

The Macro Dynamics of the Environmental Movement in Japan (1960–2020)

Makoto NISHIKIDO and Hidehiro YAMAMOTO

Abstract

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in 2011 represented a pivotal moment in the history of Japan's environmental movements. In response to the increasing threat of nuclear accidents, the movement against nuclear power generation and the denuclearization movement advocating for renewable energy have gained substantial traction in Japan since 2012. This study aims to investigate the qualitative changes that occurred in the Japanese environmental movement in the periods preceding and following the Fukushima disaster by analyzing protest event data.

We investigated the trends and nature of environmental movements based on changes in the number of movement events and the proportion of tactics in Japan since the mid-1960s. We also examined the dynamics of two waves of protests that emerged after the Fukushima accident in 2011: the anti-nuclear (environmental) and anti-security law (peace) movements. Thus, this study explores the qualitative changes in environmental movements in postwar Japan and the potential emergence of a “social movement society.”

In conclusion, liberal governments that are friendly toward social movements in Japan are currently weak. Moreover, public opinion is unfavorable for social movements. The number of protests declined following these two waves and social movements are now uncommon in Japan. Despite two waves of protests occurring in the wake of 3.11, a “social movement society” has yet to emerge within the Japanese context. The current environmental movements in Japan can be regarded as organized intra-institutional protests or unorganized protests that create reactive demands in response to major social issues (e.g., anti-nuclear power). Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that Japanese civil society may have been constrained by lack of progress.

1. Introduction: Discussion Background and Research Questions

In the period following World War II, Japan witnessed significant environmental movements and socioeconomic transformations. During the mid-1960s and the 1970s, the pollution resulting from economic expansion led to protests. The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident sparked an anti-nuclear movement that was further reinforced by the emergence of a significant anti-nuclear movement following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident in 2011.

These movements have significantly affected both state and civil society. In addition to driving the implementation of environmental policies, these movements have heightened the public awareness of environmental issues and created opportunities for individuals to consider their roles in a democratic society. Japanese environmental sociologists have explored the broader societal implications of these issues using in-depth case studies. However, research on the macro trends associated with these movements is lacking. Consequently, the development and evolution of this movement remain unclear.

This study focuses primarily on the dynamics of environmental movements in postwar Japan and the transformation of civil society. An event analysis approach is used to quantitatively analyze social movement events. We investigate the trends and nature of environmental movements based on changes in the number of movement events and the proportion of tactics.

This study clarifies the macro dynamics of the environmental movement in Japan since the mid-1960s. It analyzes changes in the waves of protest events and means and the types of demands arising from protests. Thus, this

study explores the qualitative changes in environmental movements in postwar Japan and the potential emergence of a “social movement society.”

This study focuses on the dynamics of the environmental movement while comparing and exploring the dynamics of the labor movement, which was a major mobilizing force in postwar social movements in Japan, and the peace movement, which resulted in large-scale activities following the anti-nuclear power plant movement after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a brief history of environmental movements in Japan, Section 3 introduces the method used in this study for social movement event analysis, Section 4 presents the analysis results, and Section 5 summarizes and discusses the findings.

2. Previous Studies on the Environmental Movement in Japan

2.1. The ‘Ice Age’ of the Japanese Environmental Movement and the Fukushima Nuclear Accident

The late 1960s and the 1970s witnessed significant anti-pollution and residential movements in Japan, which greatly influenced society by revealing the detrimental consequences of rapid economic growth. However, Japan’s social movements have been described as experiencing an ‘ice age’ since the 1990s (Pekkanen, 2006; Cassegård, 2022). Wu (2022) described the reasons for this ice age as follows: “The transformative power of the first wave of the environment movements in Japan gradually receded, and public contestation against state and corporate power evolved into other forms of activism led by community-based associations, local environmentally friendly politicians, and a pro-environmentalism circle of ‘soft elite’—technocrats and academicians—embedded in all levels of formal environmental governance, most of whom took part in the environmental protests in the 1960s” (Wu, 2022:83).

Furthermore, Pekkanen (2006) asserted that “Japan does have many groups, but what it does not have is many professionals. Japanese civil society is vital locally. At the national level though, Japanese civil society organizations lack staff and thus do not have the expertise and ability to make their presence felt in national debates” (Pekkanen, 2006:46). Hasegawa (2010) stated that “Japan’s environmental NGO/NPOs and environmental movements have kept strong puritanical tendencies and specific self-expressive orientations. To some degree, this indicates their limited links to the government and business” (Hasegawa, 2010:86).

Thus, Japan’s civil society and particularly the environmental movement have been perceived as having limited political influence. This is partly because their support base consists of the “soft elite” who participated in the protests of the 1960s and lacked the expertise to exert political influence at the national level. According to Hasegawa (2010), the Japanese environmental movement must collaborate with various actors to establish institutional channels.

The Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident in 2011 represented a pivotal moment in the history of Japan’s environmental movements. In response to the increasing threat of nuclear accidents, the movement against nuclear power generation and the denuclearization movement advocating renewable energy have gained substantial traction in Japan since 2012. This study aims to investigate the qualitative changes that occurred in the Japanese environmental movement in the periods preceding and following the Fukushima disaster by analyzing protest event data.

2.2. Anti-Nuclear Power Movement After the Fukushima Nuclear Accident

The concept of the “protest cycle” in social movement research refers to the emergence and decline of protest movements as individuals interact and engage with institutional politics (Tarrow, 1989). According to Chiavacci and Obinger (2018), Japanese society has entered a new phase of protest cycles, with geopolitical hazards, socioeconomic crises and disparities, the conservative establishment’s authoritarian tendencies, and nuclear power concerns collectively contributing to the formation of a “new protest cycle.”

Researchers have studied the resurgence of protests since the ice age with anti-nuclear power demonstrations, especially among those living outside Japan. The relative rarity of large-scale demonstrations in Japanese society

has made this topic particularly relevant to researchers outside Japan as it offers a rare opportunity to observe such phenomena. For example, Cassegård (2022) posited that the “freeter activism” in the 1990s constituted a necessary condition for protests in the 2000s, contributing to the return of protests in 2011. Brown (2018) attempted to understand the anti-nuclear movement culture through a monograph of the protests in Tokyo following the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Bochorodycz (2023) highlighted the complexity of actors, structures, and relationships within the Japanese anti-nuclear movement by integrating the sociological social movement theory with political science theories of civil society.

Some Japanese researchers have focused on the anti-nuclear power plant protests that occurred after the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. Oguma (2013) conducted a participatory observational study, whereas Machimura and Sato (2016) conducted a questionnaire survey to examine the relationship between anti-nuclear and nuclear-free movements.

