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# **Sayōnara Nukes -**

**Development, Mobilisation Strategies and Organisation  
of Anti-Nuclear Protest in Japan after the 2011 Fukushima Accident**

**Jan Niggemeier\***

**Working Paper No 48  
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**Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies  
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## Abstract

Broad public contention against nuclear energy can be observed as a new phenomenon in Japanese society after the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident. This study aimed to identify a sufficient explanation about why the emergence of such a protest movement only occurred after the direct experience of a critical event and did not happen before. Discrediting a sole and simple grievance-based argumentation, the analysis took into account underlying environmental and structural factors with a potential impact on protest development. A strategy of scrutinising in-field observations and findings in appliance of classical approaches of social movement theory provided the best possible outcome. As a primal finding, the recent emergence of protest could be mainly attributed to the opening up of novel political opportunities, newly accessed parts of society as additional mobilisable resources, but most of all to an effective application of framing strategies. Nevertheless, explanatory factors were also found outside of the covered range of the theoretical framework, such as the apparent characterisation of the protests as a New Social Movement. Although this initiated a discussion about the underlying model's adequacy, its suitability was generally proved by its rich repertoire of explication in this particular case.

*Key words: Japan, Fukushima, anti-nuclear protest, political opportunities, resource mobilisation, framing*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANPO:	<i>Nihon-koku to Amerika-gasshōkoku tonō aida no sōgo kyōryoku oyobi anzen hoshō jōyaku</i> (Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan)
DPJ:	Democratic Party of Japan
FoE Japan:	Friends of the Earth Japan
furitā:	Japanese portmanteau of the English word <i>free</i> and the German word <i>Arbeiter</i> , describing young people in precarious forms of employment
LDP:	Liberal Democratic Party
NAZEN:	<i>subete no genpatsu ima sugu nakusou!</i> – <i>zenkoku kaigi</i> (National Conference to eliminate all nuclear plants now)
NEET:	acronym for people currently “not in education, employment, or training”
NGO:	non-governmental organisation
NIMBY:	“ <i>not in my back yard</i> ” (pejorative term for residents' opposition)
NSM:	New Social Movement
POS:	Political Opportunity Structures
RMP:	Resource Mobilisation Perspective
TEPCO:	Tokyo Electric Power Company Ltd.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Problem Outline

Additionally to loss of life and demolition of infrastructure, the 11 March 2011 Great Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami catastrophe led to a number of severe nuclear accidents, in particular the partial meltdown and leaking of radioactive material in the reactors of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant complex. In the aftermath of the triple disaster, and also in response to the insufficient crisis management and lacking information policy from both the government and the electricity company TEPCO, the emergence of a nationwide anti-nuclear protest movement could be observed. Different protest organisations' appeals to attend key events in the following months caught the attention of tens of thousands of people who decided to participate in mass-protests on the streets of Tōkyō and other places to criticise and object to the government's seemingly unchanged adherence to its nuclear energy strategy. Demands of the protestors range from the improvement of crisis management to increased transparency and information policy, and to the phasing out and immediate or eventual abandonment of nuclear energy production in Japan.

The societal phenomenon that was highlighted in this research is concerned with the observable emerging mass-protest movement against nuclear energy in Japan. Not least because of Japan's traumatic experiences with nuclear warfare in the last days of the Pacific War, nuclear issues have long been a sensitive topic of discussion. Furthermore, narrations of international as well as domestic self-made experiences of nuclear accidents in the second half of the twentieth century raised citizens' awareness of the dangers and threats nuclear technology entails and even created a widespread sceptical mind-set concerning nuclear energy in society. Past anti-nuclear protest movements in Japan, however, had their focus mostly on regionally based issues, such as the construction of new nuclear power plants in respective localities. In spite of a number of successful cases of local protest, through which for instance the construction of power plants could be postponed or even prevented<sup>1</sup>, the mostly singular and unconnected protest movements so far failed to efficiently co-organise on a national level in order to create a debate which addresses the issue of nuclear power usage in general. Obviously, this stands in contrast to the developments which could be observed in many other countries, for example in Germany and other European states where, after the experiences of

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<sup>1</sup> One example is the nuclear power plant project in Maki Machi, Niigata Prefecture, which was cancelled after a successful local referendum against the construction in 1996 (Hasegawa 2004: 148).

country-external and internal nuclear accidents, nationwide contentious movements against nuclear power with a certain political influence could successfully form. In spite of existing strong anti-nuclear sentiments within society, the Japanese government's programme of expanding the nuclear energy reliance was largely unaffected by domestic protest movements and could mostly be pursued according to plan (Hasegawa 2004: 146). Nevertheless, after the Fukushima Daiichi catastrophe, broader contention against nuclear power in Japan seems emergent. Organisers of the events appear well prepared and for the first time a society-encompassing anti-nuclear movement, supported by numerous prominent figures, seems to be developing into a nationwide phenomenon, which addresses and might be able to influence national politics.

This opened up the puzzling question about the inability of such broadly observable open contention and protest against nuclear energy to develop before Japan itself experienced the nuclear catastrophe of the Fukushima Daiichi reactor in March 2011. A simple answer to this might be that the catastrophe of Fukushima represented a critical event of so far unprecedented magnitude and local vicinity, which could lead to protests against nuclear energy in this scale in Japan. However, in particular, the comparison with anti-nuclear protest movements in other countries shows that protest mobilisation is not necessarily dependent on such direct crisis experiences<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, even if a critical event such as a nuclear accident served as the triggering element of protest, it does not become clear in which ways and through which processes this can lead to a society-encompassing form of organised contention. In this sense, it becomes imperative to trace the specificities of protest emergence, development and structure, which differentiate the recent movement in Japan from previous attempts. Can its successful development be attributed to novelties in mobilisation, organisation and strategies of the movement's founding members? Or can the underlying reasons rather be traced to a changing structure of the political and social environment? And which role can be attributed to processes of cognition and identity formation, i.e. how is the critical event and the activation of protest reflected on in society?

This research did not attempt to provide a comparative analysis of movement developments in other countries, but instead extensively scrutinised the specificities within and around the emergence, development and character of the recent protest movement in Japan. The project was based

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<sup>2</sup> Although neither Germany, nor Italy, nor the Scandinavian countries were directly affected by nuclear accidents, remarkable anti-nuclear movements arose during the 1970s and 80s.

on observations and findings gathered through field research and employed a range of theoretical tools of social movement analysis. In doing so, it aspired to answer questions about the changes in Japan's societal structures, which enabled the apparent successful generation of anti-nuclear mass-mobilisation today. It also tried to illustrate the political and social underlying circumstances of the recent wave of protest and to present an overview about the movement's diverse participants as well as their objectives and strategies of protest mobilisation. Considered factors include furthermore the applied ways of cultural framing of the crisis event and of the on-going actions of protest. Conclusively, in applying rather classical theoretical approaches, this project aimed to evaluate their adequacy for the addressed case and point out possible weaknesses and omissions.

As a research project focusing on these aspects, this work attempted to fill an apparent gap in the scientific argument about Japan's contemporary contentious politics. Although previous examples of single case examinations of protest movements in Japan can partially provide hints for the understanding of the emergence of the recent anti-nuclear movement, its novel shape and topicality make it a thus far less approached subject, which necessitates extensive scholarly scrutinisation. Through the provision of in-field observations and the appliance of a broad range of tools of social movement theory, this study aimed to initiate a process of further reaching scientific involvement in the field of Japanese social movements and in particular in relation to the theme of anti-nuclear protest.

First and foremost this research project tried to give an answer to the question:

**→ Why could broad contention against nuclear energy emerge only after the direct experience of a critical event such as the nuclear accident in Fukushima in 2011?**

and in particular:

- What are the underlying explanatory factors and conditions for the protest movement to be able to develop into a phenomenon of this dimension?
- Can existing theories of social movement development provide adequate explanations for the recent emergence?

## 1.2 Method and Selection

Large protests against nuclear power in Japan are a relatively recent phenomenon, whereas open public contention in itself can be seen as traditionally rather weak in the history of Japanese society. In this regard, research about the on-going social movement entered a fairly untouched field of scholarship. The continuing dynamics and developments made it difficult to grasp and define a delimited and clear picture of the movement, which would be required for conducting any kind of fruitful quantitative research. Rather, the analysis of this rapidly changing situation and unsettled environment followed a non-experimental, qualitative research design. Experiences gained within the process of collecting and analysing data gathered from the field led to adjustments and changes to the research questions, responding to the nature of explored circumstances, as Creswell mentioned (Creswell 2007: 19). Due to this, it was important to design the research plan with a certain degree of flexibility. A methodological focus on a qualitative, to a large extent inductive approach encompassing in-depth ethnographic field research, provided the biggest possible outcome, as Creswell describes that “ethnography is appropriate if the needs are to describe how a cultural group works and to explore the beliefs, language, behaviours, and issues such as power, resistance, and domination” (Creswell 2007: 70).

At the beginning of the research project, it appeared most helpful to gain a broad overview about the whole phenomenon of anti-nuclear activism in Japan. Preliminary evaluations of the movement's activities and its dimension were based on information, which had been provided on the activist groups' websites or internet blogs, whereas it was noticeable that Japanese mass media remained relatively silent about these events. Japan's major influential newspapers (*Yomiuri Shinbun* and *Asahi Shinbun*) as well as big television broadcasting channels barely report on anti-nuclear activism. Thus, in order to arrive at a satisfying degree of understanding, in-field observation and interaction of the phenomenon were mandatory.

The fieldwork project was conducted during a three-month research stay in Tōkyō from January to March 2012, which means during the time preceding the first year's anniversary of the catastrophic events that gave rise to the protest phenomenon under consideration. Although the so far largest demonstrations and protest events took place in the summer months after the catastrophe, the selected time frame turned out to be a good choice, as in particular during the weeks preceding 11 March a lot of protest-related events and activities took place in and around the Japanese capital. At large demonstrations it does not instantly become obvious, but the broader anti-nuclear movement in Japan contains a manifold set of different actors and groups with differing backgrounds, motivations, goals and strategies, which

made it imperative for the design of data collection to report on this diversity. The collection of primary data during the three-month period was based on three different moments of interaction.

Firstly, acting as a participant observer at anti-nuclear street demonstrations and other forms of openly visible protest served as an early orientation about the complex picture of the movement and provided useful insights into its dimension, broader structure and organisation. Participant observation, as Bryman describes, means that the researcher “immerses him- or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations (...), and asking questions” (Bryman 2008: 402). Gaining access to the setting was very unproblematic, as most street demonstrations were announced ahead on the organisers' webpages and because of the events' public nature conducting observations in a covert role was not necessary. During the three months of field research, opportunities opened up to attend and observe five demonstrations in Tōkyō and the Tōhoku region, organised by different groups and of differing scope. It was not only possible to observe features and characteristics of the demonstrations and its participants, but furthermore to converse with both numerous group-affiliated and individually mobilised demonstrators at the setting in order to get an impression about their motivation to participate in protest.

