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Citizens in the Era of Governance: Citizen Participation and Active Citizenship

Noritada MATSUDA

Associate Professor of Political Science, Faculty of Law, University of Kitakyushu, Japan

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Nowadays strong emphasis has been placed on “governance” and “citizen participation”; citizens are expected to be ever more involved in the policy process and to ever more actively govern society. The promotion of citizen participation, however, should entail thorough consideration on citizenship or citizens’ qualifications and capabilities. This paper theoretically examines the notion of citizen in the era of governance and highlights active citizenship as necessary for citizen participation; any participant must be an active citizen.

This paper avers that education for active citizenship significantly contribute to individuals being active. Given that values, knowledge and skills—both basic and practical/applied—need to be developed for political participation, education for active citizenship should be provided for not only young people, but also adults who are participating or will soon participate in the policy process; in this sense, both child/youth education and adult/social education are important. Due to the heterogeneity and diversity of individuals, and given that a wide range of knowledge is necessary for active citizen participation, moreover, education for active citizenship should be provided by various agencies in various ways. An educational system for active citizenship, consequently, needs to be designed on the basis of the recognition that the system should contain child, youth, postgraduate and adult/social education programs; and that the system should utilize characteristics of diverse agencies such as elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, graduate schools, NPOs and citizen’s colleges.

Without such a citizen development system, active citizen participation would be hardly possible to be successfully promoted.

Designing a citizen participation mechanism accompanied with citizen development programs (educational programs for active citizenship) is an arduous task. This task involves not only new participants in the policy process, viz., so-called ordinary citizens. Policymakers also have to adapt to the changing political process. Scholars in various study fields, as well, are required to academically and practically contribute to designing and facilitating citizen participation. Citizen participation in the policy process, nevertheless, sounds nice to many people and thus might be promoted without careful consideration. This paper is intended to warn against such promotion and to be a starting point for defining “citizen in the era of governance” and for establishing an effective citizen participation mechanism accompanied with an educational system.

KEYWORDS: Citizen Participation, Active Citizenship, Citizenship Education, Governance

1. Governance and Citizen Participation

Terms such as “governance” and “citizen participation,” recently, have been found ubiquitously in the social sciences literature. Many social scientists, especially scholars in political science, public administration and public policy, have lamented over the lack of responsiveness of legislative and executive branches to citizens’ needs: viz., government failure. Every effort has been made, then, to solve the following question: how could the gap between policy contents and citizens’ needs be narrowed? Traditional approaches to tackle this problem tend to focus on processes within government. Solutions to the problem, additionally, have now been sought from a broader perspective, in which governance and citizen participation are stressed.

The concept of governance used to be associated with government whereas it is today no longer so restricted. Although one may not find a definition of governance which all users of the term accept, they seem to agree that it includes “reference to processes and actors outside the narrow realm of government” (Kjær, 2004: 1). The current emphasis on governance indicates that government should not be regarded as the only actor in charge of tackling social problems; various actors should be considered to “govern” society. The study of governance thus has been devoted to designing the governance structure where the problem of government failure could be alleviated (Niikawa, 2004; Nakamura, 2004).

Key actors in the governance structure contain citizens. Citizens are expected to play an active role in the policy process and collaborate with other actors such as governments and corporations so that their preferences could be reflected in policy determination. Some analyses on political process demonstrate, in fact, that active citizen participation could direct politicians’ attention to citizens’ needs (Matsuda, 2006a, 2007). Institutional arrangements facilitating citizen participation include “community governance,” in which citizens are not only monitored by but also do monitor governments (Yamamoto, 2004a, 2004b, 2005).
The focus on governance and citizen participation could be described as deregulation in the political market, where public policies are produced (Matsuda, 2007: 124). There have been market entry regulations; a limited number of actors such as politicians, bureaucrats and some special interests have been allowed to enter the political market. Recently many customers (viz., citizens) are feeling dissatisfied with products supplied in the market (viz., public policies), and thus deregulation is being seen as necessary; that is, it is contended that such market entry restrictions be removed. This line of argument is emphasizing citizens as newcomers to the political market.

Deregulation in the market system, however, is seldom free of side effects; it is prone to entailing some negative social impacts. When implementing deregulation, hence, some measures are usually taken to deal with such impacts. The same holds true for the promotion of citizen participation. If it has negative impacts on society, one needs to identify those negative impacts and consider effective measures against them. As long as one is to promote citizen participation in the policy process, thus, the following question arises inevitably. Is anyone able to play an active role in the policy process; to put it differently, is anyone capable of governing?

This question leads us to another one of equal importance: are there any qualifications or capabilities for successfully participating in the policy process? One plausible answer to it may be stated as follows: an individual is allowed to participate as long as he/she is a “citizen.” Then, what does “to be a citizen” — viz., citizenship — mean? Although this has been a controversial issue in social sciences since a long time ago, it is getting more crucial given the current focus on governance and citizen participation. This focus indicates that the relationship between citizens and governments and the position of citizens in society are changing. It is implied, hence, that the notion of citizen needs to be reconsidered today.