Moreover, some scholars have contended that the role of demonstrations in Japanese society has experienced a significant metamorphosis in response to the large-scale anti-nuclear protests that followed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. For example, Japanese author Kojin Karatani envisioned a “society with demonstrations” (Karatani, 2012), whereas Ito (2012:18) described society transitioning from isolated, sporadic events to a more systematic, recurring pattern protests that becomes a part of daily life. This phenomenon is referred to as a social movement society, that is, a society in which protests are a routine means of political participation, non-institutionalized expressions of interest besides voting are regular occurrences, movement organizations have become professionalized, and disputes through institutional means have increased (Meyer and Tarrow, 1998). The question then arises as to whether the anti-nuclear movement that emerged in the wake of the Fukushima accident led to the emergence of a social movement society in Japan.

2.3. Two Protest Waves After the Fukushima Disaster and a Social Movement Society

The anti-nuclear movement that arose in the aftermath of the Fukushima accident was followed by a sequence of protests that reached their peak in 2015. Moreover, these protests encompassed opposition to the deployment of the US Osprey aircraft and Japan’s Specified Secrets Protection Law (*Tokutei Himitsu Hogo Hou*) and holding weekly demonstrations in front of the Prime Minister’s office against the 2015 Security Law, which provided for the exercise of the right to collective self-defense. These demonstrations have become increasingly prevalent in Japan.

Higuchi and Matsutani (2020) used a questionnaire survey to examine the trends among individuals who participated in the anti-nuclear demonstrations that peaked in 2012 and the anti-security law demonstrations in 2015. They observed that anti-security law demonstrations derived from the experience of anti-nuclear power plant demonstrations to successfully build large-scale demonstrations. Furthermore, the demonstrations in the aftermath of the nuclear accident were expansive “public spaces” where numerous anonymous and heterogeneous “separate thoughts” could meet, broadening the scope of where objections could be raised in one’s daily life. The researchers posited that these two waves of protests could serve as an impetus for the emergence of a social movement society in Japan.

However, Higuchi and Matsutani (2020) also posited that while younger demonstrators are embracing less confrontational tactics and “movement aversion” is spreading among the Japanese, movement organizations in Japan are obliged to devise more appealing and engaging forms of protest and present compelling counter-proposals and policies to overcome this aversion. This would help convert would-be participants into advocates and advocates into active participants. Their study also highlighted the need to acknowledge that, among younger people, fewer women participated in demonstrations than men. Additionally, the younger generation has not yet had the opportunity to assume the roles previously held by older adults who were active participants in demonstrations.

Furthermore, Higuchi and Matsutani (2020) emphasized the importance of allowing demonstrators to express diverse opinions rather than relying on the traditional organized mobilization style of protest movements. This suggests that the transition to a social movement society in Japan may not have been as straightforward as anticipated. Thus, it is necessary to investigate whether the two waves of protests following the Fukushima nuclear accident resulted in the emergence of a social movement society in Japan.

2.4. Research Question

A review of existing research on the environmental movement in Japan indicates that, before the Fukushima nuclear accident on March 11, 2011, the movement utilized relatively moderate protest methods and became institutionalized. However, the anti-nuclear power movement that emerged in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear accident and the subsequent 2015 anti-security legislation movement that was influenced by it led to the emergence of two waves of protest. The resulting arguments indicated the arrival of a “social movement society” in Japan. However, a significant limitation of these discussions is that they are based on qualitative research, which may fail to objectively capture the macroscopic dynamics and changes in the environmental movement in Japan before and after the Fukushima nuclear accident on March 11. In this study, our objective was to construct protest event data to confirm macroscopic dynamics and interpret qualitative changes in environmental movements and the reasons for these changes.

3. Protest Event Data and Research Design

3.1. Event Analysis Using Protest Event Data

Event analysis was used to quantify social movement activities, including protests, strikes, and demonstrations.

The general definition of a protest event is “for more than one person who, explicitly/potentially, are opposed or antagonistic to, or have complaints about the authorities or organizations of a similar character, regardless of whether in an organized way or not, to get together and act holding a demand that would affect others.” We included protest activities against authorities, such as national and local governments, and corporations that are backed by authorities and have overwhelming power in the local area. Each protest event’s collected contents comprised the event’s time and date, location, tactics (action repertory), type of discontent causing the event, type of demand for the protest, and characteristics of the people who protested⁽¹⁾.

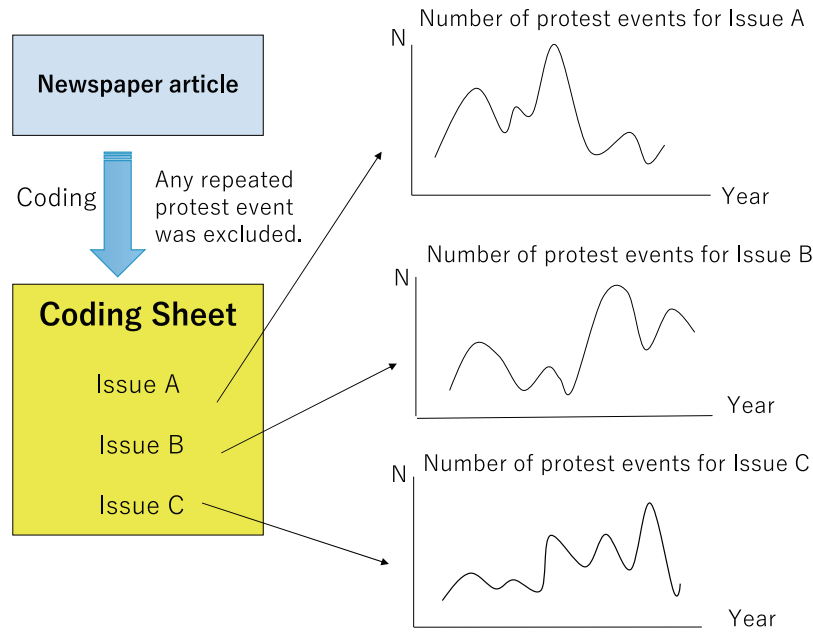
Accordingly, the term “environmental movement” has been used in this study to refer to the totality of protest events based on dissatisfaction with environmental issues. The event data comprised three issues extracted from a newspaper article and aggregated protest events. When the same protest event was indicated in a different newspaper article, duplicate protest events were excluded (Figure 1).

The central purpose of event analysis is to uncover the traits of social movements using event data. Changes in the number of events can be used to determine which social movements are active and their overall level of activity during a particular period. Moreover, data on factors such as whether an event is violent or moderate can be used to capture the characteristics of social movement tactics. Thus, event analysis eliminates impressionistic discussions based solely on the researcher’s subjective assessment of which movements are significant and captures the broader fluctuations of all protest movements.