Secondly, six semi-structured interviews with representatives and participants of different groups and organisations within the Japanese anti-nuclear movement have been conducted. Among the respondent groups were two environmental NGOs (*FoE Japan* and *Greenpeace Japan*), two local neighbourhood associations (*Hōshanō o kangaeru Shitamachi Nettowāku* and *Nakuse Genpatsu Nerima Akushon*), one youth-oriented protest network (*NAZEN*) and one newly emerging political party (*Midori no Mirai – Greens Japan*). The interviews that have been conducted were held in Japanese, English and German and were designed in a semi-structured form. Semi-structured interviewing not only allowed relevant topics to be specifically addressed, but also provided the observational process with the necessary degree of flexibility. In this regard, Bryman highlights the “[o]pen-ended, discursive nature of the interviews which permits an iterative process of refinement” (Bryman 2008: 439). The interviews' dual structure enabled focus on a range of pre-formulated questions (among others about the groups' establishment, mobilisation strategies, membership structure, their agenda and concrete activities of protest; the full list of questions can be found in the Appendix), but also left open the possibility for the groups' respondents to address their specific fields of emphasis and engagement.

The first access to respondent groups was made via direct mail contact with representatives or by personally approaching group members during

demonstration events, who then served as “gatekeepers” for further research (Bryman 2008: 407). Another useful occasion to create contacts was through participation as a volunteer at the “Yokohama International Conference for a Nuclear-Free World” in January 2012, a large-scale event organised by many Japanese and international actors and groups within the anti-nuclear movement. In the course of the field research project, the contact with “key informants” represented an invaluable helpful opportunity to gain further access into the setting. Exactly as Bryman describes, “they often develop an appreciation of the research and direct the ethnographer to situations, events, or people likely to be helpful to the progress of the investigation” (Bryman 2008: 409). Particularly useful was furthermore the structure of interconnection between the different groups, which made it possible to enlarge the circle of respondents through a “snowballing” strategy<sup>3</sup>. In spite of their busy schedules prior to the countless number of organised events on the days around the yearly anniversary of the catastrophe on 11 March and the fact that many participants in protest groups are not professional staff but engage in the movement during their free time next to their full-time employment, it was possible to receive a relatively high rate of response to the interview inquiries. During the process of interviewing, as well as during the other interactions with participants of groups within the anti-nuclear movement, a strong interest and open attitude of responding and providing details about the groups' work and activities could be noticed. This turned out to be very beneficial for the research project, as it simplified the accessibility to information and facilitated the overall process of data collection.

Thirdly, after establishing contact with some of the movement's groups, the fortunate opportunity arose to receive invitations to participate in a number of their regularly held internal meetings, which enabled the enhancement of previous findings and, apart from that, the obtainment of an idea about internal work-processes and organisational structures of different protest groups. Issues of temporal or local relevance, such as recent political decisions concerning nuclear policy or publications of radiation measurements are as much a topic as the presentation, discussion and explanation of relevant newspaper articles, books or information from the Internet. Furthermore, external scientists or experts in different fields often supplement the provision of information. The group meetings are also used to discuss the planning of future events, such as the participation in or self-organisation of demonstrations. Although these forms of internal meetings are normally openly accessible, in the role of a non-local foreign researcher, gaining access

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<sup>3</sup> Snowballing is described as “a sampling technique in which the researcher initially samples a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research” (Bryman 2008: 424)

was dependent on the previous acquaintance and support of a “champion” from within the respective groups, who was “prepared to vouch for you and the value of your research” (Bryman 2008: 407).

#### *Source validity and criticism of sources*

In emphasising that “ontological assumptions and commitments will feed into the ways in which research questions are formulated and research is carried out”, Bryman highlights the relation between the researcher's ontological starting point and the actual performance of social research (Bryman 2008: 21). While conducting a study which aimed to explore a complex phenomenon such as a protest movement, one had to be aware of the existence of multiple and subjective realities (Creswell 2007: 17f). Different individuals show different perspectives and perceptions of the same issue in focus and for a researcher it was mandatory to report on this multiplicity. As Creswell highlights, epistemologically it is imperative for qualitative researchers to “try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (Creswell 2007: 18). In reducing the distance between the researcher and the subject of study through establishment of direct “field contact” it was possible to “become an 'insider'” (Creswell 2007: 17). However, through the researcher's own influential role in the research process, it had to be considered that interpretations were “[s]haped by the researcher's own expectations and background” (Creswell 2007: 21). It was crucial to realise possible influences of a personal preoccupation and a probably biased view on the topic in order to secure a necessary degree of objectivism during the research process.

While conducting qualitative research with extensive field contact, it had to be kept in mind to maintain and critically reflect on the reliability and validity of empirical findings. It is clear that accessed information, in particular from the process of conducted interviews, always includes influences of the respondents' personal biases and perspectives. Especially in a case where the theme of study focused on a rather disputable topic like the anti-nuclear protests, it cannot be doubted that these individual perceptions and views played an important role. However, for the nature of this research project this was a rather small obstacle, as the aim of this study was not to find out the truth about a specific issue, but much more to report on how it is perceived, reflected on and framed by the actors under consideration. As long as statements of respondents were analysed in a critical way and more or less obvious biases were reported on, possible problems with the reliability and validity would be prevented.

In taking the role as an overt participant observer at demonstration events and mentioning this role while conducting interviews, it was compulsory to



realise and report on the influence of this sympathising process on the collection of data. To reveal oneself as a supporter of the movement's general ideas and demands made it easier to gain access to different informants and to valuable information. Furthermore, the role of conducting research as a German citizen might also have served to open up further possibilities for data collection, as many Japanese respondents appear to strongly connect the issue of anti-nuclear protest to the developments in Germany. Thus, it had to be kept in mind that both the declared sympathy with the protestors as well as the nature of one's national background had an unequivocal impact on the way and content of the informants' responses during the interviews.

#### *Description of analysis and transcription*

Creswell describes the process of analysing qualitative data as “moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach” (Creswell 2007: 150). Thus, to understand a complex phenomenon such as the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement and provide a fruitful analysis regarding the stated project's questions, it was important to choose a combination of methods and theories, which on the one hand could provide a clear underlying structure for orientation and on the other hand could be open for flexible alterations of the framework, if empirical findings required this.

A large amount of the gathered information from both ethnographic field observations and conducted interviews had been categorised and classified in order to form a base for an analysis following an integrated model of social movement research, grounded in the work of McAdam and others (McAdam et al. 1996). It encompassed theoretical approaches that provided a rich array of tools to evaluate the empirical material. However, in spite of the undeniable influence the preselected theoretical framework had on the data collection process, it was not possible to bring all findings into relation with the applied theoretical models. Due to its intuitive character, the ethnographic method of data collection produced a number of surprising and rather unexpected findings, which were discovered to play crucial roles as well. The interpretation of data thus did not strictly follow the model-determined course, but the coding also took into account additional information, which did not directly correspond to the theoretical framework.

The conducted interviews, which were held in three different languages, have been transcribed in two different ways. Where available, true reproductions, as well as direct translations of recorded material have been selected to exemplify interpretations made in the analysis. Apart from these, conversions of spoken language have been employed in those cases, where transcriptions were not possible due to missing recordings of the interviews. In the latter case, it was crucial to realise the possibility of misinterpretations and personal influence of the researcher or the reader.

### *Project delimitations*

Due to the restricted time frame of this research project, a small-scale micro-ethnographic research design was preferred to a longitudinal ethnography of the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement. This forced the study to make a number of concessions, as for instance in many aspects a more detailed observation and analysis would have been very interesting. Also, large-scale random-sample survey results reporting on Japanese society's overall stance towards the issue would have made a valuable contribution to the research topic.

Furthermore, it had to be kept in mind that the chosen range of respondent groups does not attempt to be representative for the whole observed societal phenomenon. Due to the limited time frame of the research project, a fully-fledged ethnographic study encompassing the majority of the participating groups in the movement would have been quite difficult to conduct. Nevertheless, in the selection of respondent groups, consideration for the movement's diversity and multiplicity was taken into account as much as possible in sampling a range of groups with different forms of organisation and differing character.

### *Ethical considerations*

Although the research was conducted in an open setting, an awareness of the maintenance of ethical consideration in numerous forms had to be kept in mind. First of all, it was important that interviews with participants as well as organisers of the anti-nuclear protest groups had been conducted only after notification of and permission by the respective organisations. In accordance with Swedish research regulations, it was mandatory to receive the research subjects' consent about the project's details<sup>4</sup>. Secondly, while conducting interviews and subsequently using the material in the analytical part, the anonymity of the individual respondents had to be guaranteed. Although actors in civil society in Japan enjoy the freedom of expression and speech, respondents might fear possible negative consequences if their names are connected to specific statements in relation to the protest movement. In this sense, the study refrained from mentioning the names or characteristics of individual respondents from the interviews. However, for reasons of exemplification and illustration, the observed and interviewed groups within the movement themselves were not anonymised in this research project. Furthermore, it was important to understand the possible sensitivity and emotionality that the nuclear issue might involve for some respondents.

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<sup>4</sup> These regulations include the notification about the study's purpose, the methods used, consequences and possible risks of participation, the identity of the research, its voluntary nature of participation and the right to discontinue participation at any time (The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs 2003).

During the interviews it thus turned out to be very helpful to create a sense of closeness and to demonstrate personal understanding and sympathy towards the respondent's interests related to the anti-nuclear movement.

### **1.3 Thesis Disposition**

The thesis is structured in the following manner. The first section (1) provides an overview about the thematic background and presents a brief review about previously conducted research in the field. The second part (2) introduces a theoretical framework for social movement analysis and is divided into three partial approaches, which had been considered in this research project. An analysis based on the gathered empirical findings and in appliance of the previously introduced theoretical models follows in the third part (3) and opens up a discussion in the subsequent section (4), before finally a conclusion is drawn.

## **2. THESIS**

### **2.1 Background and Review of Previous Research**

Numerous studies on civil society's protest against a range of environmental issues in Japan have been carried out in the past. However, the focus of exploration in this previous research remained largely on the analysis of regionally based or temporary cases of protest against acute cases of environmental pollution. Earlier research applied to a large extent to so-called "NIMBY" (*not in my back yard*) issues, which describe civil society groups' opposition to developments in their close residential vicinity. In spite of their difference in focus, these analyses provided insights into patterns of movement mobilisation and its difficulties in Japan. In this regard, several authors focused on the aspects impeding the development of broad forms of contention in Japan. For instance, Avenell emphasised local forms of protest as measures of "regional egoism", which emerge as defensive reactions rather than as expressions of democratic activity (Avenell 2006). Concerning this, Hasegawa's analysis of civil society's contentious role pointed out that environmental movements in Japan primarily developed as local and case-focused "residents' movements" in comparison to broader, issue-based "citizens' movements" (Hasegawa 2004). Cole's scrutinisation of grassroots environmental groups illustrated the problems of a lacking tradition in political activism as the main reason for their limitation on local influence (Cole 1994). Furthermore, Broadbent's extensive research on the mobilisation

of environmental protest in Japan emphasised the important role of political opportunities and the strong influence of power networks (Broadbent 1997, 1998).

