

"The Interaction between State and Civil Society over Divisive Facilities:
A Cross National Comparison"

by

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Abstract

One of the most vexing problems for governments is building controversial facilities that serve the needs of all citizens but have adverse consequences for host communities. Japanese residents often refer to these projects as "meiwaku shisetsu." Policymakers must decide not only where to locate such often unwanted projects, but also what methods to use when interacting with opposition groups. For my book *Site Fights*, I gathered quantitative evidence from close to 500 municipalities across Japan to show that planners deliberately seek out acquiescent and unorganized communities for such facilities in order to minimize conflict.

When protests arise over nuclear power plants, dams, and airports, agencies regularly rely on the coercive powers of the modern state, such as land expropriation and police repression. Only under pressure from civil society do policy makers move toward financial incentives and public relations campaigns. Through fieldwork and interviews with bureaucrats and activists, I illustrate these dynamics with case studies from Japan, France, and the United States