This paper theoretically examines the notion of citizen in the era of governance; insisting on development of citizen as critical to citizen participation, it explores what could help an individual be a citizen. The analysis proceeds as follows. The next section begins with reviewing the debate over the concept of citizenship. It then marshals arguments about contemporary challenges to citizenship and gets a broad idea of citizenship in the era of governance. This idea is fleshed out in the third section, through referring to the study on citizenship education; focus is placed on the problem of what an individual as a citizen should acquire in order to successfully participate in the policy process. What education has to be provided to individuals, moreover, is worked out, attending specifically to who needs to learn, what to learn and how to learn. This paper is concluded by averring that the governance structure reform encouraging citizen participation requires the institutional design of citizen development and that its success depends on the contribution of policymakers and scholars. The analysis in this paper as a whole is intended to be a starting point for defining “citizen in the era of governance” and establishing an effective citizen participation mechanism accompanied with an educational system.

2. Approaches and Contemporary Challenges to Citizenship

Citizen participation aims primarily at getting a variety of individuals to engage in policymaking so that the quality of public policy could be improved. Not everyone that intends to participate in the policy process, however, is allowed to do that; he/she is required to be a citizen. What does it mean to be a citizen? This question concerns the notion of citizenship. This section of the paper first presents a brief description of theoretical approaches to citizenship and then explores the contemporary meanings of citizenship, specifically those in the era of governance.¹

Citizenship is delineated, on the one hand, as a legal status or relationship between the individual and the state whereas the other view conceptualizes citizenship as participation in civil society (Delanty, 2005). According to Lawson (2001: 177), citizenship consists of “the notion of participation in public life, the idea that a citizen is one who both governs and is governed, a sense of identity, an acceptance of societal values, and rights and responsibilities.” There have been several theories to citizenship, she affirms, which differ primarily in the way to view the relationship between rights and responsibilities of citizens. Those approaches might be divided into two groups: liberal individualistic approaches and republican or communitarian ones.²

Liberal individualistic approaches, which stem from the liberal Lockean view of natural law, stress rights of citizens and regard the protection of the rights as the primary function of the state. Republican/communitarian approaches, on the other hand, have developed in line with the philosophical tradition of Aristotle; emphasizing citizens’ duties and their belonging to a community, the approaches call for an involved citizenry (Kivisto, 2008). These two groups of interpretations are clearly distinguished by Habermas (1994: 25-26):

In the one interpretation [liberal individualism], the individuals remain external to the state, contributing only in a certain manner to its reproduction in return for the benefits of organizational membership. In the other [republicanism/communitarianism], the citizens are integrated into the political community like parts into a whole; that is, in such a manner that they can only form their personal and social identity in this horizon of shared traditions and intersubjectively recognized institutions.

To the ongoing attempt to conceptualize citizenship, have contemporary social changes added new controversial issues; those changes have led to reconsideration of citizenship.³ First, the globalization and the facilitated transnational people movement have changed the relationship between the state and the citizens. One result of this change is the
increase in individuals with dual or multiple citizenships, which signals the coming of “a new era in which the nation-state’s monopoly on defining citizenship is being challenged” (Kivisto, 2008: 543). Such changes have been accelerated by recent technological innovations.

The globalization, moreover, has changed the scope of social problems and the way to deal with them. The impacts of environmental problems, for instance, are no longer limited to within a state; those problems have global influence and need to be tackled internationally. This situation has stimulated supra-national organizations to be built: e.g., the United Nations and the European Union. It is implied here that the roles of the state in defining citizenship has changed and that an “earth citizen” (van Steenbergen, 1994b) is emerging.

The second social change which has challenged citizenship is the current emphasis on multiculturalism. Traditional approaches to citizenship have focused on rights of an individual. Today group rights, especially those for minorities, are increasingly recognized as significant, given the diversity in contemporary society. Rights of this kind are often referred to as cultural rights, which are newly added to Marshall (1950)’s types of rights (Delanty, 2005). To what extent to acknowledge group differences and how to balance between unity and diversity in multicultural society are theoretically controversial issues now (e.g., Kymlicka, 1995; Kymlicka & Norman, 1995).

In addition to these contemporary challenges to citizenship, the recent stress on governance and citizen participation has revitalized the traditional debate between liberal individualism and republicanism/communitarianism over rights and responsibilities of citizens. In the liberal individualistic view, “the citizens are no different from private persons who bring their pre-political interests to bear vis-à-vis the state apparatus”; in the republican/communitarian interpretation, on the other hand, “citizenship can only be realized as a joint practice of self-determination” (Habermas, 1994: 26). The liberal individualistic interpretation, Charles Taylor (1989, quoted in Habermas, 1994: 26) affirms, puts no value on participation in rule for a citizen’s own sake whereas the republican/communitarian model of citizenship “defines participation in self-rule as of the essence of freedom, as part of what must be secured.”

The recent calls for governance and citizen participation insist on citizens’ ever more active role in the policy process. What meaning does the changing position of citizens in society have to the debate over citizenship? Ranson and Stewart (1989: 14–15) describe contemporary citizens as follows (also vide Takahashi, 2004):

Citizens are active participants in the community as well as in the polity, contributing to the common welfare, to the economy’s wealth production and, most significantly, sharing in the rights and responsibilities of the polity.