In comparison to open forms of contention against nuclear energy, big waves of protest against nuclear warfare and armament on Japanese soil have been a common phenomenon in Japan's post-war history, but were rarely related to the issue of nuclear power. Regarding this, Higuchi (2008) provided an analysis of nationwide anti-nuclear activism during the 1950s and early 1960s, but his research instead dealt with protests against nuclear warfare tests carried out by the USA and did not problematise civic contention against nuclear energy. However, although of a different nature, the issue of protest against nuclear weapons by Higuchi provided interesting insights about the factors of movement mobilisation for the broader picture of citizen protest in Japan.

The development of anti-nuclear protest into a broad citizens' movement of the recently observable dimension represents a relatively novel aspect of public contention in Japan. Due to this, the body of literature focusing on the recent emergence of protest against nuclear power is so far quite limited. However, the catastrophic accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in 2011 has prompted a small number of scholars to focus on this very topic. Aldrich, who in the past conducted several studies on Japan's public protest against different environmental issues, pointed out the new forms of contention against nuclear energy after the Fukushima accident in his latest publication (Aldrich 2012). Likewise, Doege and Köllner provided a brief overview about the institutionalised rigidities – often described as the “nuclear village” – that the emerging protest movement has to face (Doege & Köllner 2011). Dusinger and Aldrich deepened the understanding of this elaborate system of nuclear energy promotion in their case study analysis of one local siting issue (Dusinger & Aldrich 2011). In spite of these recent works, the timeliness of the event limits its to-date existing exploration and hence makes it most necessary as the focus of further research.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Although this research project on the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement followed in many ways an inductive approach, it encompassed analysis that was based on a set of available theories of political protest and social movements. After an ethnographic exploration of the manifold sites and facets of the movement, through participant observation on the one hand and semi-structured interviews on the other hand, the gathered impressions, data and

information served as the base for scrutinisation that followed an integrated approach of movement mobilisation based on the work by McAdam and others (McAdam et al. 1996). The authors' work, which introduces, modifies and finally attempts to synthesise three different approaches of traditional social movement analysis, appeared to provide a rich repertoire of tools to analyse a movement such as the apparent anti-nuclear protests in Japan. The authors propose this integrated triangular model as a comprehensive advancement of the numerous different approaches on protest and social movement development.

The field of social movement research has its origin in the scientific curiosity to provide an understanding of the emergence of the observable turbulent cross-country student uprisings in the late 1960s. Social movements turned out to be not “a thing of the past” but a “common feature (...) in the political landscape” (McAdam et al. 1996: 1). Opp provides a discussion about differing concepts of protest and social movements in previous literature and he himself arrives at a rather wide definition, which he considers necessary for theoretical developments (Opp 2009: 38). In his eyes, “protest is defined as joint (i.e. collective) action of individuals aimed at achieving their goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target” (Opp 2009: 38; italics in the original), which very much leaves open its actual dimension or concrete form. Building on this, he furthermore speaks of social movements to equal a distinguished kind of protest group, as a “collectivity of actors who want to achieve their shared goal or goals by influencing decisions of a target”, with a certain size and degree of organisation (Opp 2009: 44).

Charles Tilly (Tilly 1978), Doug McAdam (McAdam 1982) and Sidney Tarrow (Tarrow 1996, 1998; McAdam et al. 2001) focused on detailed case analyses of political opportunity structures in order to find explanations for the emergence of protest. Emphasising the interactive relationships between the character of political structures and movements, the approaches tried to answer questions about the influence of changes in formal or informal power relations or of national differences in institutionalised politics on the emergence and development of protest phenomena.

Another group of scholars, among them John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (McCarthy and Zald 1977), aimed to alleviate the influence of grievances on protest emergence and emphasised instead the importance of micro level actors' agency and meso level organisation in their resource mobilisation perspective. Their approach pointed out that the specific forms of newly organising social movements on the one hand, and previously available

network structures, such as neighbourhood- or work-related organisations on the other hand, have a crucial influence on protest development.

Apart from political opportunities and mobilisation structures as necessary factors for protest emergence, David Snow (Snow et al. 1986), Bert Klandermans and others give great importance to cognitive, psychological elements. Building on ideas from perspectives of social constructivism and collective identity formation, this third group focuses on the crucial role of framing processes in collective action mobilisation. They highlight two important factors of individual perception, which are necessary for the development of social movements: experienced sentiments of grievance and threat on the one hand, and on the other hand an understanding of optimism and persuasion, that political protests can serve as successful means of change. However, this third perspective was not seen as an alternating theory, but much more as a so far crucial missing mediating element which enabled linking the other approaches into a combined explanatory model of social movement analysis (McAdam et al. 1996: 5).

All the approaches have in common the understanding that processes of protest emergence take place on and between a structural and environmental macro level and a micro level, which focuses on individuals or interpersonal agency. This distinction into two explanatory levels is helpful to grasp the diverse and often complex relations and impacts of the models' factors and variables on the actual development of the process. The following paragraphs provide a more detailed description of the three introduced approaches and point out in which ways analyses based on these models can be conducted.

### *2.2.1 Political Opportunity Structures*

Tarrow defines political opportunity structures as “consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements” (Tarrow 1996: 54). The emphasis here lies on “signals” and the most important signalling elements in this regard include processes of political opening-up, availability of influential allies, divisions among elites and changes in the state's capacity for repression. The factor of an increasing access can serve to mark out new possibilities of political influence and thus create incentives for participation. Tarrow explains that “the narrower the preexisting avenues to participation, the more likely each new opening is to produce new opportunities for contention” (Tarrow 1998: 78). The elements of available allies and elite fragmentations both describe structures of informal power relations within a political system. Influential alliances with elite actors can lead to an increase of the movement's legitimacy,

whereas divisions within elite groups can improve a movement's relative strength in the system (Tarrow 1996: 55f). Lastly, a state's ability for repression signals an imposed threat and can as such impede a movement's formation. Tarrow summarises that “when institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines, challengers find opportunities to advance their claims” (Tarrow 1996: 71).

One important argument Opp brings up in his scrutinisation of the POS approach is the necessity to employ a subjectivist definition of opportunities. Not their sole existence, but the way in which opportunities of whichever form are perceived as “visible signals”, which then can translate into incentives of actual protest, is crucial (Opp 2009: 170). Although the focus of attention in the POS model lies on the analysis of the above-mentioned structural signals, incentives to engage in protest can furthermore be strongly influenced or eventually triggered by the experience of sudden crisis situations (Opp 2009: 195). According to the model, both changes in structural opportunities and situations of crisis lead the micro level to a reevaluation of perceived costs and benefits of (in-)action, which then can translate into individual incentives to engage in contentious activities. On the macro level this eventually becomes visible in the form of collective action, i.e. political protest – see Figure 2.1.

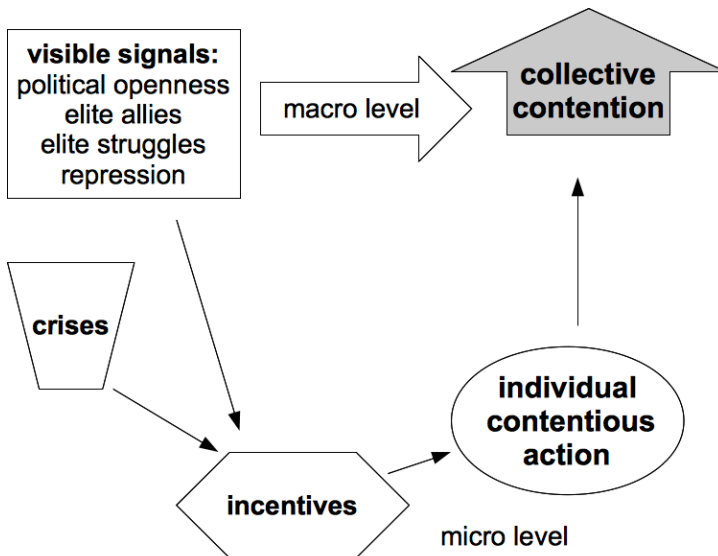


Figure 2.1: Simplified POS model based on McAdam & Tarrow

### *2.2.2 Resource Mobilisation Perspective*

Whereas the focus of explanation by the POS approach lies clearly on external structures as protest-stimulating factors, the group of scholars around McCarthy and Zald proposes in their resource mobilisation perspective an emphasis on protest participants' own resources and pre-given organisational structures as crucial explanatory facets. Mobilising structures are defined as “those collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action” (McAdam et al. 1996: 3). Central elements of the RMP are a range of macro and micro resources such as for instance an available means of communication, transport and technology as well as disposable time, money, knowledge and skills which are transformed within mobilisation processes into activities of protest as their final product (Rucht 1996: 186). The RMP regards changes in the amount of available and furthermore disposable resources to have an influence on mobilisation processes and thus serve as triggering elements for the development of collective contention. It has to be remarked that changes of macro resources do not immediately result in individual movement participation. Similar to the causal linkages in the POS approach, Opp notices that “[c]hanging macro resources are only conducive to collective protest if they change incentives on the micro level, i.e. they instigate micro mobilization processes” (Opp 2009: 147). Another micro factor which is often regarded as a crucial element of the RMP is the “repertoire of contention”, which Tarrow defines as “at once a structural and a cultural concept, involving not only what people do when they are engaged in conflict with others but what they know how to do and what others expect them to do” (Tarrow 1998: 30; italics in the original). In this way, he emphasises routines of protest, which on the one hand shape and on the other hand can be shaped by mobilisation processes – see Figure 2.2.

At the same time, external network structures, which for instance pre-exist in the forms of grassroots organisation, work-related groups or kinship and friendship circles stand in an interactive relationship to the mobilisation process. On the one hand, mobilisation derives out of pre-existing institutional, but to a larger extent “informal structures of everyday life” on the meso level, between the structural macro level and the individual micro level, “can serve as solidarity and communication facilitating structures when and if they choose to go into dissent together” (McCarthy 1996: 143). On the other hand, McCarthy points out that mobilised activists themselves own the ability to influence social patterns, as “they can invent new ones as well as radically alter and creatively combine available ones as they try to achieve their collective purposes”, and thus create a reciprocal relationship between existing



external network structures and active mobilisation processes – see Figure 2.2 (McCarthy 1996: 147).

