

Conflicts over Concentration and Dispersion of Costs

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the concentration and dispersion of costs caused by locally unwanted facilities through the investigation of conflicts concerning a plastic waste recycling facility in Machida city. To clarify the problematic structure of locally unwanted facilities, the relationship between one facility siting case and another has to be considered.

From this perspective, I classified conflicts in the siting of locally unwanted facilities into two types. One is "cost sharing siting", and the other is "cost overlapping siting". When a facility is constructed according to the concept of sharing the burden which has been concentrated in another area, the siting is an example of "cost sharing siting". By contrast, when a facility is constructed in the same place where the cost of nuisance facilities has already been concentrated, the siting is an example of "cost overlapping siting".

In "cost sharing siting", the construction of the facility has the purpose of achieving "fairness of distribution". Therefore, those who are opposed to the construction, tend to focus on the unfair siting procedure of public officials. On the other hand, in the case of "cost overlapping siting", "fairness of distribution" can provide people with reasons to oppose the project.

Through the research of conflicts in Machida city, the characteristics of the two types of conflicts were considered. In Machida city, the cost of waste disposal has been concentrated in one part of the city, Oyamada, for a long time. In addition, the Machida city government planned to construct a plastic waste recycling facility in Oyamada. This case is thought to be one of "cost overlapping siting".

The Machida government tried to justify the plan by "risk substitution", arguing that the new facility would alleviate environmental risk in the local surroundings because plastic recycling would reduce dioxin emissions from the incinerator operating in Oyamada. But residents in Oyamada were strongly opposed to this plan and declared that the burden of waste disposal should be shared with other areas in Machida city. After this, the Machida government decided to construct the facility in a southern part of the city, Tsuruma, in the interests of the fair distribution of burden. But residents in Tsuruma also rejected the facility siting, complaining that they had suffered from air pollution caused by waste disposal facilities in an adjacent city. After the failure in Tsuruma, the Machida government tried to construct the facility in another area, Oyamagaoka. However, it failed again to reach consensus with local residents.

In "cost sharing siting", there is a trade-off relationship between one area which has suffered from the burden and another area which is asked to share the burden with the former. This trade-off often gives rise to conflicts between the two areas. However, in the case of Machida, no conflict occurred between three areas. On the contrary, opposition movements in the three areas supported one another. One of the reasons why conflicts did not happen is that the opposition movements in Oyamada tried to find a comprehensive solution to the waste problem including not only plastic recycling, but also incinerators and landfills in Oyamada. Their aim lay in changing the fundamental waste disposal policy in Machida city. Another reason is that the siting procedure of the Machida government was regarded as unfair and undemocratic by residents in all the three areas. This enabled the three areas to unite against the Machida government.