

# Attempts and Challenges of Evidence-Based Policy Making in Japan

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# 1-1. Background

## *additional function of e-Government*

- New trends in technologies and policies are giving additional values and potentials to the quest for efficient government.
- *E-government*: An old and new example
  - Basic Act on the Formation of an Advanced Information and Telecommunications Network Society (2001)
  - e-Japan Strategy, e-Japan Strategy II and New IT Reform Strategy aiming to stimulate usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in public sectors.
- E-government is prospective not only in improving government-society relationship, but also achieving efficient policy making by gathering data efficiently.

# 1-1. Background

## *EBPM and data accumulation*

- *Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM)* is a different concept from *e-Government* and has developed and evolved in independent manners.

*However,*

- Realization of e-government make it easier for the government to accumulate data on administrative process at work, public satisfaction with the services, and so on, which could be a strong base of EBPM.
- Meanwhile, EBPM is sharing the common goal with e-government: Both aim to achieve higher transparency and accountability of the government.

# 1-2. Research Question

- Although tightly related, EBPM was separately argued and left behind the counterpart.
  - The term EBPM appears for the first time in the 2017 edition of Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform (*Honebuto no hōshin*), which is the basic policies for economic and fiscal management published every year.
- How have EBPM attempts made in Japan and what are the challenges of EBPM introduction in Japan?
  - Special attentions are paid to whether and how EBPM practices are different between central and local levels and considers the challenges for both types of governments.

## 2. Literature Review

- Utilization of academic research
  - They are often referred under the names of research utilization or knowledge utilization, and the observed gap between academics and practices is sometimes explained by the “two communities” framework (Newman et al. 2016).
- But academic research is not the only sources of evidence the government utilize.
  - Kay (2011) four modes of rationality that EBPM practices base according to the degree of ambiguity/conflict over goals and the degree of uncertainty over process.
  - “Policy-Based Evidence Making” as a critic?

## 2. Literature Review

- Typology of evidence/perspective especially relevant in the modern era (Head 2008) :
  - systematic research ('scientific'), program management experience ('practice'), and political judgement.
  - Lee (2015) effectively use the three lenses to study the development of wind industry in UK and Spain.
- “In most countries empirical data on just about every aspect of the actual policy analytical practices followed by bureaucratic policy analysts in government are lacking” (Howlett and Newman 2010)
- Data *gathering* practices are much less explored.

# 3. EBPM and Data Utilization in Japan

## 3.1 EBPM Initiatives at Central Level

- *Initiatives:* 2017 Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform (Honebuto no hōshin),
- Characteristic of the initiative on the central government level: Administrative and statistical reforms were discussed together.
  - e.g.1. Prior to the Honebu to no hōshin of 2017, the Cabinet Secretariat organized a “Study Group on the Economic Statistical Challenges for Meeting EBPM Needs” in October–December 2016. ->Basic Policies for Statistical Reform.
- *Development and utilization of government statistics make up a crucial element in EBPM promotion in Japan.*

## 3. EBPM and Data Utilization in Japan

### 3.1 EBPM Initiatives at Central Level

- *Viewpoints in Trial Inspections in November 2017*
- Three “Model Projects” were selected for the trial inspections.
  - One of the comments: “It is essential to record, preserve, and make publicly available information that enables the checking of the basis for decisions on assumptions and operational choices. Moreover, [...] it is necessary to first consider what should be gathered and design a project that sufficiently facilitates the collection.”
- *EBPM in the central government is characterized by questions about how to accumulate and utilize data inside the government, as a prerequisite of EBPM.*



# 3. EBPM and Data Utilization in Japan

## 3.2 EBPM Initiatives at Local Level

- *Chiba City*: initiatives promoted under the banner of open government
  - actively working to introduce EBPM into their policies.
  - in 2014, Chiba's department in charge of public relations started a report system called Chiba Report System, which is an initiative similar to Fix My Street from Britain, where citizens can report trouble with public facilities online.
  - The System was constructed not only for public relations: In addition to existing citizen reports, they will use images taken with in-vehicle smartphones to check road conditions.
- *EBPM at local level aims to gather data from citizens' everyday activities and apply it for work purposes.*

# 3. EBPM and Data Utilization in Japan

## 3.2 EBPM Initiatives at Local Level

- *Osaka City*: led by ICT Strategy Office established under Mayor Toru Hashimoto's leadership
  - worked together with several partners, analyzed driving data from the partners' cars, and identified locations in the city with high accident risks on a "near-miss map."
  - Developed a mobile application on their own to make it easier for foreigners to communicate with the fire department.
- *Their context that pays attention to interfaces for exchanges between society and information can be an effective resource for pioneering EBPM.*

# 4. Analysis of the Challenges

## 4.1 Two Separate Spheres

	Central	Local
<i>(Internal: within the government)</i>		
1.Integrating and accumulating administrative information	X	X(Osaka)
2.Improving policy formation process	X	
<i>(External: with the society)</i>		
1.Collecting information from society		X
2.Disseminating information in Society		X

The central government is concerned with integrating and accumulating information held by the authorities as well as improving the policy formation process. By contrast, at the regional level, the concern is how to collect and utilize information from the citizens<sup>11</sup>

# 4. Analysis of the Challenges

## 4.1 Two Separate Spheres

- Just reflecting the distance between government authority and citizens/society?
- The separation of the spheres is especially striking in Japan on the level of “perception”.
  - Central Level: Despite the existence of offices inside the Cabinet Secretariat, which could engage in social information collection and utilization similar to that seen in local governments, there has been very little in the EBPM debate so far touching on the possibility of such data utilization.
    - > Narrowly defined possible data sources for EBPM
  - Local Level: It is rarely treated as a resource for “policy formation.”
    - > Low awareness of operation department

## 4.1 Analysis of the Challenges

### 4.2 Lack of Connection with Policy Management

- Something seem to be missing from *both*: connections with concrete administrative policy management.
- Both levels of the governments have plenty of opportunities to obtain information within existing policies as well as incentivize citizens to supply information, but they have not made the most of them.
  - National ID system is not used effectively for administrative management or EBPM.
  - Information useful for policy formation at local level is accumulated through everyday operations, while citizens the large amount of paperwork is not replaced by ICT so far.

# 5. Conclusion

- We presented examples of EBPM initiatives that make up the beginnings of such efforts in Japan, and looked at both the central government and the regional government levels.
- Data utilization in EBPM and administration in Japan has come to be divided into two spheres. These interests align with the differences between central and regional government.
- What is needed for the governments in Japan to integrate the directions pursued by each one, while there is also a need for them to give more thought to the data collected during policy management as well as the opportunities for further incentivizing citizens to supply information.