Japanese environmental sociology has a longstanding tradition of qualitative research-based case studies examining protests related to environmental concerns. Only a few studies have endeavored to create event data to gain insights into the environmental movement wave in Japan and investigate its relationship with structural factors (Nakazawa et al., 1998; Nishikido, 2003). While several researchers have performed event analyses of environmental movements in Europe, the United States, and East Asia (Tarrow, 1989; Kriesi et al., 1995; Rucht, 1998; Rucht, Koopmans, and Neidhardt, 1999; Johnston and Zhang, 2020; Chen, 2020)⁽²⁾, the event data constructed by them are

(1) The criteria for distinguishing between singular and multiple events were as follows: (1) Regarding time, a protest event is defined as a protest action carried out by the same entity at the same time (within 24 hours). (2) Even in instances in which the same entity is responsible for protests at the same location, they are not counted as a single event unless they meet certain temporal continuity requirements, that is, if events are held by the same actor continuously (or at intermittent intervals) within a 24-hour period, they are counted as a single event. In the event of a gap of more than 24 hours between one event and another and the occurrence of a new event after that interval, the latter is counted as a separate event. Regarding spatial criteria, the following rules apply: (1) If a protest event takes place in a location that is spatially distant from the location of the previous event, it is counted as a separate event. However, if the location of an event is unidentifiable or if it is a nationwide event, it is counted as a single event. (2) If events caused by the same actor at the same time occur in multiple locations, they are counted as a single event. For further details on the methodology employed in the creation of the protest event data used in this paper, please refer to the works of Nomiya and Nishikido (2000).

Figure 1 Coding Process



the only datasets capable of capturing the macro-level dynamics of social movements in Japan during the postwar era, as noted in previous research (Nishikido, 2008, 2012; Yamamoto and Nishikido, 2004).

3.2. Event Data and Analysis Methods Used

This study used three distinct datasets of protest events (1945–1995, 1996–2005, and 2006–2020) sourced from the Asahi Shimbun. The Asahi Shimbun was chosen for its extensive coverage of social movements and capacity to collect detailed data on protests, making it a more reliable source than other national newspapers (Watanabe and Yamamoto, 2001). Moreover, the Asahi Shimbun database contains the most extensive time-series datasets for any national newspaper in Japan. Data for 1945–1995 were obtained by examining articles related to protests in the “Asahi Shimbun Headline Database for the 50 Years After the War (*Sengo 50 Nen Asahi Shimbun Midashi Deta Besu*)” and selecting every fourth day from August 15, 1945. The dataset was completed by extracting relevant information from newspaper articles, including the events’ date, time, location, and nature; the issue being protested; and the organizing entity’s characteristics. The data were then coded.

Table 1 Data sources and coding methods for event data

Event Data	Data Source	Coding Method	Number of Events
Event Data 1945–1995	Final version of the Tokyo edition of the Asahi Shimbun	Handwritten coding	7207
Event Data 1996–2005	Asahi Shimbun data including local editions (KIKUZO)	Handwritten coding	5564
Event Data 2006–2020	Asahi Shimbun data including local editions (KIKUZO)	Handwritten coding for one year (2008), later performed by machine learning	8521

The data for 1996–2005 and 2006–2020 were obtained from the Asahi Shimbun “KIKUZO” database every four days by searching for keywords such as demonstrations, rallies, and petitions. We identified articles containing

(2) For a comprehensive review of event data, see Koopmans and Rucht (2002) and Hutter (2014).

these keywords and selected those that corresponded to social movement events. The coding process was performed as previously described. The coding process for the period 1945–1995 and 1996–2005 was carried out manually. For the years 2006–2020, human operators manually coded the data for 2008, and thereafter, utilized supervised learning with this information to code the remaining years. Lastly, the coding’s suitability was determined through manual checks conducted by human operators to ensure its accuracy (Table 1).

The data indicate a significant variation in the number of protest events, with 7,207 events in 1945–1995, 5,564 in 1996–2005, and 8,521 in 2006–2020. This inconsistency suggests that the Asahi Shimbun data source employed different extraction methods before and after 1996. Articles published before 1945–1995 were retrieved by searching for headlines, whereas local-edition articles were included in the database after 1996. Therefore, analyzing changes over time by comparing ratios rather than absolute numbers is essential when using the three protest event datasets.

4. Analyses

4.1. Analysis 1: Changes in the Number of Events

Figure 2 depicts the fluctuating number of protest events from 1945 to 1995, whereas Figure 3 presents the data from 1996 to 2020. Figure 2 demonstrates that labor disputes were the most common occurrence during the 1950s, with the labor movement remaining active until the mid-1970s, encompassing a substantial number of labor movement events. This can be attributed to the Japanese labor movement’s firm dedication to both political and peaceful movements. The number of events related to the peace movement was notably high in 1960 and 1968, which may correspond to protests against the Japan–US Security Treaty in 1960 and the movement against the Vietnam War in 1968. Peace movement events were also relatively frequent in 1982 likely owing to the emergence of an anti-nuclear peace movement following the Second UN Special Session on Disarmament.

Conversely, environmental movements have been linked to protest events initiated by residents in response to pollution concerns during the late 1960s and the 1970s and significant development issues, such as the development of Mutsu Ogawara. Furthermore, an anti-nuclear power plant movement emerged in the late 1980s after the Cher-

Figure 2 Number of Protest Events (1945–1995)