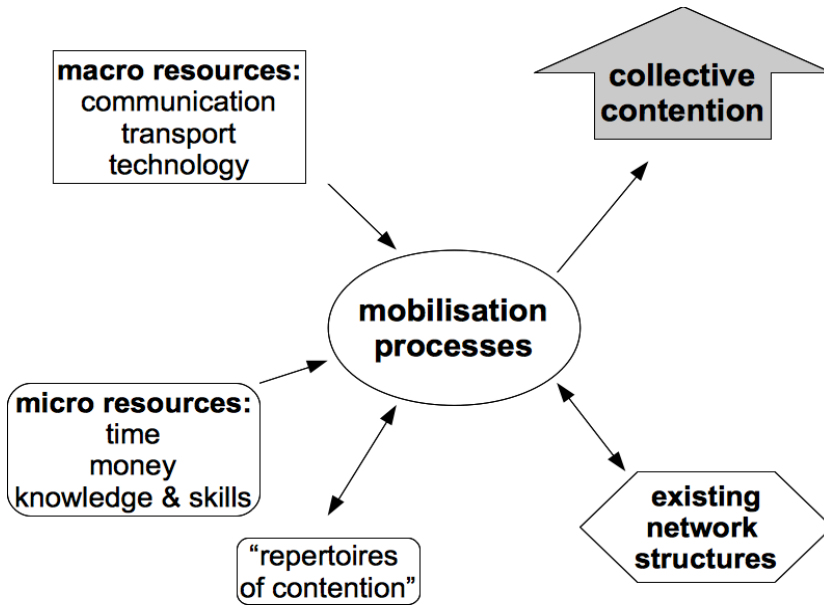


Figure 2.2: Simplified RMP model based on McCarthy & Zald

### 2.2.3 *Collective Identity and Framing Processes*

Relatively recent developments in the field of social movement research extend the previous models and approaches by important components of cognition and ideology, such as the work of Klandermans and Snow which emphasises the crucial role of collective identity formation as well as framing strategies within protest mobilisation processes. Although great importance is given to the factors highlighted in the other approaches on protest development, Klandermans regards collective identity as having a strong positive impact on contentious behaviour. Such a "we-feeling" evolves "if the members of a group develop shared views of the social environment, shared goals, and shared opinions about the possibilities and limits of collective action" (Opp 2009: 216). Tarrow describes moreover that "by drawing on inherited collective identities and shaping new ones, challengers delimit the boundaries of their prospective constituencies and define their enemies by real or imagined attributes and evils" (Tarrow 1996: 21f). Constituting factors of collective identity may be institutional or cultural environments, but also previous engagement in political protest itself, which "leads to fundamental

changes in the beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes of the activists" (Opp 2009: 219).

Next to the influence of collective identities on protest development, Snow's work aims to emphasise the role of framing processes. These processes of frame alignment, which he defines as "[l]inkages of individual and social movement organisations' interpretive orientations, such that some set of individuals' interests, values and beliefs and the social movement organisations' activities, goals and ideology are congruent and complementary", are seen as necessary, though not sufficient conditions for a movement's mobilisation (Snow et al. 1986: 464). The model understands social movements' framing strategies to encompass two decisive moments. The first element is the (re-)interpretation and condensation of grievances and opportunities through "selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action within one's present or past environment" (Tarrow 1996: 110). This enables social movement participants to frame their issue of attention, i.e. the underlying grievances and the responsible actors, in a way that aligns with the moral norms and emotional conditions of unmobilised individuals in order to convert their passivity into action. After this first alignment process, the second necessary procedure for movement mobilisation focuses on the development and presentation of frames oriented towards the motivation of action. Not only the understanding and consensus of individuals about the severity of a movement's issue of attention, but also the belief and persuasion that the movement's proposed contentious actions are supportable, adequate in direction and scope as well as inevitably necessary are required for the successful processes of individual mobilisation. Tarrow summarises that "inscribing grievances in overall frames that identify an injustice, attribute the responsibility for it to others, and propose solutions to it is a central activity of social movements" (Tarrow 1998: 111).

The original aim of Snow's theoretical model was not to propose an alternative to the other approaches of social movement development, but rather to enhance their patterns of explanation by a so far missing cognitive, psychological variable, which serves as a helpful clarification of the above-introduced macro-to-micro propositions in the POS and RMP approaches. Thus, it becomes clear that both collective identity formation as well as framing processes alone cannot be seen as sufficient conditions for protest development, but that altering political opportunities, changes in available resources as well as crisis occurrences are required to be considered as explanatory factors at the same time.

#### *2.2.4 Integrated Model of Social Movement Development*

It has to be acknowledged that single alterations of these variables alone only possibly, but not necessarily, present sufficient conditions for protest emergence. Rucht explains that “as a rule, political opportunity approaches have neglected the structural basis for resource mobilization, whereas resource mobilization approaches have largely ignored the broader political environments in which social movement organizations are embedded” (Rucht 1996: 185). Although in some cases a detailed analysis based on only one of these focuses might have appeared interesting and fruitful, an exploration of a phenomenon such as the recent Japanese anti-nuclear protests, which have not yet been the object of extensive research, required a rather broader examination that could take into account several possible factors. Thus, in order to find out if available models and approaches of social movement development can provide answers to the proposed research question, i.e. why anti-nuclear protests could develop in Japan only today, or if the existing theoretical framework is insufficient for application in this case, the whole range of available tools needed to be employed and tested.

Both Tarrow and Opp proposed ideas about synthesising the three above-introduced approaches of social movement development into a comprehensive theoretical framework. As might have already become clear, although each of the models focuses on different aspects as explanatory factors for the evolution of protest, the proposed ideas about processes and mechanisms are rather complementary than competitive.

According to the POS and RMP approaches, changes both in the structural environment, i.e. the political opportunities, as well as in the amount of available and disposable macro and micro resources have an influential effect on the mobilisation of protest. Furthermore, experiences of sudden grievances, i.e. crises, can serve as elements that trigger protest. However, these factors do not initiate the occurrence of protest in a direct way, but form and shape previously unmobilised individuals' grievances into incentives to become actively engaged in social movements. Whereas the availability of macro and micro resources, which also include the above-mentioned “repertoire of contention”, represent a rather objective variable in the mechanism of shaping incentives, the perception and interpretation of political opportunities as well as experiences of crises can be strongly manipulated through cognitive framing processes on the part of movement activists. The reframed opportunities and grievances can then influence individuals' incentives to become mobilised in protest. Cognitive framing processes can furthermore have an impact on the mobilisation process itself, when activities of protest experience framing in

order to be considered as adequate and necessary. Aspects of collective identity are in this integrated model perceived as “one of many possible selective incentives” that derive out of and are shaped by the above-introduced macro factors, as “identification with a group provides a motivation to act in support of the group” (Opp 2009: 228f; italics in the original). The RMP furthermore deals with the explanation of external network structures on the organisational meso level, which are considered in this integrated model as standing in an interrelationship to the process of mobilisation, as adherents can be drawn out of this reservoir of organised individuals, but additionally these networks and social patterns can be influenced and altered by processes of protest mobilisation. Finally, collective contentious action emerges out of individual mobilisation. Figure 2.3 presents the processes and causal relationships introduced in the integrated approach in a graphical form.

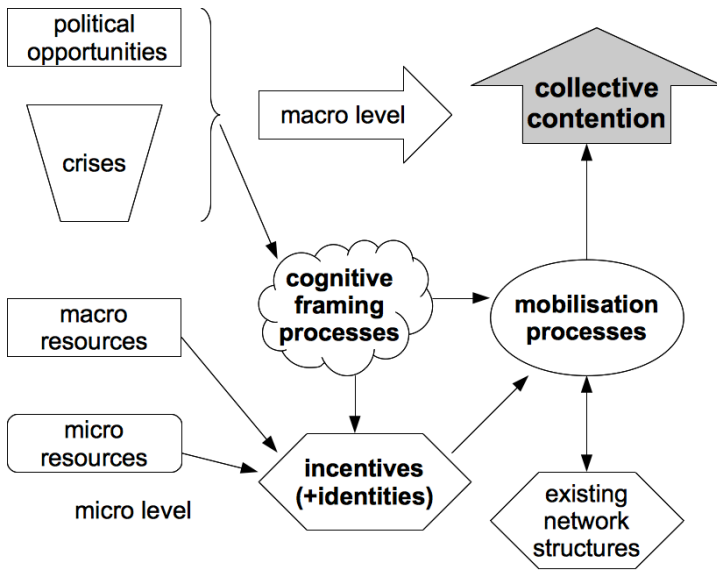


Figure 2.3: Integrated Model of Social Movement Development, based on ideas from McAdam, Tarrow and Opp

Although the sudden threat imposed by the critical event of the 3.11 catastrophe could be regarded as the major triggering aspect of protest emergence, the fact of the non-occurrence of comparable movement developments in the past raises a number of questions about additional underlying elements of influence in the present case. In this regard, Opp clarifies the importance of additional factors of explanation in mentioning that “suddenly imposed or abruptly realized and continuing major grievances make mobilization likely when there is some threshold level or resources able

to be activated when perceived grievances increase dramatically” (Opp 2009: 158). In questioning the predominance of sole grievance-based protest developments and extending the focus onto a wider and more diversified range of explanatory factors and variables for social movement emergence, the above-described integrated approach appears as the most useful available and applicable tool for the analysis of the recent protest development in Japan.

The most apparent variable on the macro level was, needless to say, the occurrence of the critical event of the 3.11 triple disaster. However, in order to employ the POS model, further visible signals of political and structural change in the previously mentioned categories had to be traced and brought into relation to observable framing procedures on the part of the movement's organisations. Perceived political openness, the existence of influential allies, signs of elite internal conflicts as well as the forms of the state's possible repressive measures were factors observably available for scrutinisation as explanatory elements for protest development. Also apparently traceable were, on the one hand, changes in macro resources such as for instance available means of communication, technology and logistics and, on the other hand, pre-existing external network structures on the meso level, which are both aspects featured in the ideas introduced in the RMP approach. However, changes in micro resources as well as the way in which available macro and micro resources, and also framing processes, influence individual incentives for protest participation, and furthermore collective identities, have not been readily apparent during the observational phase. Although the limited degree of field interaction cannot claim representative accuracy, the interviews with a number of actors in the protest movement nevertheless revealed the possibility of gathering exploitable information about these additional factors and processes. Numerous information about changes in available micro resources, such as for example disposable time and financial resources or necessary knowledge and skills for movement participation derived out of the interviewing processes, whereas personal narrations furthermore provided important insights about aspects of individual incentives and the role of collective identities.

Integrated approaches of social movement and protest analysis, though in slightly different implementations, have already been employed in a number of comparative studies that focus on movement developments in Japan and other settings. Hasegawa applied the triangular approach of social movement analysis in cases of anti-nuclear protest in Japan and the USA (Hasegawa 1995). His main findings indicated that effective mobilisation against nuclear power issues in Japan was previously restricted by a closed political structure,

an impedimental framing environment as well as the protest movement's own defensive character. The same approach was applied in Sato's comparative analysis of anti-nuclear movement mobilisation in Japan and Germany (Sato 2009). She concluded that major differences in the political opportunity structure are responsible for the unequal outcomes of the movements in the two countries. Moreover, Broadbent, who applies a version of the POS approach in environmental protest in Japan, arrives at the understanding that "short-term openings" alone had no role in stimulating protest, but that it was reframed impositions of grievances that played a crucial role (Broadbent 1998: 112).

## **2.3 Empirical Findings and Analysis**

Based on the empirical findings about the protest movement gathered through field observations as well as the conducted interviews and the appliance of the previously introduced theoretical framework of social movement mobilisation, the following section will present an in-depth analysis of the emergence of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement. The aim of this analysis has been to trace and evaluate possible explanatory patterns for the development of political protest in the aftermath of the nuclear crisis in 2011 and to find out if these given influential factors are able to provide a sufficient explanation for the movement's emergence. As an analytical tool that takes into consideration a wide spectrum of possible influential factors on the movement's emergence, the above-introduced integrated approach appeared to be most useful for an in-depth examination of the case. However, it had to be kept in mind from the very beginning that sufficient results through the employment of the approach should not be taken for granted, i.e. that other factors, which are not encompassed in the model's explanatory range, might have had a stronger influence on the movement's emergence. This thought was taken up in a discussion following this analytical section.

