

Broadbent's *Environmental Politics in Japan*

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Broadbent, Jeffrey. 1998. *Environmental Politics in Japan: Networks of Power and Protest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This book raises an interesting question: How can an industrial society such as Japan undergo rapid economic growth and reduce industrial pollution at the same time? This is, in Broadbent's words, the "Growth-Environment" dilemma that faces all industrial societies. The Japanese underwent an economic miracle after World War II that found them becoming very successful as an industrial nation in the 1960s while at the same time creating severe air and water pollution. The Japanese economic miracle was followed by something of a pollution reduction miracle in the 1970s as Japan managed to reduce many major pollutants at a faster rate than other industrialized countries including the United States.

The Japanese managed to reduce pollution despite facing a number of social dilemmas that made social change difficult. For instance, Japanese society is very hierarchical with a great deal of deference to leaders and yet some of these leaders had to be opposed to stop pollution. Japanese religions such as Shintoism revere nature and yet the natural world of Japan was being sacrificed for rapid industrialization. The Japanese are very locally oriented and the Japanese failed to establish national environmental groups, yet large international businesses were persuaded to change course.

Jeffrey Broadbent manages to explain the resolution of these dilemmas that confronted the Japanese environmental movement by drawing on a number of academic literatures. Many commentators have emphasized how the cooperativeness and willingness to follow orders of the team oriented Japanese labor force has led to the great success of Japanese multinational organizations. By contrast, Broadbent provides insights into how the Japanese environmentalists were capable of generating a great deal of resistance to the economic and political status quo supported by political and business elites who were bent on continuous industrial expansion at the expense of environmental values. In explaining the grass-roots resistance that was generated, Broadbent shows a sweeping knowledge of the social movement literature by comparing hypotheses generated from a number of perspectives. A student of social movements would learn a great deal by considering how he tests a number of competing hypotheses from these perspectives, rejecting some and supporting others. At the same time, he provides insights into how social movements, such as environment movements, operate at the grass-roots level in Japan, and he constantly contrasts the operation of the grass-roots environmental movement in Japan with the United States.

Broadbent's methods in testing hypotheses are not those of the typical quantitative network researcher. There are no network diagrams in the book, and there are no heroic attempts to interpret the results of a structural equivalence printout. Rather the study is a painstaking recreation of the history of a series of events in a eight villages along the coast of Japan. The author is uniquely qualified to write about events in these villages because he lived in several of these villages for 30 months and then spent 14 years working on this book.

The care and effort taken by Broadbent is readily apparent. He doesn't present one case study of a village; he studies eight villages under contrasting circumstances. Some villages supported industrial growth even though the resulting pollution would destroy the local fishing industry and beaches. Other villages were opposed. The differing strategies of actors acting within slightly different social circumstances contained within an overarching similar cultural and political context allow Broadbent to look at variation in variables that lead to social resistance or support of industrial growth. By focusing on these villages Broadbent can develop rich, nuanced details of events, but, at the same time, he also steps back from the village to examine the regional prefectural politics and national politics.

This comparison of village, prefecture, and national forces leads to an elegant model of how political struggles in Japan take place. Broadbent shows how the "triple control machine" of the Liberal Democratic Party, the prefectural government, and big business exert control through patronage and personal persuasion, or what he calls "soft control", through networks of personal contacts. At the same time, this machine is not perfect; not all government actors are in favor of unregulated economic growth, and political patronage relations are weaker among the younger post-war generation of Japanese who are more willing to oppose authorities.

The ultimate outcome of resistance to the machine is not dissimilar from attempts by environmentalists to alter development in other Western democracies. In many industrialized countries, local people become upset at industrial polluters, win concessions from business, but business later continues its development agenda, albeit with cleaner technologies. However, Broadbent is constantly reminding the reader that even though the economic problems of development are similar, the social and political rules of Japan are different. Japan is a hierarchical society in which people are well-aware of their social rank. In this stable order face-saving is very important. Thus officials would say that they were going to change their development plans to not offend protesters, but would not actually change anything. "Consensus" is also very important in deciding social issues in Japan. Consensus in the Western sense would mean that contrasting views are expressed in a political arena and participants reach an agreement. In Japan, consensus for government officials was defined as the "non-expression of protest" by the opposition (p. 304). Thus, from the government's point of view, consensus would be achieved if the government presented plans for development and protests quieted down.

Broadbent's answer to how the Japanese could produce a "pollution miracle" after producing a post-war economic miracle is that the Japanese responded to pollution because of its social intensity in terms of number of people affected rather than pollution intensity in terms of quantity of pollution. Their response did take place in terms of a class structure controlled by a big business-labor coalition, but this is true of many other countries, thus Broadbent rejects class mobilization arguments as the answer to their more successful response to pollution. Social mobilization arguments resting on establishing frameworks of values to mobilize citizens

is also rejected. In this case, frameworks of cultural values and beliefs were so diverse as to provide everyone with a rationalization for their actions.

Ultimately, Broadbent argues, the Japanese were mobilized to oppose polluters through informal networks. The horizontal networks among the political and business elite were mobilized to oppose protesters and support allies. Laws were intentionally vaguely written under the assumption that informal networks of connections were the real source of power that would be used to interpret laws. Similarly, the protesters were also able to mobilize village opposition through their networks. Strong leadership at the village level, often a high school teacher who was revered in the local community and able to resist the bribery attempts of the local arm of the national Liberal Democratic Party, was also a key ingredient in mobilizing opposition through networks.

In reaching these conclusions Broadbent provides an intriguing theoretical synthesis of materialist, institutional, and cultural theories and how the assumptions of these theories intersect with the degree of structuration of the social field. Structuration is cleverly defined as a continuum of freedom of action from structured through established patterns of action to agentic where actors are free to innovate with an interesting midpoint of "plastic" in which actors can exert agency when faced with contradictory structures. The combination of three theoretical perspectives with three states of structuration produces a nine-fold table of power structures that Broadbent uses to interpret the historical events.

This book is an impressive research document and an ambitious theoretical undertaking. At times, however, I wished that Broadbent had tried to be a little more reductionist. Finishing the book by explaining events in terms of nine theories is very comprehensive but a more parsimonious explanation might be more satisfying to the reader. Broadbent argues that this social movement study is not amenable to a "fixed general theory" (p. 360), and I would not want the author to sacrifice any of the rich historical detail in an effort to fit the events into a box. However, Broadbent's methodology focuses on producing a very detailed narrative without judgment as to the most important causal connections among events. Narrative methodologies exist (e.g., Abbott, 1992) to formalize the relationships among events to help researchers glean the important events and causal connections, and these techniques have been applied to historical studies of environmental events (Stevenson and Greenberg, 1998).

Some readers may feel frustrated that more quantitative network techniques were not used to determine variations in networks across these villages in order to reduce some of the complexity of the data. The reader who would like a more quantitative network comparison of policy networks across Japan, the U.S., and Germany could consult another book that Broadbent co-authored (Knoke, et.al., 1996). Broadbent also speculates in an appendix as to how one could quantify attempts at political influence in a set of vectors. (In a personal communication to the editor of this journal, Broadbent suggests modifying his hypothesized vectors that predict the relative explanatory weight given a theory on an outcome. This modification will be incorporated in the paperback version of the book.)

These are minor criticisms of an extremely impressive work of scholarship. After reading this book, I was left with a rich understanding of the Japanese social, political, and cultural context. I found the synthesis of theoretical perspectives to be extremely thought-provoking. This book makes a major contribution to the literatures on policy networks, social movements, environmental activism, and the structure-agency relationship.

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