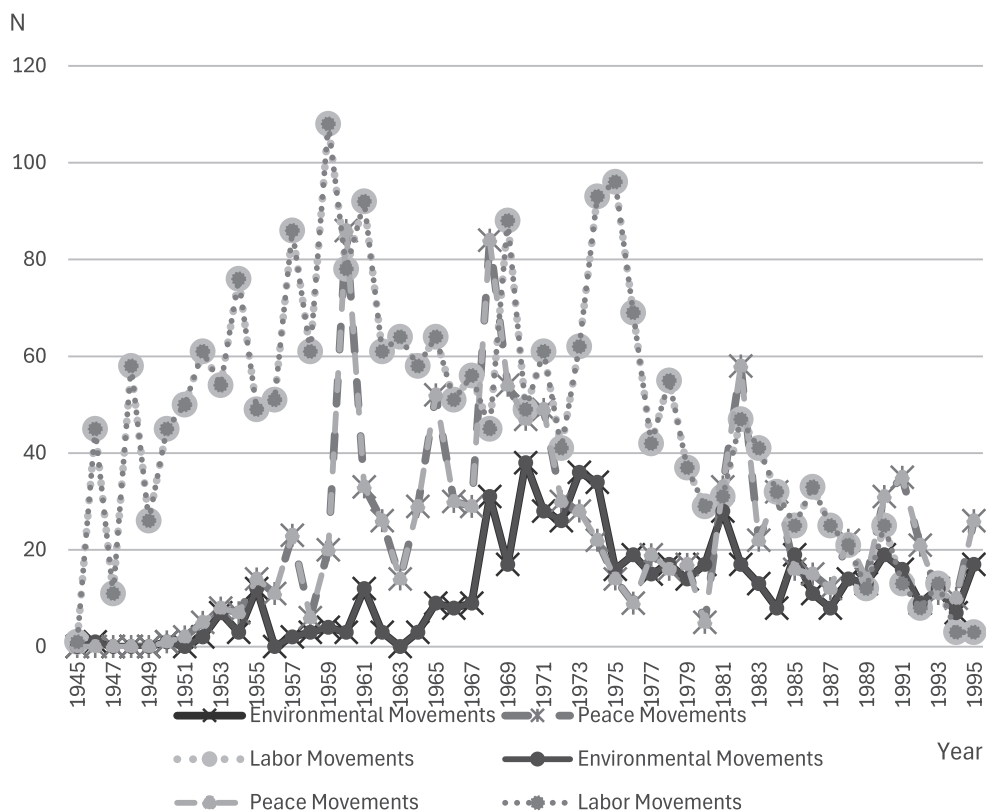
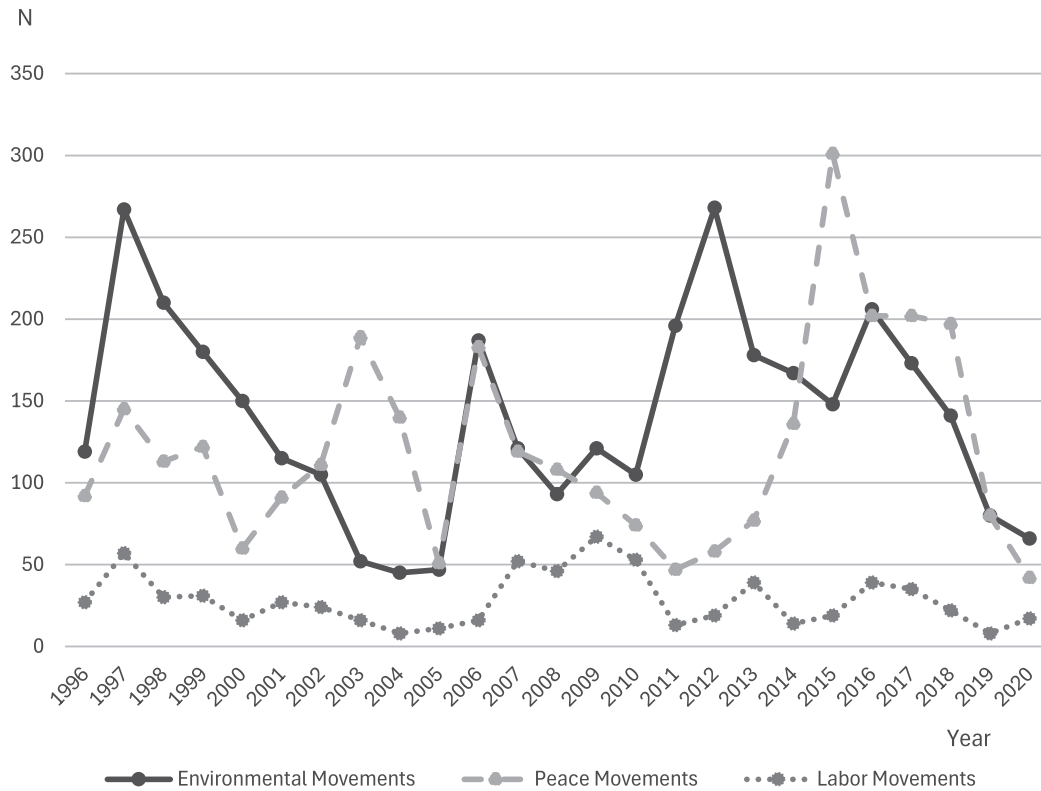


Figure 3 Number of Protest Events (1996–2020)



nobyl nuclear disaster. These examples illustrate the diverse nature of environmental activism (Nishikido, 2003).

Figure 3 shows that the environmental and peace movements reached their peak in 2012 and 2015, respectively. However, periods of increased protests against both movements can also be discerned before these two waves of protests. The number of events associated with the environmental movement and those in 2011–2012 and 1997 were almost identical. This is because, in 1997, protests were held against industrial waste issues, the expansion of nuclear power plants, such as the Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant, and dam construction.

The environmental movement in 2011–2012 provides ample evidence of the growth of the anti-nuclear movement, which had a significant impact on society. Furthermore, the environmental and peace movements continued to hold protest events after their peak following the Fukushima accident, indicating that such activities were a routine part of Japanese society for a certain period. Additionally, a survey conducted by Higuchi and Matsutani (2000) suggested that some participants in the anti-nuclear movement also joined the Security Treaty. This implies that the environmental movement may have influenced the peace movement.

4.2. Analysis 2: Transition in Action Repertoires

An action repertoire refers to a specific type of action performed during a single event. Generally, actions can be separated into six distinct categories (Kriesi et al., 1995): (1) initial stage actions, such as consultations, rallies, and resolutions, as well as the establishment of movement organizations; (2) moderate intra-institutional protest actions, including lawsuits, petitions, and recalls; (3) demonstrative mass mobilization actions, such as demonstrations and collective bargaining; (4) somewhat radical intra-institutional protest actions, such as audit requests and referenda; (5) confrontational protest actions, including sit-ins, occupations, and strikes; and (6) violent protest actions, which can include various forms of violence.