Today’s citizen participation movement, hence, is considered to assume the republican/communitarian view of citizenship: viz., “active citizenship.” There have been, in fact, an increasing number of studies that refer, explicitly or implicitly, to the notion of active citizenship and insist on promotion of citizen participation (Alford, 2002; Schachter, 1995). Turning to educational policy in affluent democracies, moreover, one finds active citizenship declared more often today than before. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in the United Kingdom, for instance, published Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (commonly referred to as the Crick Report) in 1998, which clearly defines active citizenship as the aim of education (QCA, 1998: 25). With regard to welfare, much stress is put on not only the provision by the state but also what individuals can do for each other in voluntary groups and organization, whether local or national (QCA, 1998: 10). This interpretation of citizenship is seen as akin to the republican/communitarian citizenship.4

The era of governance, to sum up, requires active citizenship; citizens are now expected to be active in governing globalized and multicultural society. The next section fleshes out this idea of citizenship and examines what “to be active” means. Specifically, resorting to the literature on citizenship education, attention is given to who should be active and how to be active.

3. Education for Active Citizenship

Critical to citizen participation, the foregoing suggests, is an individual being active. How can an individual be active? This paper stresses education for active citizenship as a crucial element for development of citizens and achievement of effective citizen participation.

As early as the time of the French Revolution, how to develop citizens for political participation was discussed (Matsuda, 2008b). The historical significance of the French Revolution can be described as follows (Crubaugh, 2008: 203):

[The French Revolution] ushered in modernity by destroying the foundations of the “Old Regime”—absolutist politics, legal inequality, a “feudal” economy (characterized by guilds, manorialism, and even serfdom), an alliance of church and state, and created a vision for a new moral universe: that sovereignty resides in nations; that a constitution and the rule of law govern politics; that people are equal and enjoy inalienable rights; and that church and state should be separate.

As to “inalienable rights,” the right of political participation was granted only to citoyens actifs (active citizens), not to all individuals of the state. Citoyens actifs were distinguished from citoyens passifs (passive citizens) by Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, a leader theoretically influencing the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789 and the
Constitution of 1791 (Sakagami, 1992): whoever lives in the state was granted rights as citoyens passifs including protection of his/her life, property and liberty whereas not all citizens were not permitted to play an active role in politics. This idea that only citoyens actifs enjoy the right of political participation was shared with Jean-Denis Lanjuinais. Citoyens actifs, according to Lanjuinais (Sugawara, 2001), were those qualified in terms of knowledge and rights (e.g., being old enough to have knowledge and exercise rights), usage de la raison (exercise of the reason), identification with French citizens, period of residence and so on.

If those without sufficient knowledge or ability to exercise the reason participate in politics, undesirable decisions might be made. In order to avoid this situation, such theorists as Sieyès averred that citizens capable of political participation (viz., citoyens actifs) be distinguished from ordinary citizens, and that affairs of the state be administered exclusively by the former citizens. Condorcet (Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat), on the other hand, objected to such a view of politics as a professional occupation (Sakagami, 1992). Condorcet highlighted public education as a factor preventing wrong decision making in politics; he contended that everyone of the state participate in politics and, through public education, become a citizen capable of doing it.

In the era of governance, any citizen is expected to actively participate in the policy process. It implies that the idea of Condorcet, rather than that of Sieyès, should be adopted today. Close attention, consequently, needs to be given to education for active citizenship.

Nowadays there has been agreement both across democracies and in the academia that education contributes to individuals being active. In the United Kingdom, following the ideas of the Crick Report, the National Curriculum was reviewed so that individuals could be educated to be active in the democratic system. The US Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994, two of whose goals stress citizenship education.

Turning to the literature on education, one sees many thorough research studies and vigorous discussions regarding education for democracy and citizenship. Researchers in education, as referred to below, have looked into what educational curricula need to be implemented for individuals to be a good citizen in democratic society.

Social scientists, as well, have scrutinized the notion of citizenship and recognized that education could contribute to the accomplishment of democracy. Whereas education for democracy is a traditional subject for political philosophers and theorists such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it has recently been reexamined in contemporary terms (e.g., Gutmann, 1999). Academic societies for social sciences, moreover, have now contributed to citizenship education. The American Political Science Association (APSA), for instance, publishes PS: Political Science & Politics, in many issues of which vigorous discussions are held regarding education for democracy and citizenship; moreover, the APSA’s activities include “lobbying the state legislators, organizing staff development workshops for social studies teachers, making curriculum recommendations, and writing high school textbooks on government” (Ahmad, 2006: 8).

Given that education helps individuals be citizens, what does the recent stress on governance and citizen participation mean to education? What education needs to be provided in the era of governance? The search for answers to such questions, furthermore, entails examining the notion of active citizenship, on which the current citizen participation movement is theoretically based; who should acquire what in order to be active, and how? Relying on arguments over citizenship education, this section theoretically explores the targets, contents and ways of education contributing to meaningful citizen participation. The analysis here reveals that more emphasis has been placed on child and youth education than adult and social education, and more on acquisition of values than knowledge and skills. It is affirmed, then, that active citizen participation require applied knowledge and skills, as well as practical values, of participants; that much stress be placed on educating those who are participating or will soon participate in the policy process, not only young people; and that how to organize basic and applied education for active citizenship be worked out so that citizen participation could be successfully promoted.

3.1 Who Needs to Learn?

Many attempts have been made to design an educational curriculum for citizenship. One sees considerable controversy as to what citizenship education should be provided. The aforementioned contemporary social changes — the arrival of global and multicultural society and the calls for reforming the governance structure — have provoked the problem of what should be taught and learned today through citizenship education. Different researchers in education present different answers to this question. Many of the answers have something in common, however: targets and places of citizenship education.