### *2.3.1 Political Opportunity Structures*

Openness in the original understanding of the theoretical perspective has been described as individual civil liberties or possible means of political influence. In order to serve as an explanatory factor for the Japanese movement emergence, it was thus necessary to trace and identify recent changes in the degree of openness in Japan's political structure. By its constitution, Japan is a democratic country that grants political freedoms and civil liberties to its citizens. However, the actual ways of political influence from the grassroots level are rather limited. Japan's political system has long been described as

depending on the so-called “Iron Triangle” structure, the rigid interrelated dependency-system between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the massive bureaucratic apparatus and influential business representatives. With the success of the oppositional Democratic Party (DPJ) in the 2009 parliamentary elections, the long-term dominance of the LDP as one of the constituting elements of the triangle structure has been broken. However, it remains questionable if this change of ruling party had a strong effect on the degree of political openness in Japan. In the case of energy politics, the DPJ appears to follow a not too different direction as the LDP and although an inner-party discussion about the DPJ's position towards this issue goes on, so far it did not lead to a strong and clear stance against nuclear power or for a stronger advancement in the field of alternative energy sources (The Economist, 5 May 2012). Nevertheless, the first real change of ruling party, after a short interim of party turbulences during the 1990s, could be interpreted as a sign of hollowing out the long-time status quo in Japanese politics. At least the general opportunity to oust a ruling party in favour of another through elections appears to be given and thus represents a form of political openness that might have become more apparent only recently.

A certain increase in political openness can also be seen in the more frequent employment of means of direct democratic influence as an expression of public discontent through national or local referendums about a range of different topics, as Hasegawa describes (Hasegawa 2004: 147ff). Although citizen referendums in Japan have no legally binding impact, in particular on the local and prefectural level the influence of the referendums' outcome on the agenda of politicians who aim to be (re-)elected should not be underestimated<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, since the late 1990s, NGOs in Japan have been granted legal status, which enabled them to enhance their scope of work and made their operation easier in numerous ways. A vibrant and growing organised civil society scene can be identified as another aspect of increased political openness<sup>6</sup>. Environmental NGOs such as *FoE Japan* or *Greenpeace Japan* are, in spite of their often-controversial activities, registered as legal entities and have been able to develop a certain degree of political influence not least

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<sup>5</sup> Hasegawa explains that “to hold a referendum in Japan, a local ordinance or a prefectural law must be carried by a majority of the relevant elected assembly” and although it does not have a legally binding impact, it “can be likened to throwing the ball back to the elected officials, requiring them to review and alter their policies in accordance with the expressed will of the people” (Hasegawa 2004: 152f).

<sup>6</sup> “With juridical recognition as a legal entity, NPOs can retain full-time staff and establish a permanent board of management”, as Hasegawa describes the impact of the March 1998 enactment of the “Law Concerning the Promotion of Specific Non Profit Organization Activities” (Hasegawa 2004: 62).

through their extensive lobbying activities. Hasegawa describes that “in a highly technocratic system like Japan's (...) and an enduring single party dominated political system, citizens' movements and NPOs, with their fresh ideas and flexible approaches can provide 'exemplary actions' and open the way to break existing barriers” (Hasegawa 2004: 249f).

Alliances between the anti-nuclear movement's actors and influential members of the political elite, as a second form of political opportunity, seem to be rather rare in Japan. So far there have been no representatives of the two major political parties on the national level openly expressing their support to the protest movement, although the issue of nuclear energy meanwhile entered a quite critical discussion. However, several local or prefectural politicians, partially influenced by the result of successful referendums, expressed their sympathy with the demands and goals proposed by the anti-nuclear movement (Asahi Shinbun, 28 April 2012).

Apart from political elites, a number of famous actors, musicians, TV idols, novelists, journalists and even business people can be observed to have taken side with the anti-nuclear protestors or even to engage as initiators of several actions<sup>7</sup>. Although not having direct political influence, these celebrities' degree of popularity and frequent presence in mass media can have a wide-ranging impact on the public perception and reception of the movement's activities in Japanese society. In this regard, one might argue that the influence of prominent supporters in the movement cannot so much be considered as a political opportunity, but has a certain effect on processes of framing, which will be discussed below.

Conflicts among political elites, which can serve as a beneficial opportunity for a protest movement's development, appear to play an important role in the case of the Japanese anti-nuclear protests. First of all, the on-going struggle about the factional leadership of the presently ruling DPJ seems to undermine its position as a strong and united political force, which makes it easier for its critics<sup>8</sup> to spot weaknesses. Factional inner-party competition has been a common feature in Japanese politics and could, in particular when revealed during a crisis situation, be seen as a factor of political instability.

A second rift between political elites is exemplified by the rivalry over political autonomy between the central and local or prefectural governments.

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<sup>7</sup> Examples are Nobel laureate Ōe Kenzaburō, who actively supports the umbrella network *Sayōnara Genpatsu* on various occasions (Asahi Shinbun, 18 March 2012) or Softbank chairman Son Masayoshi, who openly declared his opposition to nuclear energy and attempts to promote the development of alternative energy generation in Japan (The Korea Times, 20 June 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Recent inner-party struggles of the DPJ focus on different factional opinions about the proposed doubling of the consumption tax rate until 2015 (The Japan Times, 9 May 2012).



There seem to be tendencies to demand strengthened means of decentralised decision-making about a number of different issues<sup>9</sup>.

A third type of elite dispute can be observed in the conflict-stricken relationship between the financially struggling electricity company TEPCO and the Japanese government, which felt obliged to secure the company's financial survival through bailout payments and an eventual nationalisation (The Economist, 11 February 2012). TEPCO's position as a quasi-monopolistic provider of electric energy in East Japan and its close connection to the Japanese government can be regarded as a typical example of an "Iron Triangle" relationship. Already during the crisis occurrence and the subsequent process of early crisis management, the on-going reciprocal allocations of blame revealed this critical relationship (The Wall Street Journal, 19 March 2011).

The final signal, the POS approach, takes into consideration the factor of potential measures of repression by the authorities. Constitutionally, Japan grants democratic rights of free expression and demonstrations are legal and applied means of protest in the country. However, the state's capacity of repression against the protest movement can be revealed in a number of both visible and disclosed features.

A striking element at all demonstration scenes is the omnipresence of a massive number of police forces. At some of the smaller demonstrations, the police even appeared to outnumber the protest's participants. Police forces regulate the event's activities according to the pre-decided plan, in assuring that time- and space limits are maintained. In effect, convoys on both flanks of the parade make sure that no participant leaves the designated course and furthermore restrict the public standing on the sidelines from joining the parade. This appears very effective, as the by-standing audiences, in spite of showing a certain interest in the event (such as taking photos) and in many cases also expressing their support (cheering and clapping), do not join the march. As another successful strategy, the police try to separate the demonstrators' parade so they walk in a number of smaller blocks with vacant spaces in between. Interestingly, or just because of the sheer number of police forces, the demonstrators usually don't show any signs of contesting these restrictions. In most cases, the whole atmosphere, in spite of the sensitivity of the topic, appears very peaceful and orderly.

The massive presence of police forces not only seems to impede the spontaneous and flexible organisation of protest actions but also creates an

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<sup>9</sup> For instance, Ōsaka's elected mayor Hashimoto Tōru and his initiated party Ōsaka Ishin No Kai, challenge the central government with a range of populist claims (The Economist, 28 January 2012).

atmosphere of intimidation and unease for the by-standing public. As was depicted above, it is difficult for bystanders to join in a demonstration march. But even if they could, many people appear rather reluctant to spontaneously join the protest, as the means of demonstration, in regard of the massive presence of police, appears to be perceived as something rather controversial, dangerous and, if possible, better avoided. In creating and upholding a type of socially embedded taboo about protest activities, the state authorities seem to be quite successful in repressing and limiting their development. As Broadbent describes: "Japan's cultural values of self-denial, aversion to conflict, and the primacy of welfare of the group or community over that of the individual hampered protest mobilization" (Broadbent 1998: 136).

One respondent from *Nerima Akushon* presented a personal encounter, which describes this problem of taboo very well:

*"The Fukushima accident was a kind of trigger for people to realise things, which they didn't realise before. For example, after a movie screening (about nuclear energy issues) in Yokohama, I talked to one young mother and she said that before she always thought that people joining protests were kind of weird, but now she watched the movie and realised that people participate in demonstrations because they have something to protect. And she changed her worldview by 180 degrees. Without the Fukushima accident, she would still have this image."* (Nerima Akushon).

As some interviewees claimed, measures of repression seem to be also employed in a disclosed manner. For instance, among university students, organisation of and engagement in protest activities are reported to be not only discouraged but also actively suppressed by educational authorities, for example through threats of exclusion from university. This information derived out of the unstructured discussion in one of the conducted interviews (*NAZEN*) and could not be further verified, but it makes clear that the degree of at least perceived and expected repression among protest participants is quite high. Other informants furthermore described the frequently alleged presence of undercover observers at demonstration events (*Shitamachi Nettowāku*).

Despite these identified aspects, it is difficult to say if repressionist measures and the capabilities of the state experienced a change prior to or during the development of the recent protest movement. It thus remains unclear how the recently observable emergence of protest stands in relation to the degree of applied repression. Nevertheless, it could be argued that in regard to the fact of people demonstrating in spite of certain repressionist measures, even more people would join the protests if the actual or perceived levels of repression

were lower. Following this, repression can be seen to have a protest-impeding influence in this context.

The application of the POS approach through the analysis of visible signals of political opportunities seems to provide at least a partial explanation for the recent emergence of protest. Whereas the political structure opened up some points of access and revealed spots of weakness for public contentious measures, the availability of influential popular supporters of the movement and the on-going conflicts among elites on different levels appear to serve as beneficial opportunities for the emergence and mobilisation of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement. However, the POS approach furthermore considers critical events as integral and necessary factors for a movement's evolution. In a situation of sufficiently available political opportunities, experiences of crisis, such as the nuclear catastrophe in this case, can serve as a triggering element to prompt individual decisions to engage in protest. As Opp describes, "the event, which may suddenly impose a grievance as at Three Mile Island (...) changes perceptions and calls attention to, and crystallizes opinion on, moral and political matters that had been dormant or ambiguous" (Opp 2009: 268). Nevertheless, the bare existence of opportunities or the experience of a critical event alone would have been insufficient for the social movement's emergence. Rather, constituting processes include the perception of rising costs of personal inaction to an unbearable level with regard to the occurrence of the nuclear accident paired with the development of individual incentives to participate in protest based on an evaluation of available political opportunities.

