers of crossing bicycles;
 - Drawing road markings to reduce the speed;
 - Drawing guidance lines (for right turns) from the north; and
 - Adding a digital signboard for bicycles showing the remaining time for the green signal.



Final agreement



Process adaptation in Kita-josanjima

- **Three types of process adaptation** were identified in the experiment.
 1. Choosing right persons based on the Japanese context
 2. Adapting consensus building to accommodate the needs of government agencies
 3. Adapting consensus building to maximize its effectiveness



Adaptation 1: Choosing right persons based on the Japanese context

- **An academic was involved in organizing for the experiment.**
 - **JP Context:** Japanese academics have traditionally functioned as advisor in policy-making.
 - Professor Yamanaka was instrumental in organizing the experiment as well as empowering the “neutral” team in relation to the government.
- **The leading facilitator was chosen based on the age.**
 - **JP Context:** Age is a key factor in determining one’s status.
- **Community leaders were invited to the committee.**
 - **JP Context:** Involving them early is often crucial in circumventing local oppositions (In this experiment other local stakeholders were also invited to insure the full representation of interests).
- **Conflict assessment interviewees were given an option to remain anonymous in the report.**
 - **JP Context:** Japanese often shy away from standing out in policy-making dialogues no matter what voice they may have.



Adaptation 2: Adapting c-b to accommodate the needs of government agencies

- ***Iinkai*** was established to gain legitimacy within the ministry.
 - **JP Context:** Advisory committees (*iinkai*) are crucial in creating a consensus within government agencies.
- Conventional frameworks for **interagency negotiation** was integrated into the process.
 - **JP Context:** MLIT and police department must negotiate before making decision.
 - Separate negotiation took place aside from the stakeholder dialogue.
- Work plan was designed to reduce the impact of the **fiscal year system**.
 - **JP Context:** In Japan almost all “planning” projects cannot be subcontracted for multiple fiscal years (must be contained in each fiscal year).
 - In Kita-josanjima stakeholder analysis was conducted in FY 2004 and the dialogue was organized in FY 2005.



Adaptation 3: Adapting c-b to maximize its effectiveness

- **Workshop techniques** were used to improve the communication between each committee member in the meeting.
 - **JP Context:** Commons (the neutral facilitator team) was skilled with “workshop” meeting management techniques. The team infused the technique into consensus building.
- Third-party team tried to get acquainted with each member in the ***nemawashi*** fashion.
 - **JP Context:** *Nemawashi*—sounding out the interests through informal meetings before formal meetings—is a crucial part of decision-making in Japan.

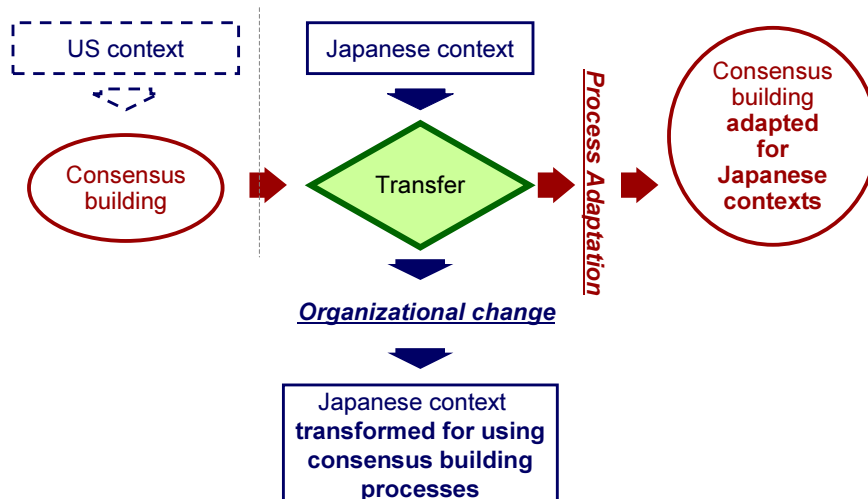


Organizational change

- Adaptation was insufficient for using consensus building in the Japanese context.
- **Japanese organizations (convenor and stakeholders) had to assume new roles, norms, and rules in the experiment!**
 - Introduction of consensus building triggered a change in the way they deliberate and plan.
 - Such change was necessary in order to maintain the key concepts of consensus building.