Research into citizenship education is likely to focus on young people as primary targets of education and to look into how to improve child and youth education to create active citizens. Such focus derives from the recognition that citizenship education is a way to make young people ready for democracy (Biesta & Lawy, 2006: 70, emphasis added). A major goal of citizenship education, to put it differently, is to “develop young people into the kind of citizens required by the norms and ideals of the overarching political community” (Parker, 2001: 6, emphasis added; also vide Ross, 2004).

Related to this common focus on young people as primary targets of citizenship education, moreover, there has been agreement regarding where to conduct citizenship education. Citizenship education usually aims at developing good citizens via school education so that democracy can work (Sano, 2008: 1, emphasis added). Democratic cultures and virtues are promoted through school education, according to Enslin et al. (2001); the family or the market place no
longer work as agencies of citizenship education since they are based on private interests or respect for authority (also vide Gutmann, 1995). Theoretical and empirical research into citizenship education, consequently, tends to look at children and the youth in schools, to search positive relationships among governments, students and schools and to aim at devising effective educational programs.

Biesta and Lawy (2006), for instance, investigate a ubiquitous problem in the United Kingdom: an unwillingness of young people to become active in social and political life. Their theoretical analysis redefines this problem and contends that close attention be paid to contexts where young people live. Lawson (2001) examines what attitudes the government in the United Kingdom has taken toward citizenship and citizenship education; referring to the educational situations in secondary schools, then, surveys are conducted regarding how the government’s intentions might translate into the school contexts. Urging the importance of value development for citizenship in contemporary society, Veugelers (2007) points out that there has been little stress on this in Dutch child and youth education. Parker (2001) reviews the literature on education of the young for citizenship and presents seven policy directions for citizenship education.

In addition to elementary and secondary school students, moreover, there are a number of studies which focus on college and university students and tackle the problem of what contributions colleges and universities could and should make to educate students to be citizens in democracy. Roberts and Eksterowics (1996), for instance, begin with recognizing that the mass media play a significant political role such as informing voters of public affairs and that responsible positions in print and broadcast journalism tend to be assumed by college graduates; it is contended, then, that colleges and universities “have a responsibility to help students understand the nation’s political institutions” (Roberts & Eksterowics, 1996: 71) so that the media could play the expected role (also vide e.g., Rimmerman, 1991; Nishide 2002).

Education for citizenship in childhood and youth is, without doubt, critical for an individual to be a citizen in contemporary society; such education helps an individual learn what to learn. The era of governance, however, requires an individual to play an ever more active role. An “ever more active role” implies that citizens should be ever more educated, in terms of values, knowledge and skills, to meaningfully participate in the political process; and, consequently, that what to learn now might be broader and deeper, if not different, than before.

The educational elements which should be more emphasized today than in the past would include ones which are more suitable to be learned in adulthood. Although there are arguments for children’s and young people’s participation in the policy process (e.g., Mayo, 2001), it is, in many cases, adults who are to play an active role. By educating individuals in childhood and youth, some problems accompanying active participation could be avoided or successfully dealt with. There are many things, however, which should be learned just before and/or while experiencing participation.

It follows that citizenship education should not be restricted to young people. In the era of governance, education of adults for active citizenship is another critical factor responsible for the success of citizen participation. Efforts need to be made, hence, to design an educational system including child/youth and adult/social education which contributes to meaningful citizen participation.

From this viewpoint, activities of a research center in Japan deserve attention: Local Human Resources and Public Policy Development System Open Research Centre (LORC), Ryukoku University. LORC was established in April 2003 with the funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan, as a part of their Open Research Centre Project for Private Universities. One of the primary goals of LORC is to research “on education and training system for human resources who are to shoulder local public policy.” One outcome of its research (Tsuchiyama & Ohyano 2008) is the surveys and evaluations of current educational and training programs for adults in several countries. The programs surveyed include those provided in professional graduate schools (especially graduate schools of public affairs) and those of staff training in local governments; this research suggests other organizations than elementary and secondary schools could contribute to creating active citizens.

The focus of this research, as Tsuchiyama and Ohyano (2008) acknowledge, is placed intensively on “professionals” such as government employees, legislators and NPO staff members. The current citizen participation movement, however, calls for every stakeholder participating in the policy process. It follows, hence, that human resources to be educated and trained include not only professionals but also nonprofessional ordinary individuals. All individuals are expected, in other words, to be active citizens and hence to be educated and trained.

The calls for participation of every individual as an active citizen lead us to recognize that various organizations could contribute to creating active citizens. In addition to elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and graduate schools, agencies which are not primarily categorized as formal educational institutions are expected to play a significant role in education for active citizenship. Education and training provided NPOs, for instance, are of great help for ordinary individuals to acquire many important elements necessary for active citizenship (Sato, 2004).

Given a lot of differences across individuals, that is to say, educating various individuals could be promoted by various educational programs which various agencies offer. What is implied here is that one should transvalue adult and social education. Adult and social education is traditionally considered to support self-development and enrich each individual’s life through him/herself choosing and organizing programs (Fukudome, 2006). In the era of governance, however, adult and social education is much more important to society as a whole. Adult and social education is
expected to create active citizens who are to govern society — in the words of Tanaka (2000), citizens who build civil society. This line of argument, as discussed later, is increasingly emphasizing citizen’s colleges as agencies responsible for adult and social education.