### *2.3.2 Resource Mobilisation Perspective*

Advanced means of communication and technology, which are considered as macro resources in the RMP approach, enabled simplified and cost-efficient ways of information distribution, for instance through the availability of mobile phones with Internet access and the widespread use of online social networking services such as *Twitter* and *Facebook*. On the one hand, these new possibilities improved the spreading of alternative information apart from the perceived-as inadequate mass media and thus could extend the breadth of discussion about nuclear power issues by reaching so far inaccessible parts of society. And on the other hand, the new channels of modern communication provided activist groups in the movement with a whole new range of tools to simplify and facilitate logistic processes at their events. For instance, information about upcoming protest activities as well as meetings can easily and without high cost reach a wide audience of possible adherents. This is exemplified best by the successful regular organisation of street

demonstrations by groups such as *TwitNoNukes*, which rely on a diversified network of followers in online social networks. Furthermore, advanced means of communication also improved the possibilities of networking and cooperation between different active groups within the protest movement, as can be seen for example in the provision and exchange of information about alternative energy options on online platforms such as e-shift network, which was initiated by a number of environmental NGOs. Another newly enabled form of protest is given through the possibility of “*cyber-activism*”, in the form of online petitions, which are frequently used by organisations within the anti-nuclear movement in Japan.

Readily disposable time, as one important micro resource, seems to play an important role as well. Although among the protest groups under consideration active participants are also in the generation of young parents (30–40 years) or within working age and affiliated to some other form of activism, the majority of active members belong to the age group of retired people (60 years and older), who can be expected to commit a rather large amount of free time to engage in activities of protest. One exception in the consistency of membership can be seen in the youth-oriented network *NAZEN*, which encompasses a large number of young activists. Students, recent university graduates, those in non-permanent and rather unstable forms of employment, widely considered as “*furitā*” and young unemployed people called “*NEET*” are also groups that have a certain amount of necessary disposable time to spend on activities of protest.

In comparison, the influence of disposable income as another micro resource for protest development does not seem as apparent. Most organisations within the movement are financed completely by participant donations and appear to operate on a rather small budget. However, dominant groups among the movement's adherents (retired, above-average educated), with the exception of the younger generation activists, could be counted as financially rather well-off and thus represent quite a strong base of financial resources. It could furthermore be argued that the financial pressure on protest operators was at least partially mitigated due to the above-discussed newly available means of low-cost communication, although a certain amount of financial resources is still required for the distribution of information and the organisation and implementation of protest events.

Environmental NGOs such as *FoE Japan* or *Greenpeace Japan* are financially dependent on receiving donations from their officially registered membership. Next to their base of supporters, the NGOs' personnel is made up of professional staff and a number of volunteers with different backgrounds and in different age groups. The introduction of legal recognition improved the

financial situation through benefits such as possibilities for tax exemptions and thus supported their possible range of activities.

Knowledge and education can be regarded as influential micro resources as well. Respondents of both interviewed neighbourhood-based groups pointed out that the majority of activists have an above-average educational background, i.e. college graduation. This should provide the movement's groups with the necessary degree of technical, political as well as organisational comprehension to operate effectively.

The so-called “repertoire of contention” also appears to play a crucial role in the development of the protest movement. At least some of the participants and organisers of demonstration events have experiences of previous protest engagement, which could serve as pivotal expertise for the movement's mobilisation. In particular among the older activists, many people have been active in protest movements against other issues, starting from the 1960's student movement, demonstrations against the US-Japanese security treaty (“ANPO”), protests against the Vietnam War or against a range of other environmental problems.

However, as was depicted by some of the interview respondents, the act of protest in the form of open contention can be seen as not being “culturally embedded” and much more as something considered rather controversial in Japan. This persisting social taboo of open protest might be reinforced by connecting the anti-nuclear movement to previous examples of more radical and violent examples of protest. In this way, strong roles of “protest veterans” might also withhold possible adherents from actively joining the ranks of the protestors and thus impede mobilisation.

Cooperation between different organisations and groups within the protest movement takes place first of all in the planning and implementation of joint demonstration events. For this purpose, umbrella networks such as *Sayōnara Genpatsu* not only collate information from various smaller groups but also manage to provide visual symbols of corporate identity such as unified logos on flags and badges at large-scale protest events, in which the numerous decentralised groups participate. Generally, these forms of networking are seen as very positive. A too large number of groups with a wide range of different goals, expectations and propositions, however, might have a hindering effect on successful cooperation.

One respondent of *FoE Japan*, which is part of the network *e-shift* remarked:

*“Now it is not that easy to work together, because every group thinks a bit different. For example, one group might think that nuclear power plants should be stopped right now, but another one might say that they could run for another 20 years, when their security standard is high enough”*

and to the question if this leads to tensions between the different groups:

*“No, we do work together, but for example when we want to release a [common] statement, there can occur some problems” (FoE Japan).*

Another central element regarded by the RMP approach is the reliance of movement mobilisation on pre-existing but thematically unrelated network structures on the meso level. A large number of organisations and groups within the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement developed on the base of such available networks, whereas the type and degree of formality of these structures is very diverse. Environmental NGOs such as, for instance, *FoE Japan* or *Greenpeace Japan*, which had been active in the country for quite a while but did not specially focus on issues related to nuclear energy, decided to refocus their activities towards a strong anti-nuclear agenda as their main topic after the critical events in 2011.

Asked about their refocus of agenda, one respondent of *FoE Japan* mentioned:

*“Of course we were against nuclear power, but we didn't have any particular activities in this field (...), we started properly in April (2011)” (FoE Japan).*

This refocus of activities not only increased the presence of environmental NGOs at major protest events, but also led to a rising interest and motivation for new participants to support their work or even become active members.

One interviewee of *FoE Japan* mentioned:

*“Many people have been angry about the evacuation measures of the government, that not enough has been done, that information has been concealed (...) And we did more in this field. That's why, I think, our supporters increased” (FoE Japan).*

Neighbourhood-based protest groups basically developed as new entities during the summer after the catastrophe, but often seem to rely on pre-existing forms of rather indefinite local organisation, such as residents' associations. Networks of kin- and friendship also seem to play an important role in the process of mobilisation, as many of the respondents described during the interviews. Triggering incentives for organisation within the local setting have been, among others, an emerging critique and dissatisfaction in response to public hearing events held by the municipal governments, as one respondent of the local group *Shitamachi Nettowāku* explained.

On the other side can be seen dependencies and relationships to large-scale network structures such as labour union associations, for example, in the case

of the umbrella organisation *Sayōnara Genpatsu* or the youth-oriented network *NAZEN*. The reliance on underlying network structures opens up possibilities for mobilisation to draw on a large number of already accessed supporters and furthermore makes available previously established and tested channels of communication.

Although already existing organisational structures appeared to play a crucial role in the emergence of a number of groups, there also exist several protest networks that developed without being affiliated to previously existing networks and put a strong emphasis on this self-reliance. One such example is the locally based group *Nerima Akushon*, which was set up by a number of concerned residents of a central district in Tōkyō and is now involved in diverse activities of protest.

Many respondents mentioned that a lot of participants engage in protest activities parallel to their full-time employment and that for many previously somewhat apolitical people this engagement represents their first experience of political activism. This activation of new and diverse support groups not only enlarges the base of movement adherents, but can also serve to demonstrate a movement's openness and thus motivate further mobilisation.

One respondent from *Nerima Akushon* confirmed this finding:

*“A lot of people who were not interested in politics started to participate in the movement, (...) for example mothers who were not politically active before are now very worried about their children. They started to get informed about the issue, read and wrote many articles and issued claims to the ward office to ensure low enough radiation levels in their children's school lunch. In Japan it's very rare for women to take action or claim something from the government, but after the nuclear accident it is changing dramatically” (Nerima Akushon).*

Apart from relying on pre-existing organisational structures, new external networks with different degrees of formalisation and institutionalisation are also created and shaped through the movement's activities, as represented in the case of the development of *Midori no Mirai* as a type of Green Party in Japan. This group strives to become established as a political party with an environmental stance, i.e. an anti-nuclear agenda.

The support of labour union organisations for protest against different issues has never been uncommon in Japan and thus cannot represent a new factor in the movement's mobilisation. The relationship to other types of externally organised groups, such as neighbourhood associations who now engage in protest, however, can be regarded as a novel development and a possible explanatory factor for the recent movement emergence. Furthermore, as some of the interview respondents explained, mobilisation processes do not necessarily have to rely on pre-existing network structures (as is shown for

example in the case of *Nerima Akushon*). In particular the mobilisation of previously rather apolitical participants, as for instance adherents in the age group of young parents (30–40 years) but also the younger groups of students, “*furitā*” and “*NEET*”, exemplifies the apparent change among available resources, which could be regarded as decisive explanatory factors to enable the movement's development.

### 2.3.3 *Collective Identity and Framing Processes*

Signs of collective identity as an influential factor on protest development could be observed in a number of cases, although some of the contacted groups seem to put a stronger emphasis on its open representation than others. In particular among the younger participants in groups such as *NAZEN*, sentiments of collective identity appear to play a crucial role and were often emphasised during the conducted interview and furthermore made visible by their presence at demonstration events. Solidarity with peers and the representation of a “we-feeling” within the group can serve as an incentive for adherents to become actively engaged and moreover directly motivates and drives specific activities of protest. Whereas during the bigger demonstrations neighbourhood-based groups often act as representatives from their localities who enjoy exchanging information about their respective activities with other organisations, for younger protest participants in particular the aspect of belonging and being identifiable to a group seems to play an important role and is described as a “big factor of success” (*NAZEN*).

Other groups, such as *Nerima Akushon*, however, pointed out the strong diversity among its participants and made clear that aspects of collective identity play at the most a role to commit to a common goal, whereas the activists' heterogeneity itself serves as a motivating factor of mobilisation and the unforced and vague possibilities of involvement in the group made it attractive for many adherents. In spite of the presence of some majority groups such as people of retired age or young people in precarious situations, the social diversity among participants in this protest movement is striking. Although some of the groups emphasise the importance of collective identity formation and representation, its influence on the whole movement itself should not be overestimated. A “we-feeling” might thus motivate individuals to join a certain protest group or become affiliated to a specific network within the movement, but the role these identities play within the frame of the broader Japanese anti-nuclear movement is rather limited and thus should not be regarded as able to serve as a strong explanatory factor for its development.

In contrast, framing processes appear to play a much more integral part in the movement's emergence and development. Frame alignment takes place by



making the incalculable threats and dangers of the catastrophe apparent and displaying a relationship to individuals' circumstances and situations and thus pointing out a necessary society-encompassing concern. These strategies are generally taken up by all kinds of groups and organisations that are active in the anti-nuclear movement and a wide range of frames are employed in a movement-overarching manner.

Strong framing symbols that are frequently used in the Japanese case include, for instance, worried and concerned parents and in particular mothers in states of imposed helplessness against the dangerous situation. This is crucial for mobilisation, as was already mentioned by Hasegawa, who claims that “for the actors themselves, the role of 'mother/parent' is already central to their orienting framework, a key determinant in their behavior patterns and decision-making. Appealing to someone's sense of responsibility as 'mother/parent' can be a very direct and effective means of motivating them to action” (Hasegawa 2004: 140f). In this sense, repeatedly called-out messages and paroles on pamphlets and posters used during demonstration events often depict health dangers for children now and in their future<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, in emphasising personal and direct threats through radioactive contamination in food and air, many of the groups signified the critical situation as an issue of everybody's necessary concern. Out of these sentiments of imposed helplessness and developed distrust in the present situation, individual choices of participation in protest seem to be motivated and many of the respondent groups described this underlying incentive to become active as a mentality of “one has do (at least) something”.

