

Combination Participatory Backcasting and Sustainability Transitions Study - A Case Study of "Future Fortunate Dining" Workshop

*KAZUHIKO OTA¹, Motoki Akitsu², Yoshimitsu Taniguchi³, Mari Nakamura⁴, Steven Robert McGreevy¹, Hiraku Kumagai²

1. Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, 2. Kyoto University, 3. Akita Prefectural University, 4. Nagoya Bunri University

The following may be mentioned as typical problems arising in deepening the involvement of local governments in policy aspects of sustainable development: setting short-term goals and not fulfilling their objectives sufficiently (Bulkeley and Broto, 2012). Factors such as division of policies and projects (eg, sectionismism) and discontinuous commitment (eg election) (Maas et al., 2012). For solve these problems, attention is focused on participatory governance, that is, transform from a top-down model to a bottom-up model through exchanging views of society's diverse stakeholders and forming consensus (Aylett, 2011). Among them, Transdisciplinary (TD) has been proposed as an effective approach to cope with sustainability issues in cooperation with society (Lang 2012, Scholz and Steiner, 2015).

As a success factor of TD research in Japan, common understanding of identifying stakeholders and continuing problems and financial problems after the project is pointed out (Mori 2014b). This report focuses on the effectiveness of participatory backcasting as a method for sharing and developing problem consciousness and outcomes between researchers and stakeholders. At the same time, we clarify the necessity of participatory backcasting and research on "Transformation to sustainable social system" in science and technology sociology. In addition, as a concrete example of participatory backcasting, a practical case of workshop for transition of agrifood system on the theme of "Future Fortunate Dining in 30 years from now" in Noshiro city, Akita prefecture will be introduced.

Participatory backcasting has been used in the Dutch government program since the early 1990s, due to the need for a wide range of stakeholders to participate to achieve the long-term goal of sustainability (Vergragt et al. 1993, Quist et al. 2001). The purpose of the implementation is to (1) analyze the adequacy and feasibility of the desired future goals and (2) encourage practice and policy making for that.

Researchers and stakeholders participate in two stages of creation and evaluation of this future image (Carlsson-Kanayama et al. 2008). Participatory backcasting requires not only problem consciousness and sharing of predicted images, but also images that can be accepted by researchers and stakeholders (Vergragt, 1993). Also, it is important to mutually confirm the manageable / inmanageable aspects in realizing the image in the future. It is pointed out that mutual confirmation is necessary among researchers in different fields, too (Mori 2014a).

Measures promoted through participatory backcasting will focus on the aspects that can be managed at the present time (or by constructing mechanisms). However, with respect to the aspect considered as management impossible, sharing of knowledge about future ways of change and related factors becomes important in promoting common recognition about continuation after finishing the program and fiscal. Consequently, confirmation of STS research accumulation (Geels & Schot 2007, Wiek et al. 2011) is expected to bring much contribution to TD by concurrent with participatory backcasting practice. As a concrete example based on the above viewpoint, we introduce three workshop practices for transition of the agrifood system on the theme of "Future Fortunate Dining in 30 years from now" held in Noshiro city, Akita prefecture in 2016. The theme of the workshop are "What kind of dining table surrounded by Noshiro in thirty years?" and "What must we do now to realize that?" Eleven participants had the sketch of "Future Fortunate Dining" respectively, and exchanged views for realization. Regarding the accumulation of research on STS related to "Sustainability Transition", it is planned to supplement it by consecutive

contributions in local newspapers.

Participating backcasting with local governments is particularly important in the context of Japan where a strong civil society that affects national policies like the EU does not yet exist .

Keywords: Transdisciplinary, Participatory backcasting, Sustainability Transitions, Sustainable Food Consumption and Production