The era of governance, to sum up, demands active citizenship, and any individual is expected to be an active citizen. Education for active citizenship significantly helps an individual learn things necessary for active participation. All individuals — adults as well as young people, and nonprofessional and ordinary individuals as well as professionals — need to receive such education. Various agencies, not only elementary and secondary schools and colleges and universities, contribute to education for active citizenship through providing their own educational and training programs; in this sense, postgraduate education and adult and social education are ever more crucial today. The next and no less important problem is what to learn to be an active citizen.

3.2 What to Learn?

Early in the twentieth century, John Dewey (1916) averred that the ultimate goal of citizenship education be teaching and learning about “associated living” — in Ahmad (2006: 10)’s words, about “human relations in a civil society.” One question arises then: what should be taught and learned in citizenship education? Searching answers to this question leads to inquiry into active citizenship.

French theorists in the eighteenth century, as discussed above, suggested what would characterize active citizenship and what education for active citizenship should aim at. Lanjuinais’ argument about citoyens actifs directs our attention to knowledge, reason and identity. Education for active citizenship is expected to affect these elements of individuals.

Such idea is passed to today’s scholars. Patrick (2003) points out civic knowledge, cognitive civic skills, participatory civic skills and civic dispositions as components of citizenship education (also vide Ahmad, 2006). According to Veugelers (2007), citizens need knowledge, skills and attitudes for their active participation in democracy, and education is required to help citizens acquire these elements.

Turning to government attitudes toward citizenship education, the founders of the United States stressed the role of school education in building society (Branson, 2003). In their view, free society depends on citizens’ knowledge, skills and civic virtue; citizens with needed qualities could be created through school education. This idea was reflected in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. The Crick Report (QCA, 1998) in the United Kingdom affirms that citizenship education be conducted with the emphasis on social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.

There is, thus, agreement on pillars of citizenship education, which might be broadly categorized into two strands: values and dispositions, and knowledge and skills (Ross, 2004). Both strands have been recognized to be indispensable to citizenship education; in response to contemporary social changes, an increasing number of studies are emphasizing the former. This line of studies is likely to recognize traditional citizenship education as too focused on knowledge and skills and as insufficient in contemporary society (e.g., Haste, 2004).

Thoroughly discussing citizenship education in changing society, Veugelers (2007) refers to Durkheim (1925=1961)’s argument about moral behavior. Durkheim stresses, as fundamental characteristics of moral behavior, discipline, attachment to or identification with the group and autonomy, all of which, Veugelers avers, are bases for citizenship and citizenship education. Veugelers illustrates, then, that citizenship education should focus on values development. Values development has been traditionally seen as critical to citizenship; a citizen must think about others, rather than pursue his/her self interest, and, in this sense, citizenship is not consumerism (Farrell, 2000). Veugelers contends, however, that today much more emphasis be placed on values development than before; it is because how to balance tolerance and diversity is a crucial problem in contemporary multicultural society. Such recognition is shared with other researchers in education (e.g., Enslin et al., 2001; Parker, 2001). On the basis of this recognition, what is needed to create citizens governing contemporary society is to link citizenship education field and multicultural education field (Parker, 2001) and to attend more to values such as realizing the importance of keeping society together (Veugelers, 2007).

It is true that changing society is requiring the reemphasis and reexamination on values development. The same holds true, however, for knowledge and skills development. Investigating the current citizenship education in the United Kingdom, Hasumi (2008) sounds the alarm for too much stress on values and democratic dispositions. The search for citizenship in contemporary society, he avers, entails not only looking into abstract principles such as virtues and values; how to equip individuals with basic knowledge and skills, also, needs to be worked out. More than just values and democratic dispositions is necessary for individuals to deal with social problems in contemporary globalized and multicultural society; knowledge about globalization and multiculturalism is indispensable for individuals to be actively involved in policy debate.

It is not only globalization and multiculturalism, however, that have to be taken into account when considering education for active citizenship. There is another important viewpoint: promotion of citizen participation in governance. In the era of governance, individuals play an ever more active role in the policy process and ever more closely collaborate with one another on solving social problems — not restricted to problems that globalization and multiculturalism bring about. If one is to expect individuals to collaboratively govern for the sake of social and collective interests, then much attention must be given to the problems of what values and dispositions are essential to
close collaboration on policy matters and what educational programs are needed to develop such values and dispositions.

In addition to values development, more seriously, the recent calls for governance and citizen participation raise the problem of knowledge and skills development. Different individuals have different interests and ideas. The policy process is described as the clash of interests and ideas; that is, it is characterized by the heterogeneity. In policy debate between heterogeneous individuals, as Yamamoto (2006) states, one sees negotiations, maneuverings and compromises; such policy debate is far from virtue-based politics. The more individuals involved in policy debate, then the more serious this situation. In the era of governance, an ever larger number of individuals are to be involved in policy debate. It follows that the promotion of citizen participation without careful consideration might open up a can of worms: chaotic debate. Those who are to participate in the policy process, hence, need to acquire various skills of policy debate such as managing policy debate, in addition to values and democratic dispositions.

Learning a variety of knowledge on public policy and policy process, as well, is critical to citizen participation in the policy process (Matsuda, 2006b, 2007). Every individual is encouraged today to be actively involved in policy debate whereas this involvement necessitates his/her acquisition of policy knowledge. Can one assume that anyone participating in the policy process has sufficient knowledge to deal with policy problems? If not, then institutional arrangement for citizen participation might not lead to policymaking for the sake of social and collective interests; at worst, citizen participation would make society worse off.