One respondent from *Midori no Mirai* emphasised:

*“I think that it was especially young mothers who had this really strong sense of crisis” (Midori no Mirai)*

and one interviewee from *Nerima Akushon* mentioned that:

*“(...) in particular for mothers, whose lives have been completely different so far, this (engagement in protest) is a completely new situation. It is always difficult to change one's life so drastically” (Nerima Akushon).*

Further framing activities observed at demonstrations try to relate the nuclear catastrophe to the strong symbols of the nuclear bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although one might expect this to serve as a most

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<sup>10</sup> Frequently called-out slogans at demonstrations are for example “kodomotachi o hōshanō kara mamorō!” (“Protect children from radiation!”) or “kodomo o mamore, otona ga mamore!” (“Protect the children. It's the adults' responsibility!”).

effective and convincing frame, its employment during the protests, in particular at those organised by younger adherent groups, was less than expected. This might be attributed to the fact that although a strong stance against nuclear warfare is already undeniably socially embedded in Japan, this topic was traditionally actively separated from the issue of nuclear energy. However, for many potential movement supporters this connection was discovered to serve as a powerful framing tool and is applied for example in the petitions organised by *Sayōnara Genpatsu*.

Another widely deployed and very effective frame can be described as a necessary but meanwhile universally accepted mistrust and rejection of government institutions and mass media's attitude towards the catastrophe and its aftermath. All interviewed organisations mentioned the lack of available and reliable information, especially about safety issues such as radioactive contamination of food or the environment. Not only are these topics barely reported in the major organs of mass media, but also many of the participants of protest organisations explained that they don't trust the published information from authorities. According to one interviewee of *NAZEN*, information published by the government authorities and mass media are not only untrustworthy or unreliable, but furthermore actively applied methods of “indoctrination” and “brainwashing” (*NAZEN*). Concerning this mistrust, a number of the respondents from different groups referred to the newspaper *Tōkyō Shinbun* as having become the main and single official source of comparatively trustworthy information about nuclear issues in Japan.

As one respondent of *FoE Japan* explained:

*“Only one newspaper in Tōkyō, Tōkyō Shinbun, reports very much about it. Every day they have two pages about nuclear power plants or about the anti-nuclear movement” (FoE Japan).*

In addition, politicians and representatives of energy producers such as TEPCO are often displayed as lying about facts and withholding information and accused of general mismanagement of the crisis. In this way, the catastrophe itself can be projected as a kind of “created crisis” by false elite actions and thus serves to represent a violation of institutional conceptions of elite responsibilities<sup>11</sup>.

As a second step regarding the analysis of framing processes, the formulation of frames oriented towards action and the way in which goals are depicted are important elements. Tying in with the representation of imposed helplessness

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<sup>11</sup> This argument was even reinforced by former Japanese Prime Minister Kan, who declared the nuclear crisis as a “man-made disaster” (The Daily Yomiuri, 7 September 2011).

and common mistrust in elites, frames depicting citizens' self-help and the importance of citizen science as well as citizen action as necessary social duties appear to play a crucial role in the mobilisation of protest. Numerous groups express the importance of independent information about the dangers of radiation and encourage individuals to engage in the gathering of such sources and to conduct and distribute their own measurements.

One respondent of *Greenpeace Japan* for instance summarised their anti-nuclear engagement as:

*“lobbying of decision-makers, mobilising and empowering local civil society and (...) consumer-safety activities” (Greenpeace Japan).*

The strong focus on alternative information provision appears to be crucial among the locally based protest groups as well. Both interviewed neighbourhood associations regularly organise events such as film-screenings or discussion meetings about citizens' safety, nuclear and radiation technology, alternative energy sources and possibilities of autonomous citizen science, to which often-external experts and scientists are invited<sup>12</sup>.

Action-oriented framing furthermore attempts to tackle the above-described problem of the socially embedded taboo towards open forms of protest and contentious activities. For instance, speeches, appeals and musical performances by prominent figures and more or less well-known artists are organised to create an atmosphere of festivity during the protest events. Next to a large number of colourful banners and flags from different groups, many people are encouraged to bring along their self-made and individually designed posters and signs, reflecting the movement's big creative input. Many protest events also actively put into focus the representation of children and families. These measures are employed to contest the existing negative picture of demonstrations as something controversial and belligerent, and attempt to present it in a more positive and appealing way.

Interestingly, the way in which the different groups display their activism's agenda and goals extends from rather vague, open-ended and flexible formulations of directions for action to very concrete and specified articulations of demands and propositions towards politicians and authorities. Whereas the environmental NGOs' primary focus is on the improvement of information provision about personal safety from dangers created through the critical situation, frames of longer-perspective goals include relatively radical shifts in national energy policies towards reducing or abandoning nuclear energy production. In order to point out possible alternatives, *FoE Japan* and

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<sup>12</sup> *Nerima Akushon* for instance organised “Action week” (akushon junkan) prior to the yearly anniversary of the catastrophe in March 2012 with several symposia about food safety, documentary films and discussion forums.

its collaborating organisations provide scientifically backed-up propositions for changes in national energy politics. *Greenpeace Japan* explained that, based on their calculations, a shift in energy policies with a strong focus on investments in natural gas and geothermal energy projects can make it possible to reach a 100 per cent energy reliance on natural sources by as early as 2020.

Locally based organisations, however, appear to design their goals in a more tangible manner. Formulations of their agenda include predominantly the frame of averting the recommissioning (*“saikadō”*) of nuclear power plants, which have been shut down for technical inspections after the crisis occurrence. A frequently framed goal by many of the active groups is to reach and maintain the important state of a *“nuclear free summer”* in 2012, when all Japanese nuclear power stations will be temporarily stopped<sup>13</sup>. Although this would not suffice as a final goal of the movement, its symbolic value is seen as important for further developments. This frame also tackles a number of common counter-frames, which are employed by the movement's opponents, such as pointing out the resource-dependency of Japan's electricity generation system, the safe and reliable character of Japanese nuclear technology as well as the inevitably rising electricity costs an abandonment of nuclear energy would entail.

One respondent of *Nerima Akushon* provides a description of such counter-frames:

*“Although Japan has experienced nuclear dangers three times, we still rely on nuclear energy! One reason for this is that logically nuclear weapons and nuclear power are the same, but in reality they are treated as being something different. Politicians and mass media always propagate how safe, powerful and efficient nuclear energy is. And of course politicians and mass media received money for progressing nuclear power plant projects. (...) After the Fukushima accident, some people realised this fact and decided to take action” (Nerima Akushon).*

It becomes clear that cognitive aspects played a decisive role in the development of anti-nuclear protest in Japan. Applied framing processes had a strong influence on two decisive moments of the mobilisation process. Firstly, broadly employed frames, which pointed out the severity of the critical event and created a relation to issues of everybody's concern, such as immediate health dangers from radiation, in particular for children, successfully awoke sufficiently strong grievances to trigger individual incentives to protest. Thus, the nuclear crisis itself was not the trigger for individual mobilisation, but the

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<sup>13</sup> This situation was achieved on 5 May 2012 when the third reactor of Tomari nuclear power plant in Hokkaidō was shut down for maintenance (The Guardian, 5 May 2012).

way and manner in which it was depicted by initiators of protest. Secondly, framing strategies served to mark out possibilities for action, for instance by emphasising the importance of citizens' self-reliance and promoting the generation of independent information. Action-oriented framing strategies, such as the festive style in which demonstrations are presented, furthermore attempted to overcome the negative connotation of protest in society.

As was explained above, framing processes also stand in direct relation to the influential factors of political opportunities or mobilisable resources, which were analysed in the previous sections. It was not their sole availability but the frames in which these opportunities and resources were presented and then individually perceived that had an impact on the development of protest. Strategic reframing of grievances served to open up the possibility for people to discover and make use of political opportunities or resources which already existed, but so far had been undiscovered. Framing processes thus take up an important interrelating role between available factors for movement development and individual perception, and subsequently incentives to become actively engaged in protest.

## **2.4 Discussion**

In spite of its wide range of considered explanatory factors, the application of the integrated theoretical model for the analysis of the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement also contained a number of weaknesses and limitations. The task of this research has been to trace, highlight and understand underlying factors for the movement's development despite the appearance of the most important triggering element, represented by the occurrence of the critical disaster event of 3.11. Although the theoretical framework takes into account a manifold set of factors for protest development, several underlying processes remain rather unclear and the model can at best lead to speculations about their role within protest emergence. Some of these important findings, which are not considered by the approaches of the integrated model, can be seen to play a decisive role in the emergence of the Japanese anti-nuclear protest movement and thus should not remain unmentioned. This section will present and evaluate these additional findings and lead to a conclusive argument about the adequacy of the applied theoretical framework for this project's analysis.

### *External opportunities*

Concerning the specific forms of organisation and strategies of protest the movement's groups employ, many of the interviewed groups referred to available international parallels, for example, the successful developments and outcomes of anti-nuclear protest movements in other countries. In particular,

the German anti-nuclear movement was often cited as an inspirational example. Several interviewees studied and followed the development, organisation and strategies of the anti-nuclear protests in Germany extensively and a few even travelled to Germany to receive information and inspiration. The availability of such a successful example could be described as an “external opportunity”, which can be seen to serve a similarly influential role in protest emergence as the political opportunities discussed above.

One respondent of *Midori no Mirai* described the influence of the German Green Party on the development of their own organisation:

*“Hasn't the German Green Party become extremely famous when the end of nuclear energy [in Germany] was decided? Even if people didn't know about a Green Party in Japan and about Midori no Mirai, because they knew about the German Green Party many started to talk about it like: Let's form a Green Party like in Germany!” (Midori no Mirai).*

#### *Anti-nuclear protests as a “New Social Movement”*

A number of the observed and evaluated features of the Japanese anti-nuclear protest provide arguments to compare its character with a so-called “New Social Movement” (NSM). Hasegawa describes these as “characterized by the absence or minimalism of formal organizations or groups. (...) They are typically averse to horizontal or vertical role-divisions within the movement group, and demand rigid adherence to non-bureaucratic direct democracy practices within the group” (Hasegawa 131). It appeared as if the settings of the group-internal meetings, which were observed, were to be kept as informal and unofficial as possible. There were no signs of hierarchical patterns and although there was one person in charge of moderating the meetings, the participants made clear their refusal to create obvious leadership structures within the group in choosing a different person for this routine at each meeting. Also, when asked about the groups' internal composition, it often appeared not very easy for the respondents to provide a clear description, as many of the groups maintain a rather loose organisation. In particular among the newly emerged groups, loose structures seem to be preferred to a strict or formal membership of participants. Interestingly, in the case of the locally based organisations, interview respondents even appeared to feel rather uncomfortable to be addressed as a representative of their group, which highlights the unwillingness of forming clear structures and patterns of hierarchies within the organisations.

One respondent of *Nerima Akushon* describes the group's leadership question as follows:

*“There are many groups without a leader in Japan. Even if they don't have a leading figure, as long as there are people who effectively manage the group, they don't need a specific person who makes decisions” (Nerima Akushon).*

A NSM character of the protests might serve as another way to strengthen its role as something novel and most of all unrelated to previous forms of open contention. It thus tries to disconnect it from the widespread negative sentiments towards these forms of protest. Its overt and accessible character opens up to new groups of possible supporters and adherents, and in this way might foster the movement's development and corroborate its strength and sustainability.