Figures 4 and 5 show the transition of the forms of action in the environmental and peace movements, respectively. Of the above categories of action, 1–4 are institutional forms, whereas 5 and 6 are non-institutional. A comparison of environmental and peace movement actions in the 1960s, 1970s, and after 2000 indicates that both movements have become more moderate. The environmental movement has specifically become less confronta-

Figure 4 Institutional and Non-Institutional Activity in Environmental Movements in Japan (1960–2020)

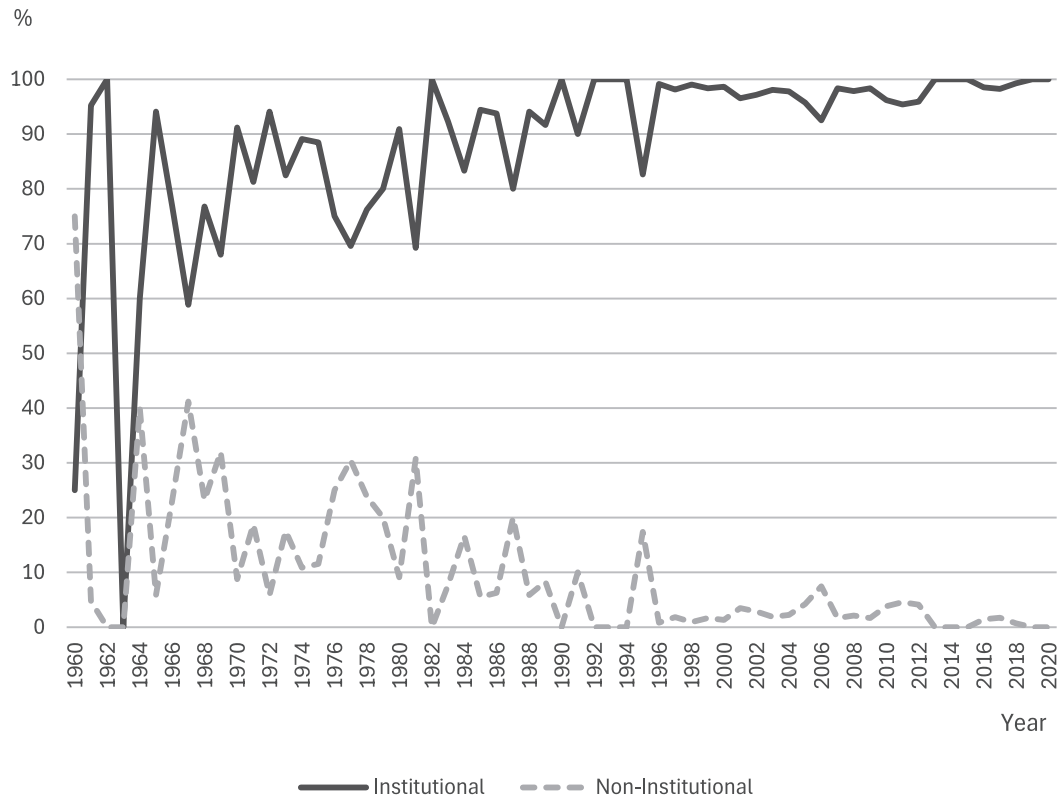
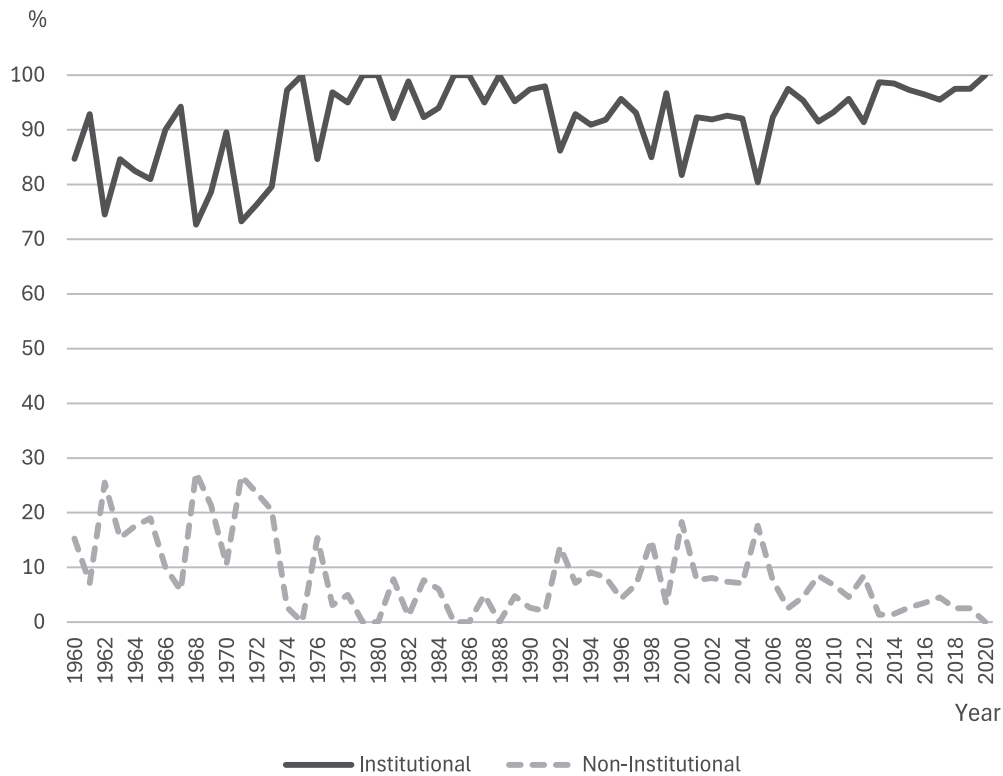


Figure 5 Institutional and Non-Institutional Activity in Peace Movements in Japan (1960–2020)



tional in its actions and more institutionalized in its means of protest. While anti-nuclear demonstrations and protests against the Security Law were particularly active in the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident, these were primarily institutionalized protests.

Figure 6 Transition of the Action Repertoire Environmental Movements (1960–2020)