Ordinary individuals’ lack of knowledge can be illustrated in at least three ways (Matsuda, 2007). First, policy problems are too intricate for ordinary individuals to work out. The participation in the policy process requires expertise and technical knowledge of participants in the policy process. If individuals lack such expertise and technical knowledge, hence, it must be extremely arduous for them to play an active role in the policy process. Emphasis on participation in the policy process without considering this point may lead to the deterioration in the quality of public policy.

Various analyses have revealed that the more salient a policy issue to individuals the more interested the individuals in the issue (Krosnick, 1990; Lavine et al., 1996). Ordinary individuals might be more familiar with complicated policy issues if those issues become more salient. Many policy problems, however, would be exceedingly subtle for citizens; even if individuals make every effort to collect and process information on economic policy issues, for instance, they are unlikely to understand the current financial situation and compare financial policy alternatives in terms of social and collective welfare.

Second, new knowledge and information individuals collect would not necessarily improve their understandings about the issues. As the theory of cognitive dissonance stresses (Festinger, 1957), individuals are likely to select and interpret information so that their original opinions could be strengthened. Such biased information collection and interpretation are considered to prevent citizens from learning about policy issues.

Finally, there is likely to be the disagreement between each individual’s preferences and social and collective welfare. In situations described as prisoner’s dilemma and assurance games, for instance, the interaction between individuals — even if they are “rational” — may result in a Pareto-inefficient outcome.

These three problems with individuals’ knowledge illuminate that successful citizen participation depends largely on provision of knowledge for individuals. As to the first problem, individuals involved in policy debate need to have minimum knowledge to understand policy issues and demonstrate their rough ideas. The third problem could be dealt with to some extent by letting individuals know the structure of social problem or the payoff matrix in game theoretical terms (Matsuda, 2007, 2008b). How to work out the second problem of biased information processing needs to be considered through attending to a way to supply individuals with knowledge. Taking account of an individual’s original opinion about a policy issue would be the first step toward his/her knowledge utilization.

Let us turn to NPOs, which are now expected to represent citizens’ interests and be actively involved in the policy process. The findings of a survey of Japanese NPOs (Tsuji, 2004) reveal that the NPOs recognize their staff members as being eager to improve society with a sense of mission. According to the survey, at the same time, those NPOs acknowledge their staff members to lack abilities of management and coordination and creativity; and the NPOs also place much emphasis on negotiating skills with governments and ability to undertake a public project. What the survey findings imply, hence, is that knowledge and skills are today indispensable for any actor to play an active role in the policy process.

It should be noted, moreover, that such knowledge and skills might be difficult to be acquired in regular school education. Basic knowledge and skills regarding management, coordination and negotiation with others could be learned in elementary and secondary education. The utilization of such knowledge and skills in the policy process, however, would be facilitated if educational and training programs are provided for those who are participating or will soon participate in the policy process. Citizenship education in the era of governance or education for active citizenship, in this sense, should be targeted not only at young people; adults also need to be educated to be active citizens with sufficient knowledge and skills acquired.

This educational role could be undertaken by graduate schools, especially professional graduate schools of public affairs. According to a comparative investigation into professional graduate school curricula in the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan (Tsuchiyama & Ohyano, 2008), they are common in that emphasis is placed on both values development and knowledge and skills development. The eight surveyed graduate schools in Japan, for instance, aim at
equipping graduate students with policy formulation and evaluation capabilities, developing democratic values in them, and giving them a global perspective. Individuals would easily learn such values, dispositions, knowledge and skills just before and/or at the time of participation in the policy process, which is much easier if they have already been educated for citizenship in elementary and secondary schools.

To those who have difficulty in going to graduate school, citizen’s colleges are of great help. Collaborating with higher education institutions, citizen’s colleges offer a variety of specialized courses (Fukudome, 2006). Knowledge and skills presented in such courses support individuals when they are involved in the policy process.

In addition to graduate schools and citizen’s colleges, moreover, NPOs are contributing to individuals’ development of values, dispositions, knowledge and skills. Some NPOs provide their staff members with learning opportunities—e.g., conducting workshops and allowing the members to go for training—so that the staff’s ability could be improved (Tsuiji, 2004).

The promotion of citizen participation must entail citizens acquiring more and new knowledge and skills. NPOs in contemporary society, as Takahashi (2004) states, can be seen as a place where, through participating in NPO activities, individuals learn new knowledge and skills for democracy. Given the recent argument that participation itself could lead to citizen development (e.g., Haste, 2004; Rimmerman, 1991; Parker, 2001), as discussed later, NPOs’ roles in citizenship education are crucial for meaningful citizen participation today.

In the era of governance, hence, agencies such as graduate schools, citizen’s colleges and NPOs need to be recognized as significantly contributing to education for active citizenship. Those agencies could help individuals develop practical values and applied knowledge and skills, all of which are indispensable for active citizen participation.

3.3 Summary: How to Learn?

In the era of governance, individuals are expected to be actively involved in the policy process. The promotion of citizen participation in the policy process necessitates citizen development; educating individuals to be active citizens is critical to citizen participation. The analysis in this paper on who needs to learn and what to learn suggests that citizenship education in the era of governance consists of two components: basic and applied education for active citizenship. The former is provided primarily by elementary and secondary schools; young people learn basic values, knowledge and skills. Education for active citizenship, however, is provided not only by elementary and secondary schools. Agencies other than elementary and secondary schools, including graduate schools, citizen’s colleges and NPOs, should undertake a crucial educational role in contemporary society: provision of applied education for active citizenship. Through applied education, those who are participating or will soon participate in the policy process could learn how to deal with policy problems and how to collaborate with others in the policy process.