### *Conceptualisations of protest activities*

The ways in which activities of protest are conceptualised among different organisations within the movement provides views about their longer-perspective aims and can be helpful to understand individuals' motivations to engage in protest activities. The established political party *Midori no Mirai* for instance, which attempts to participate in the parliamentary elections in 2013, appears to strive to put an emphasis on enlarging the anti-nuclear agenda to encompass the possible employment of democratic institutional mechanisms.

One respondent of *Midori no Mirai* described their goals as:

*“Once they (the nuclear power plants) are stopped, and hopefully won't have been restarted, after one or two years a national discussion should emerge. It is our goal that decisions about the future of nuclear energy are made through residents' or national referendums, (which means) through the citizens' consent” (Midori no Mirai).*

The probably broadest conceptualisation of grievances and protest activities among the respondent groups could be observed at the youth-oriented network *NAZEN*. Although the anti-nuclear agenda as a constituting element dominates their protest engagement, the specific issue is brought into relation to a number of much wider societal and economic problems in Japan. One respondent of *NAZEN* pointed out that hand in hand with a solution to the nuclear issue must come various deep changes in society, such as a solution to the precarious and discriminating situation for young people in the labour market.

Both conceptualisations can serve as a motivating factor for more individuals to become actively engaged in the protest movement. Whereas in the case of *Midori no Mirai*, perspectives of political institutionalisation and formalisation of the struggle around the anti-nuclear issue might be appealing for a number of possible adherents, *NAZEN* attempts to broaden the scope of

the debate to encompass further societal problems that could also be assessed as a mobilisation strategy for increasing the support base.

### *Mobilisation problems*

At the same time as tracing explanatory factors for successful movement development, it also appears important to look out for possible factors that hold people from protest participation, i.e. reasons for non-mobilisation. Broadbent mentions that “unless it springs from total ignorance, not caring about an impending threat is an act” (Broadbent 1998: 151). One striking finding is that, with the exception of *NAZEN*, all organisations lamented a lack of young people among protest participants and criticised this age group's disinterest in the issue and their general attitude of resignation towards political activism. It appeared that many of the groups had problems motivating members of the younger generation to participate in protest activities.

One respondent of *FoE Japan* answered to the question if many young people are engaged in their activities:

*“Unfortunately much less than I expected. Much more older people, I would say. That's why we plan to hold an event in March to distribute information to younger people” (FoE Japan)*

and one interviewee from *Nerima Akushon* furthermore mentioned as an explanation that:

*“Students' participation is low because in Japan students are not supposed to say their own opinion. For example, in school, if students mention a different opinion than the teachers, their grades can get worse. Or in a company, if young people say their personal opinion, other people will think, hel she is cheeky” (Nerima Akushon).*

Such rather unmobilised groups in society, on the one hand, reveal weaknesses in the employed mobilisation processes. Whether the inability to provide incentives for younger people to join in protest lies in the issue's nature, unsuccessful framing strategies or the age group's general political disinterest remains unclear. On the other hand, unmobilised young people can also represent un-accessed resources and thus indicate potentials for further protest development.

The above-depicted additional findings serve to enhance the interpretational outcome of the applied theoretical framework. However, in spite of their explanatory weight, they do not question or challenge the overall suitability of the above-introduced integrated model for an analysis in this particular case. As long as other possible factors are not categorically neglected in the



interpretation, the integrated theoretical approach encompasses a rich potentiality to provide answers to questions of movement development.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Broad contention against nuclear energy in Japan can be seen to have emerged only after the dreadful experience of the nuclear catastrophe of Fukushima in March 2011. This study attempted to find answers to the question why the development of anti-nuclear protest relied on the direct imposition of danger through such a critical event and did not occur before, as for instance in a number of other countries. In order to arrive at a better understanding, manifold facets of the Japanese anti-nuclear movement have been observed and subsequently scrutinised in appliance of available theoretical tools of social movement analysis.

The emergence of the recent protest movement seems to have been dependent on a range of novelties in structural and environmental factors. Newly existing political opportunities, such as an unstable situation among elite structures or increased political accessibility served as accountable factors for the anti-nuclear movement's development. Also, alterations in available societal resources for protest mobilisation, such as for example the presence of participants with sufficient disposable time to participate, played a crucial role. Although pre-existing underlying network structures can be seen to have partially served the facilitation of the movement's development, it should be emphasised that the most integral factor of the successful development of the recent movement was the mobilisation of previously apolitical groups of individuals. In opening up for new, previously un-accessed support bases, the anti-nuclear protest movement appears to have emerged into a much more sustainable position than past attempts of anti-nuclear protest in Japan. Whereas the impact of collective identity on the movement's formation remains rather questionable, another crucial influential role can be assigned to successfully apply framing strategies. Neither the occurrence of the crisis, nor the availability of structural or environmental factors alone could be assigned to be a sufficiently strong enough factor for protest mobilisation. Framing processes applied by movement organisations successfully managed to reshape the critical event of the triple catastrophe as well as the available opportunities and resources in a way that impacted and promoted individuals' incentives to join the ranks of protestors.

However, as was revealed in the previous discussion, a number of important additional explanatory factors for the recent protest development have not

been covered by the range of theoretical tools provided in the applied integrated framework of movement analysis. The availability of external opportunities as well as the frequently emphasised adherence to informal and un-hierarchical organisation structures have been detected to play crucial roles in the mobilisation process. Furthermore, in creating links between the movement's goals and other societal developments, the recent movement has succeeded in creating broader conceptualisations of protest that open up access to a larger support base in society. Reasons for non-mobilisation could be detected in the apparently unsuccessful strategies of many other groups to reach the younger audience, which are helpful to identify potential fields of improvement in the mobilisation processes.

In spite of these arguments, the employment of the integrated theoretical framework onto the Japanese case still appeared to be fruitful enough to provide many valuable insights to answer the focused research question. Furthermore, apart from the above-introduced model, there so far exist no other approaches that take into account a similarly wide range of possible explanatory factors. In this regard, it can be concluded that the applied theoretical framework provided the best possible outcome for an analysis of this case.

As was thematised earlier, in many aspects it might be too early to develop a broad comprehension of the development of the anti-nuclear movement that is observable in Japan today. It remains undoubted that this topic, as one of Japan's most stirring and interesting contemporary societal phenomena, bears uncountable, as yet undiscovered facets. Thus, further research is required not only in this particular area, but also in related issues such as for instance the protest movement's outcome and eventual impact on political decisions.

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## APPENDIX

### *List of conducted interviews*

6 February 2012	<i>FoE Japan</i>
6 February 2012	<i>Midori no Mirai – Greens Japan</i>
11 February 2012	<i>Hōshanō o kangaeru Shitamachi Nettowaaku</i>
13 February 2012	<i>Nakuse Genpatsu Nerima Akushon</i>
8 March 2012	<i>Greenpeace Japan</i>
16 March 2012	<i>NAZEN Tōkyō</i>

### *List of observed demonstration events*

29 January 2012	<i>TwitNoNukes</i> demonstration in Shibuya
11 February 2012	<i>Sayōnara Genpatsu</i> demonstration in Harajuku
25 February 2012	<i>NoNukes AllStar</i> demonstration in Shibuya
1 March 2012	<i>Shitamachi Nettowāku</i> demonstration in Edogawa ward
11 March 2012	<i>Sayōnara Genpatsu</i> demonstration in Kōriyama, Fukushima prefecture

*List of interview questions (in English and Japanese)*

<p>1. How long has your group been engaged in anti-nuclear activities? How did it come into existence?</p>	<p>いつからあなたの団体は反原発運動にかかわっていますか。また、どのような経緯で発足しましたか。</p>
<p>2. Has there been a triggering event? What influence did the accident of Fukushima have?</p>	<p>きっかけになった出来事がありますか。福島での事故はどのような影響を及ぼしましたか</p>
<p>3. How does your organisation recruit new members and participants?</p>	<p>あなたの団体はどのように新しいメンバーを募集していますか。</p>
<p>4. How is your group internally organised?</p>	<p>あなたの団体はどのように構成されていますか。</p>
<p>5. What are concrete examples of anti-nuclear actions your group organises or participates in?</p>	<p>あなたの団体が行った、もしくは参加した反原発運動の具体的な例はありますか。</p>
<p>6. Do you have the impression that after the Fukushima accident more people in Japan became interested in engaging in anti-nuclear activities?</p>	<p>福島事故のあと、より多くの日本人が反原発運動に興味をもつようになったと思いますか。</p>
<p>7. What are the characteristics of your group's membership structure? (Dominant age groups, gender distribution, occupation and educational background, previous political engagement.)</p>	<p>組織形態の特徴はなんですか。(年齢層、男女比、職歴または学歴、背景にある政治的興味)</p>
<p>8. What are the concrete goals of your organisation in relation to the anti-nuclear agenda? Can these goals be reached? What are the potential obstacles and problems?</p>	<p>あなたの団体の反原発に対する目標は何ですか。その目標は達成できると思いますか。根底にある障害や問題は何か。</p>
<p>9. Does your group cooperate with other organisations or is it part of a broader network of groups?</p>	<p>あなたの団体が協力している団体は他にありますか。それとも、あなたの団体はどこかの団体に所属していますか。</p>
<p>10. How important is identification with the group?</p>	<p>団体に対する帰属意識はどのくらい強いですか。</p>



*Typology of protest organisations*

<b>typology</b>	<b>umbrella networks</b>	<b>neighbourhood groups</b>	<b>environmental NGOs</b>	<b>other groups</b>
<b>dominant groups of participants</b>	labour unions, organised groups, protest veterans	young parents, retired, local residents	retired, young parents, professionals, volunteers	students, <i>furūta</i> , <i>NEET</i> , artists
<b>degree of organisation</b>	pre-existing network structures	neighbourhood community, kinship-networks	registered membership, (inter-)national networks	cyber-networks, kinship-networks
<b>form of activism</b>	large street demos, national petitions, memorial events	small neighbourhood demos, discussion meetings, citizen science	lobbying, national petitions, information work	medium-sized demos, attention-raising, sit-in protests, cyber-activism
<b>goals / agenda</b>	terminating nuclear power and stopping re-activation of shut-down plants	improving information policy, protection of citizens and local environment	e-shift, changing policies, awareness raising	broader societal change
<b>mobilising strategies</b>	pamphlets, presence at demo-events, merchandise, internet	local information platforms, pamphlets, internet blogs	internet, pamphlets, merchandise, presence at demos	internet blogs, twitter-stream, social networks
<b>employed frames</b>	emphasis of internat. cooperation, mass-influence, celebrity allies	worry and need for protection, promotion of citizen science, independence of information, government distrust	alternative proposing, consumer safety, independence of information	general societal instability, ideological framing, solidarity for change, brainwashing system
<b>observation based on</b>	<i>Sayōnara Genpatsu</i>	<i>Nerima Akushon</i> , <i>Shitamachi Nettowaaku</i>	<i>FoE Japan</i> , <i>Greenpeace Japan</i>	<i>NAZEN</i> , <i>TwitNoNukes</i>