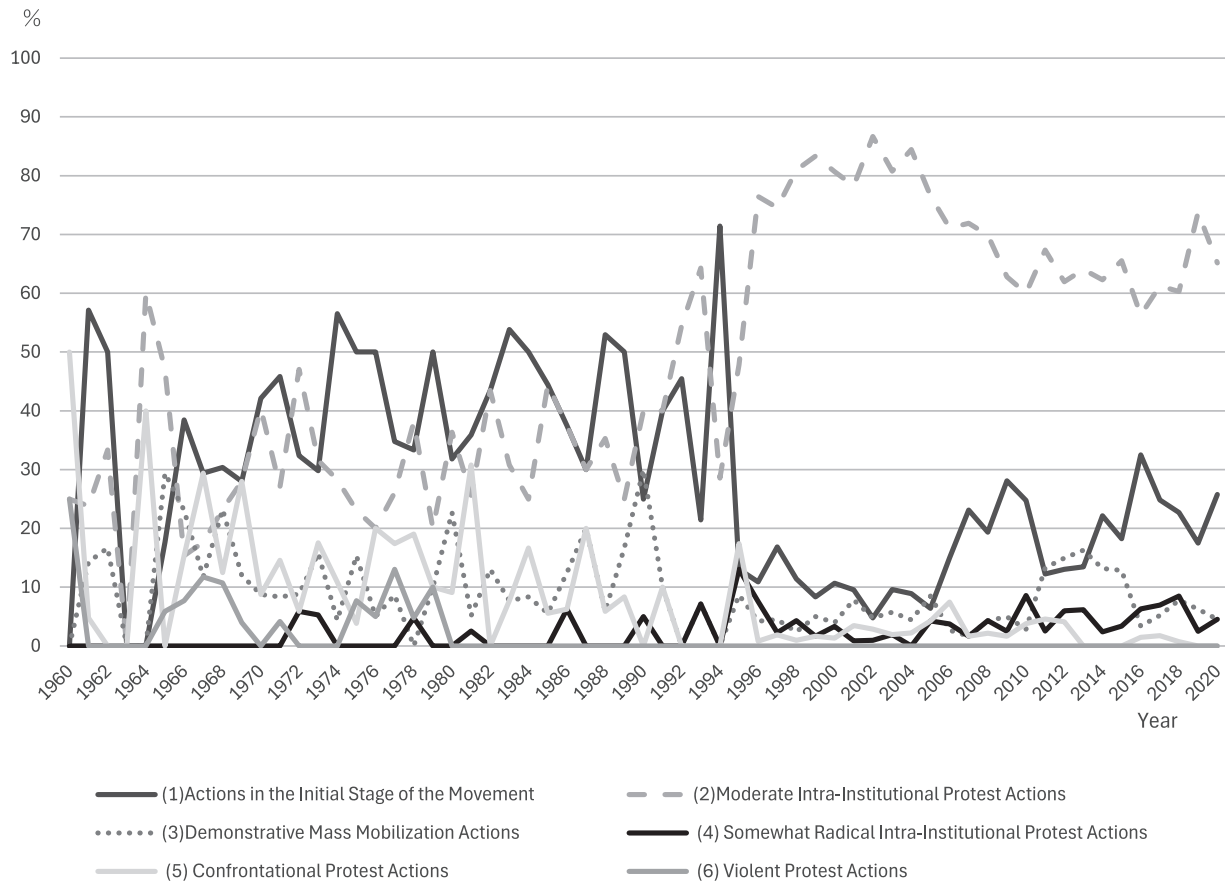


Figure 6 illustrates the advancement of the environmental movement's repertoire of the previously mentioned six actions. The data indicate that demonstrative mass mobilization heightened between 2011 and 2015, suggesting that somewhat radical intra-institutional protest actions have grown in number since 2011, whereas confrontational protest actions have diminished. As outlined above, the environmental movement in Japan has become more institutionalized since 2011.

4.3. Analysis 3: Types of Protest Demands

Protest demands can be classified into two categories: those intended to resist infringement of existing rights (reactive) and those designed to acquire new rights (proactive). In contrast to reactive protest demands, proactive demands to acquire new rights are counter-proposal or proposal-type activities and regarded as a defining characteristic of "new social movements."

Before 2000, the environmental and peace movements exhibited a considerable number of events with proactive demands, coinciding with a period of frequent protest events. A comparison of the trends in the environmental and peace movements following the Fukushima accident reveals that both had a substantial number of proactive protest events in 2008 and 2012 (Figures 7 and 8). This period coincides with the period of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) administration (2009–2012).

In 2006, the DPJ assumed power and initiated a transition toward a two-party system, with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) assuming the role of the ruling party. Between 2009 and 2012, the DPJ held power and established a government responsive to the needs of civil society. A government more supportive of social movements would encourage proactive activities, whereas one that has been critical of social movements since 2012 and viewed unfavorably by the public would discourage proactive activities and focus on reactive activities.

Figure 7 Ratio of Types of Demands of Environmental Movements (1966–2020)

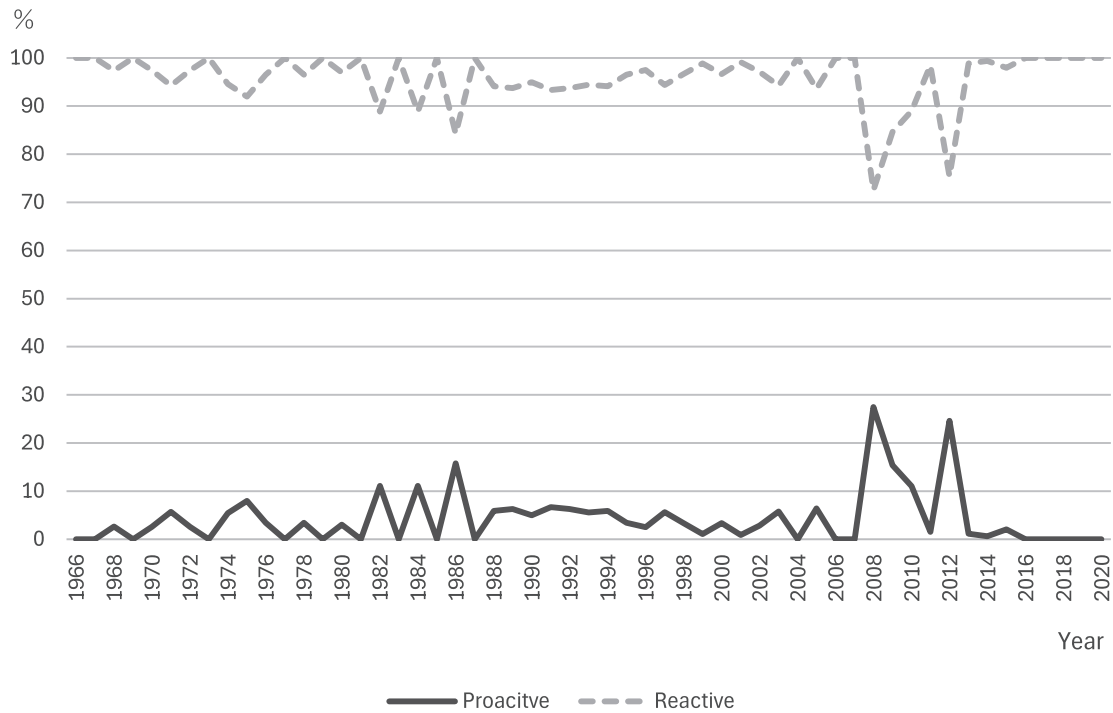
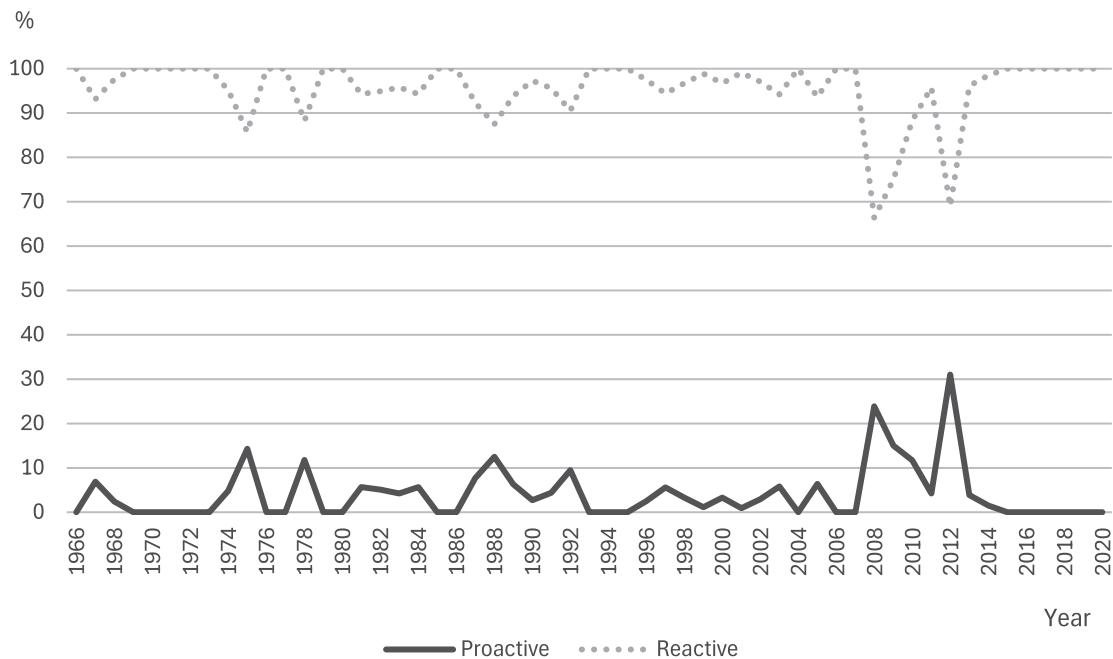