Education for active citizenship, consequently, should be provided by various educational agencies. Different agencies can make different contributions to it. Given possible educational shortcomings in each agency, agencies need to complement one another. Despite the importance of graduate schools for promoting active citizen participation, for instance, the demand for postgraduate education for public affairs is weak in Japan (Tsuchiyama & Ohyano, 2008). Those who want to receive postgraduate education have to satisfy strict conditions for admission: e.g., finance, time and educational backgrounds. If they can’t satisfy the conditions, are they forced to give up postgraduate education?

In this situation, citizen’s colleges are expected to meet those individuals’ needs. Any individual is admitted to a citizen’s college with few conditions; he/she can make a learning program for him/herself and take a variety of specialized courses. The aforementioned educational and training programs sponsored by NPOs also help individuals be educated to be active citizens.

It should be noted here that there may be inequality of opportunity or resources for education, especially applied education, for active citizenship. If one is to design an educational system to promote active citizen participation, how to give equal learning opportunities to all individuals has to be looked into.

There is, moreover, a problem concerning the heterogeneity of individuals (Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Haste, 2004; Hasumi, 2008; Parker, 2001). Whether to be educated and trained or not depends not only on opportunities available to individuals. The willingness/unwillingness of individuals to actively participate, as well, significantly affects the development of values, knowledge and skills. Such willingness/unwillingness might be partly determined by social and religious groups to which individuals belong and by cultural and historical contexts in which they live. When designing an educational system to utilize characteristics of each educational agency, hence, an essential problem is that of to what extent to take account of such individual peculiarities.

Related to this problem, it is important to education for active citizenship that different agencies are good at different educational contents. According to Tsuchiyama & Ohyano (2008), for instance, graduate schools in the United States and the United Kingdom tend to focus too much on technical knowledge and skills whereas the development of democratic values is likely to be given less attention. This shortcoming could be overcome by other agencies such as NPOs.

Takahashi (2004) emphasizes NPOs as helping individuals developing new values and new knowledge. Individuals, no longer united by territorial and blood ties in contemporary society, are necessitated to collaborate with others to solve social problems. Such collaboration depends on confidence-building among individuals. NPOs could significantly
contribute to the confidence-building, in the process of which participants in NPO activities learn new and practical values and knowledge necessary for actively governing society.

This contribution of NPOs is increasingly being recognized as essential not only to adult and social education (applied education for active citizenship) but also to child and youth education (basic education for active citizenship). NPOs are now expected to help child and youth education, as well as adult and social education (Hiratsuka, 2004; Yoshida, 2004).

The learning of practical values, knowledge and skills through participation has been attracted much attention (e.g., Haste, 2004; Rimmerman, 1991; Parker, 2001). Emphasis has been placed, of particular, on NPO and community activities which supplement school education; students are taught basic values, knowledge and skills at school whereas they learn more practical values, knowledge and skills through participating in NPO and community activities.

The participation in those activities is seen as important to education for active citizenship, especially to knowledge development (Takahashi, 2004). First, knowledge on rules and institutions obtained by being taught is different from that obtained from administering the rules and institutions; both are indispensable to active citizenship. Second, the experience of collaborating with others entails facing a variety of knowledge, which is part of practical and applied knowledge.

As long as one is to promote participation of any citizen in the policy process, to sum up, any participant must be an active citizen. In the governance structure in which citizens play an ever more active role, it is essential that values, knowledge and skills — both basic and practical/applied — be developed. What is suggested here is that education for active citizenship, a way of this development, be provided for not only young people, but also adults who are participating or will soon participate in the policy process; in this sense, both child/youth education and adult/social education are important. Due to the heterogeneity and diversity of individuals, and given that a wide range of knowledge is necessary for active citizen participation, moreover, education for active citizenship should be provided by various agencies in various ways. An educational system for active citizenship, consequently, needs to be designed on the basis of the recognition that the system should contain child, youth, postgraduate and adult/social education programs; and that the system should utilize characteristics of diverse agencies such as elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, graduate schools, NPOs and citizen’s colleges. Without such a citizen development system, active citizen participation would be hardly possible to be successfully promoted.


Nowadays, much stress is placed on “governance”; many actors are expected to collaborate with one another to deal with social problems. Those actors contain citizens. Citizens’ role in governing society is now seen as ever more active and significant; active citizen participation is being promoted. If an individual is to actively participate in the policy process, however, he/she has to be qualified for and capable of doing it; to put it differently, active citizenship is necessary. Otherwise, active citizen participation might result in the deterioration in the quality of public policy. This necessary condition for citizen participation was pointed out as early as the time of the French Revolution. Given that sophistication is needed to political participation, Sieyès affirmed that the right of participation be granted only to citoyens actifs, not all citizens. Although this idea is almost unacceptable in the current governance movement, the anxiety Sieyès felt persists even after more than two centuries have passed. Does anyone successfully participate in the policy process? In other words, does anyone satisfy the conditions for active citizenship today?

Active citizenship could not be easily assumed in contemporary society, the same as in the 18th century. Just as Condorcet insisted on education for creating citoyens actifs, so this paper avers that education for active citizenship significantly contribute to citizens being active. This paper theoretically demonstrates that education for active citizenship should be provided by diverse agencies; and that through such education any individual, both young and adult, needs to learn basic and practical values, knowledge and skills.

