

# Citizen's Participation on River Improvement Project in an Urban Area

## -A Case Study of the "Hori-Kawa Water-Front Environment Improvement Project" in Kyoto City-

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### 1. Background and Purpose

Recently, the importance of citizen's participation in public works has been realized especially in urban areas. One of the projects in these areas that necessitate citizen's participation is the river management project. The promotion of such concept in this kind of project became more apparent after the amendment of the River Law and institutionalization of citizen's participation in 1997. Due to these, issues about and related to "Silent Majority" have also been raised. However, there seems to be little speculation about the characteristics of the Silent Majority. This study provides identification of the needs of the Silent Majority and how to address such issues, stratification of the citizen's participation process, and analysis of each citizen's characteristics based on the "Hori-Kawa Water-Front Environment Project" in Kyoto City. Citizen's participation was mainly conducted through workshop and survey questionnaire, among others at the project.

### 2. Methods

Interviews with the River Division and a citizen in the watershed area were used in the stratification of the citizen's participation process. In addition, questionnaires were distributed (distribution number: 2026, collection rate: 19.1%, response rate: 56.5%) and the responses were used in the specification of the number for each stratum. Cross tabulation was also used in the analysis of the relationship between each stratum and variety of their consciousness or attributes.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### (1) Identification of the need to countermeasure against Silent Majority

The statistical test showed that there was no significant difference between the participants and non-participants in terms of satisfaction level with the improved river. It also revealed that non-participants do not intend to participate in the current river management activities. These results suggest that the needs to address issues on Silent Majority clarified in terms of promoting citizens management activities on the improved river, although it is not necessarily needed in terms of satisfaction level.

#### (2) Stratification of the citizens participation process

Figure 1 shows the results of stratification of the citizen's participation and the number of respondents in each stratum. More than 50% of the citizen have no knowledge about the project and are not aware of the workshops, hence they are classified as the Silent Majority. On the other hand, 95% of the citizens who knew the project were interested in the project itself. This suggests that there is a need to further improve the dissemination process about the project. Furthermore, because most of the participants did not participate in the workshop but were able to get involved in other activities (e.g. questionnaire survey), different forms of activities or combinations of these endeavors could be efficient in citizen's participation.

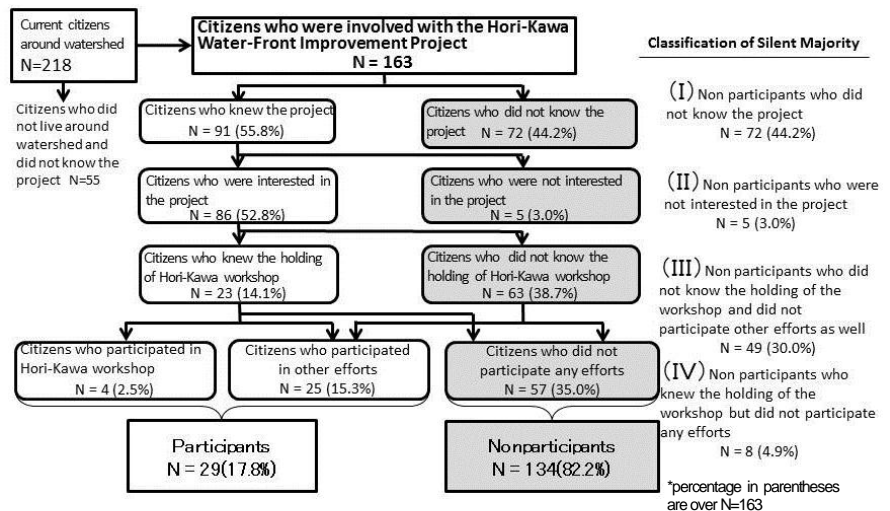


Figure-1 Stratification of the citizens participation process

#### (3) Analysis of each citizen's characteristics

Silent Majority who are age 10-19, 30-39 and 40-49, whose residence year under 20 years, and who do not get municipal information through association meetings or via notification board in the community are more likely not to have knowledge about the project itself. However, the will of the Silent Majority to participate was somehow confirmed because 44% of them replied that they want to participate in future activities that require citizen's participation. They have also enlisted some comments about the current river management project and provided several suggestions on how to better improve the implementation of the citizen's participation process.