Figure 8 Ratio of Types of Demands of Peace Movements (1966–2020)



4.4. Analysis 4: Organization of Protest Event Entities

Figures 9 and 10 illustrate the evolution of the organizational nature of protest events. In years with a relatively high number of protest events, those held by non-organized actors were more prevalent. However, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, when the number of protests was relatively low, the primary actors in both environmental and peace movements were organized.

Conversely, following the Fukushima accident, the number of protests held by non-organized actors increased for both environmental and peace movements. Even after 2015, when anti-security law protests peaked, protest events held by the peace movement persisted to some extent, whereas those held by the environmental movement

Figure 9 Degree of Organization of the Environmental Movements in Japan (1965–2020)

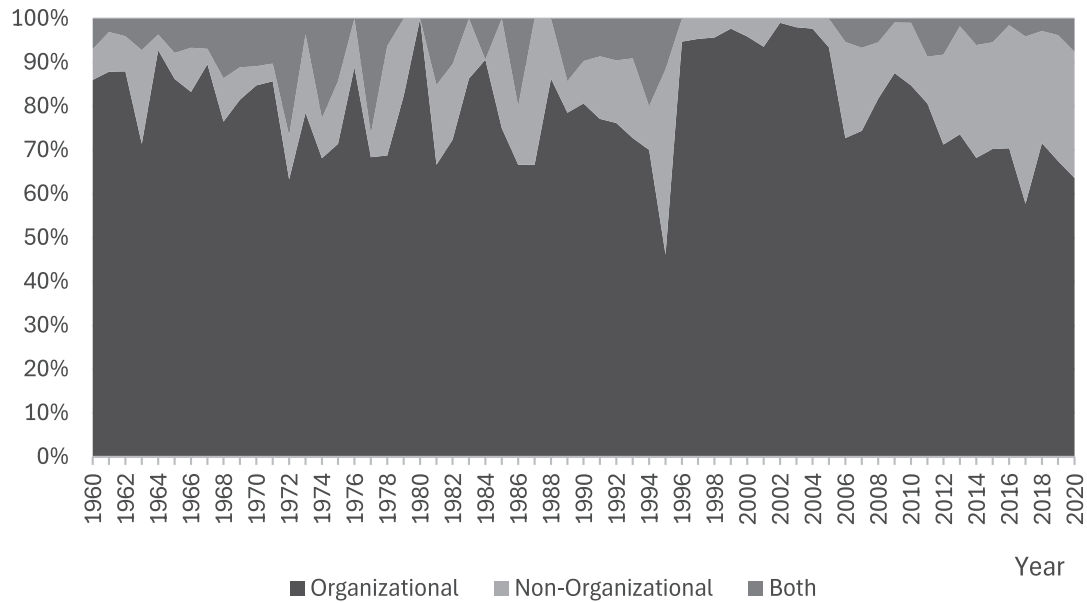
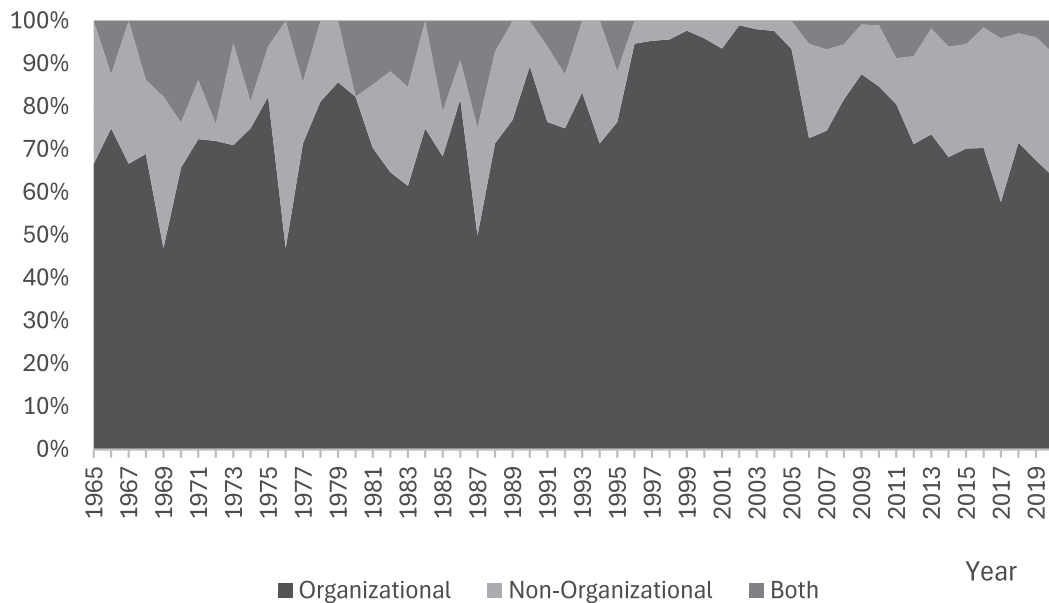