Process adaptation and organizational change



Organizational change in Kita-josanjima (1): relationship

- The traditional *kō-otsu* vertical **relationship between the government agency and the consulting firm** was relaxed during the experiment.
 - **Context:** Japanese consultants often act as a “retainer” to the government (not neutral at all). This is known as *kō-otsu* relationship.
 - In order to function as a technical assistant to the committee, not to the MLIT, the patterned relationship had to be removed during the experiment.



Organizational change in Kita-josanjima (2): representation

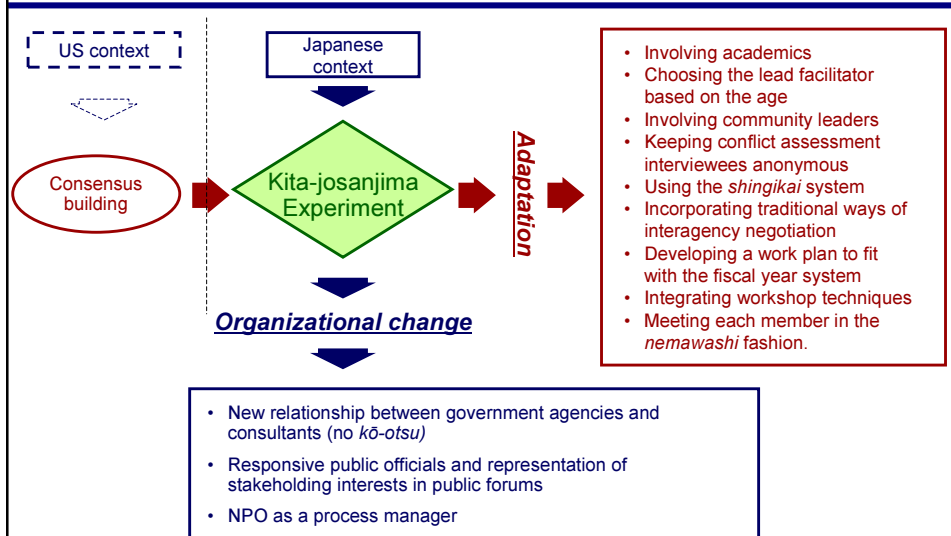
- The representative of the convening agency tried to be **responsive** in the meeting. Many other committee members also tried to **speak for the interest that they were representing**.
 - **Context 1:** Public officials often do not make any commitments for the agency in public meetings (known as *mochikaeri*).
 - **Context 2:** Community representatives are often not the “representative” of the community.



Organizational change in Kita-josanjima (3): status of NPOs

- A **not-for-profit organization**, Commons, took the role of the **process manager**. It circumvented the influence of conventional vertical relationship on the committee management.
 - **Context:** NPO (not-for-profit organization) is often considered as an advocate for citizens' interests (i.e., against the government).
 - The legitimacy of Commons as a neutral assistant to stakeholders was established through the experiment.

Summary of adaptation and organizational change in Kita-josanjima



Summary

- In order to deal with **incompatibilities with the local context**,
- consensus building needs to **be adapted** and
- the **organization** that use consensus building needs to **change**
- at the outset and **on-going**.

If a “consensus building” effort in a foreign country systematically excludes certain underprivileged stakeholders because of the “local context,” should we endorse such undemocratic effort as consensus building?



Lessons for practice

- Be open to adapting consensus building to the unique context of each country/region.
- Find a right partner, who is
 - familiar with the local context (including implicit norms and rituals) and
 - knowledgeable about consensus building (to some extent).
- Adaptation is “learning by doing”—design a flexible work plan and adjust it as incompatibilities arise.
- Too much adaptation is inappropriate: local organizations have to assume a new set of norms and rules in order to use consensus building.
- Stimulate local government agencies for a change if necessary.



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