The emphasis of this paper on citizen development derives basically from the presumption that the contemporary goal of active citizen participation goes beyond the policy process in which citizens participate. Citizen participation can be seen as a way to get satisfactory policy formulated and implemented. Crucial to accomplish this ultimate goal of citizen participation is citizen development through education. In the era of governance, consequently, the roles of citizens are not limited to participating in the policy process; they are expected also to acquire values, knowledge and skills necessary for their active participation.

It is not only citizens, however, who hold the key to active citizen participation. Policymakers including politicians and bureaucrats, who have been primary actors in the policy process, are being forced to adapt to the change in the process — viz., active citizen participation. Policymakers are likely to formulate public policy through assuming “the citizen’s interest.” In a citizen participation mechanism, however, they are necessitated to face “diverse citizens’ interests” and search for common ground in policy debate. It is implied here that policymakers, as well as citizens, need to develop so that they could collaborate with citizens to govern society. This development, then, would be facilitated by various educational and training programs such as government staff training programs and workshops for policymakers.

Active citizen participation, moreover, demands a lot of scholars in various study fields. Scholars or policy experts are now attracting attention in that they could help citizens be involved in the policy process (Akiyoshi, 2003,
2004; Matsuda, 2006b, 2007, 2008a, 2008b). They are expected, for instance, to play a role as “translator”; they translate citizens’ words into technical terms relevant for policy formulation, implementation and evaluation whereas they translate technical terms into plain languages for citizens. If scholars or policy experts are to successfully undertake this role, one future study on citizen participation must be to look into a way of such translation.

More important, academic contributions are indispensable to designing an educational system for active citizenship. This paper avers that the design of citizen participation mechanism entail that of educational system for active citizenship, and highlights what to take into account in the latter design: targets, contents and agencies of education for active citizenship. The next step is to be engaged in this design, which is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary project (Rimmerman, 1991; Porter & Venning, 1984).6

What system of education for active citizenship should be established depends primarily on the definition of active citizen participation; prior to designing an educational system, various questions about democracy and citizen participation have to be examined. What should “active citizen participation” be like? Specifically, who should be a citizen, and what role should each citizen undertake? After working out these questions, one may attend to the problem of what each citizen should learn. Answers to such questions cannot be found without multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Political scientists, for instance, could contribute to this task by philosophically and normatively studying democracy and citizenship. Given that individuals are engaged in not only political but also economic and other activities, scholars in other social sciences such as economics and sociology are expected to play a significant role in searching for answers.

More than just philosophical and normative inquiry into democracy and citizenship is needed for designing an educational system for active citizenship. Active citizen participation needs to be so effectively defined that a citizen participation mechanism could work. Empirical research into human beings, hence, is no less important. For instance, what can each citizen do for democracy to work? Just as philosophical and normative questions could be tackled in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary manner, so empirical research should be based on findings from multiple study fields: e.g., political science, sociology, psychology and economics.

In addition to such philosophical, normative and empirical studies on democracy and citizenship, moreover, research into education is critical to design an educational system for active citizenship. Based on philosophical, normative and empirical knowledge on citizens’ role, theoretical and empirical analyses need to be conducted on the problem of what citizens can learn. Attention should be paid also to what teachers and educational agencies can do for educating citizens. To searching for answers to such questions, could researchers in education, psychology and linguistics significantly contribute.

Nowadays strong emphasis has been placed on governance and citizen participation. The promotion of citizen participation needs to entail thorough consideration on citizen development, however, unless an individual were inherently citoyens actifs. Designing a citizen participation mechanism accompanied with citizen development programs (educational programs for active citizenship), as this paper illuminates, is an arduous task. This task involves not only new participants in the policy process, viz., so-called ordinary citizens. Policymakers also have to adapt to the changing political process. Scholars in various study fields, as well, are required to academically and practically contribute to designing and facilitating citizen participation. Citizen participation in the policy process, nevertheless, sounds nice to many people and thus might be promoted without careful consideration. This paper is intended to warn against such promotion and to be a starting point for defining “citizen in the era of governance” and for establishing an effective citizen participation mechanism accompanied with an educational system.

Notes
1 For thorough analysis on citizenship, vide e.g., Beiner (1995), Heater (1999) and van Steenbergen (1994a).
2 Depending on categorization criteria, theories of citizenship could be classified differently. Delanty (2005), for instance, groups those theories into four discourses: right discourse of liberal theory, classical and modern republican theory, communitarianism, and radical pluralism.
3 This paper discusses only globalization and multiculturalism as contemporary social changes influencing citizenship. Citizenship has been challenged, however, by other movements such as feminism (Lister, 2003).
4 The republican/communitarian interpretation of citizenship in the Crick Report, according to Hasumi (2008), appears in published work by Bernard Crick, chairman of the Advisory Group.
5 The other goals of LORC’s research are to design participatory/partnership-style public policy development system, to devise the social accreditation of policy/human resources development system, and to make a policy proposal for public policy and human resources development in Japan and the developing world. For the details vide LORC’s website (http://lorc.ryukoku.ac.jp/index.html).
6 Strictly speaking, “multidisciplinary” research and “interdisciplinary” research have different meanings (National Academy of Sciences et al., 2005). This paper, on the other hand, uses these words to simply state research in which scholars in various study fields collaborate and diverse areas of knowledge and study are utilized.
REFERENCES


