

Diversified Background of the “Anti-nuclear Movement” After the Fukushima Accident:
Results of a Nation-wide Survey of Civic Groups in Japan

Takashi Machimura
Keiichi Satoh
Tomoyuki Tatsumi
Reeya Komoda
JiYoung Kim
Sunmee Kim
Ui-chi Tan

After the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in 2011, Japan witnessed a sudden upsurge in anti-nuclear social movements and various types of civic activities related to nuclear accidents and nuclear energy issues. These social movements and civic activities included mass demonstrations calling for the shutdown of the nuclear power plants, support for evacuees in the disaster-stricken area, gauging radioactive substances by themselves, and many other activities. Although many individual cases of such activities were reported, almost no research has been done before on who was the agent behind the movements and how the movements and activities as a whole have progressed geographically and chronologically in Japan. In order to give a broad picture of the movements, we conducted a nation-wide survey during February and March 2013 of various types of civic groups that were active on the above nuclear-related issues. We received responses from 326 out of 904 groups (response rate: 36.1%). We also interviewed different types of civic groups country-wide. From these studies, we found that, first, the so-called “anti-nuclear social movements” consist of diverse types of groups and organizations. Second, there are cleavages among those groups and organizations based on their activities and their attitudes towards anti-nuclear issues, based on the year of their foundation, the location of the office (the distance from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant), the attributes of their members, and the organizational culture. In spite of these differences, some tactics such as setting priorities on particular issues they could agree upon and avoiding contentious topics made it possible for those organizations to keep their integrity as “a movement” to some extent. In sum, the coexistence of the different groups and organizations linked the broad range of nuclear-related issues in a relatively new way. This new linkage provided the more diversified background for the activities, which enabled the movements to continue to sustain themselves energetically nation-wide.