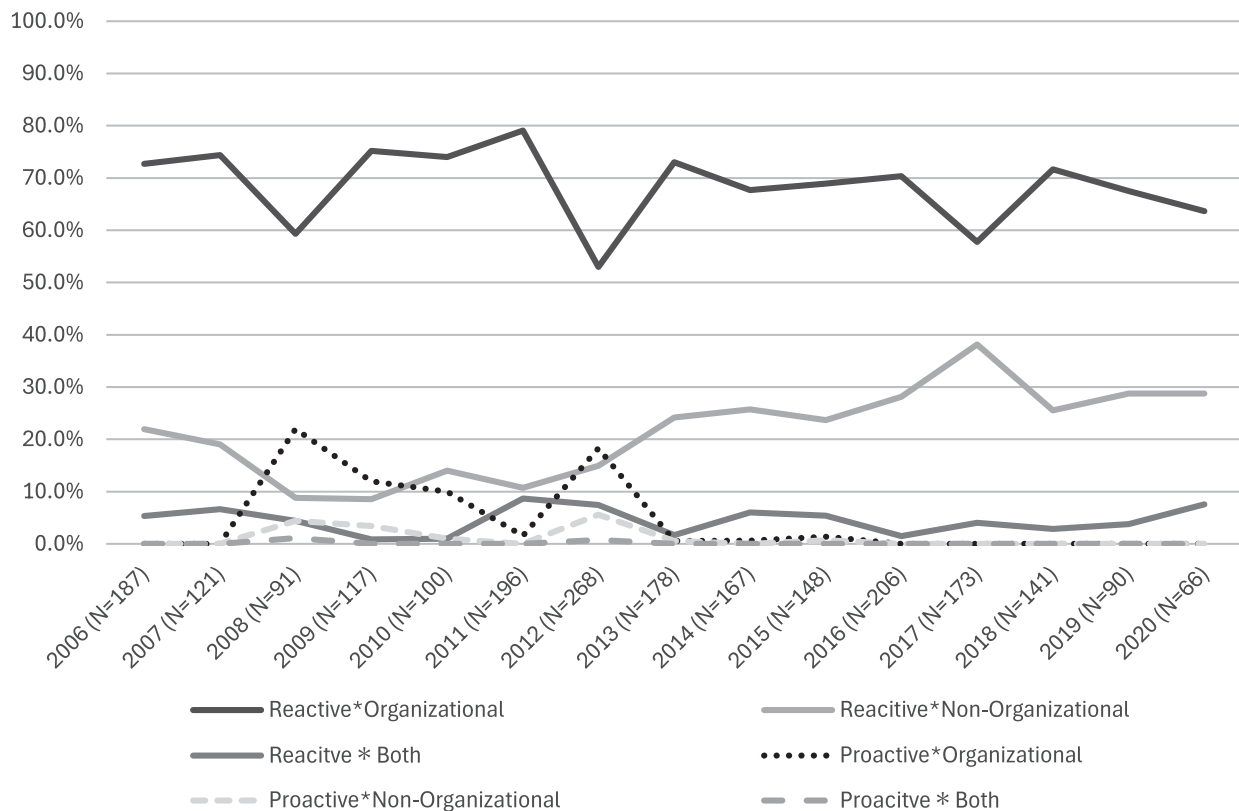
Figure 10 Degree of Organization of the Peace Movements in Japan (1960–2020)



declined. Nevertheless, a relatively high percentage of protests were not organized. This indicates that participants in the environmental and peace movements in Japan transformed in the wake of the two waves of protests following the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

Figure 11 shows a clear transition in the nature of the relationship between the protest demand type and the movement's organizational structure. An analysis of the relationship between the types of demands made by protesters and the organization of protest groups reveals a shift in these demands. Before 2012, organized protests led to the formulation of proactive demands. However, since 2013, unorganized activities have given rise to reactive demands. Environmental movements in Japan may be such that some citizens who lack the channels to express their interests resort to passive demands in the form of protests.

Figure 11 Relationship between the Types of Demands and Organization of Movement in the Environmental Movement (2006–2020)



5. Conclusion

This study used event analysis to identify long-term trends in environmental movements. We also examined the dynamics of two waves of protests that emerged after the Fukushima accident in 2011: the anti-nuclear (environmental) and anti-security law (peace) movement.

The analysis of the evolution of event number (Analysis 1) revealed that both the environmental and peace movements observed a certain number of protest events following the Fukushima disaster even after their peak. This suggests that protests have become regular occurrences in Japanese society. Nevertheless, the number of protest events organized by the environmental and peace movements declined markedly within a few years. Consequently, asserting that a social movement society has emerged in Japan is challenging.

The analysis of action repertoires (Analysis 2) indicated that the environmental movement in Japan has been moderated and the type of protest has become institutionalized. This finding is consistent with that of Wu (2022) and Pekkanen (2008).

In contrast, the analysis of protest demand types (Analysis 3) revealed that since 2013, the environmental and peace movements have been largely reactive, with minimal proactive activities. The second Abe administration, which began in 2013, was critical of social movements. The LDP's stance has therefore been to cultivate negative public opinion of social movements. Consequently, the LDP has not accepted proactive demands for alternatives, resulting in the generation of reactive activities. This outcome is distinct from the proactive activities undertaken during the Democratic Party of Japan administration (2009–2012), which demonstrated a proclivity toward aligning with social movements.

Analyses of the organizational nature of movements (Analysis 4) revealed that both environmental and peace movements have been active in unorganized groups since the mid-2000s. Examining the relationship between the types of demands expressed in protests and the organizational structure of movement groups showed that organized protests were associated with proactive demands until 2012. However, after 2013, unorganized activities were linked

to the emergence of reactive demands. This could be because the circumstances surrounding environmental movements in Japan are such that some citizens who lack the means to express their interests may resort to passive demands in the form of protests.

In conclusion, liberal governments that are friendly toward social movements in Japan are currently weak. Moreover, public opinion is unfavorable toward social movements. Following these two waves, the number of protests declined, and social movements are now uncommon in Japan. Despite two waves of protests occurring in the wake of 3.11, a “social movement society” has yet to emerge within the Japanese context. The current environmental movements in Japan can either be regarded as organized intra-institutional protests or unorganized protests that make reactive demands in response to major social issues (e.g., anti-nuclear power). Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that Japanese civil society may have been constrained by a lack of progress.

Recent protests have occurred on social networking sites; however, identifying these protests using newspaper data is challenging. Consequently, prioritizing future research to understand protests on social networking sites would be beneficial. The analyses performed in this study are preliminary, and further investigation is necessary to gain a more comprehensive understanding of protest movements in Japan. This topic must be examined particularly within the context of social movements in East Asia.

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