

The Formation of State Actor-Social Movement Coalitions and Favorable Policy Outcomes

LINDA BREWSTER STEARNS, *Southern Methodist University*

PAUL D. ALMEIDA, *Texas A&M University*

This study examines the role of loosely-coupled state actor-social movement coalitions in creating positive policy outcomes. It specifies the organizational locations within the state most conducive to state actor-social movement ties. Using the case of Japanese anti-pollution politics between 1956 and 1976, we demonstrate that favorable policy outcomes were the result of multiple coalitions between anti-pollution movements and state agencies, opposition political parties, local governments, and the courts.

In the 1960s Japan was internationally recognized with the notorious distinction of being the most polluted country in the advanced capitalist world. Literally, hundreds of people died (and thousands more chronically sickened) as a direct result of industrial pollution (Methyl Mercury poisoning, Cadmium poisoning, PCB poisoning, SMON disease, and various airborne pollutants). By the early 1970s, the Japanese state had made a rapid U-turn and implemented a series of environmental reforms viewed as a model for the industrialized world. This article aims to explain this dramatic shift in state policy-making priorities via the formation of multiple state-movement coalitions.

For social activists state policy reform happens too infrequently. Yet when it does, it can usually be accredited to two groups: 1) the actors external to the state that have made reform a political issue—social movement organizations, the mass media, and public opinion; and 2) the actors internal to the state that have ushered the reform through the state apparatus—politicians and state managers. Much has been written about social movements and the conditions that facilitate or hamper their success (Amenta and Young 1999b; Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995; Cress and Snow 2000; Gamson 1990; Giugni 1998; Piven and Cloward 1979). Less scholarly attention has focused on the relationship between social movements and state actors (Goldstone 2003; Wolfson 2001), specifically the organizational structures that give rise to the loosely-coupled coalitions that form between these two groups and lead to favorable policy outcomes. In this article, we focus on this partnership between state actors and a social movement, rather than on the social movement itself.¹

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1. Our article deals with state-oriented movements. Such movements target the state because their goals can only be achieved via state action or they require the leverage of the state against their opponents (Amenta, Dunleavy and Bernstein 1994; Burstein et al. 1995). While we acknowledge the abundant social movement literature on the crucial

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Modern states are typically composed of nested and segmented administrative units that house many competing actors. Given this structural patterning, social movements can take advantage of the complex and decentralized nature of most democratic states to create state actor-social movement coalitions that represent potential venues for action. We define a *state actor-social movement coalition* broadly. A state-movement coalition comes into existence when state actors agree to apply their organizational resources and influence in ways that further the general aims of a social movement.

State actors participate in state-movement coalitions for a variety of reasons. Some state-movement coalitions involve institutional activists (i.e., “social movement participants who occupy formal statuses within the government and who pursue social movement goals through conventional bureaucratic channels” [Santoro and McGuire 1997:503]). These institutional activists are committed to the social movement’s objectives and motivated by intrinsic rewards (Ganz 2000). While such coalitions have the potential to be ongoing, most state-movement coalitions are loosely coupled and temporary, consisting of state actors with shifting interests. Some state actors enter a state-movement coalition because they are ideologically predisposed to the movement’s objectives. Other state actors participate in coalitions as a means of promoting their own agendas (Skocpol 1985). They enter state-movement coalitions primarily to pursue their own extrinsic rewards (i.e., further their careers and/or increase their status). Still other state actors, because of the location and function of their unit, take up the claims of a social movement to increase their unit’s vitality and legitimacy within the state apparatus. State-movement coalitions, regardless of the state actors’ motivations, increase the probability of producing positive outcomes for social movements. With the creation of state-movement coalitions, social movements are granted a level of legitimacy, and perhaps more important, indirect access to the state’s decision-making structures.

In this article we examine the coalitions created between the Japanese environmental movement and four groups of state actors: 1) weak state agencies; 2) opposition political parties; 3) local governments; and 4) the courts. Initially, all five groups—the environmental movement and the four categories of state actors—had little influence in state policy-making and faced three powerful adversaries: 1) the industrial business establishment; 2) the entrenched Liberal Democratic Party (LDP); and 3) the more powerful state bureaucracies (in particular the most influential—the Ministry of International Trade and Industry [MITI] with its close relations to the business establishment). Building on recent developments in political sociology, we identify the institutional structures conducive to the formation of the state-movement coalitions that shaped policy reform.² We also examine the policy impact of each state-movement coalition and show that the unprecedented change in state environmental policy that occurred in Japan depended on the creation of multiple state actor-movement coalitions.

Political Institutions and State Actor-Movement Coalitions

Once a social movement forms and is relatively unified, a state’s reaction to a social movement might range from ignoring or repressing it, to addressing its demands either symbolically or with real change (Tilly 1978). The first choice of a democratic government is often

role of influential allies and institutional access for the creation of efficacious movements (McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1994), this article centers on the *coalitions* between state actors and social movements. Thus, our focus here is on the interactions between particular state actors and social movements that form the loosely-coupled coalitions that help bring about favorable policy outcomes.

2. Amenta and Young (1999a) examine many of the same political institutional structures and ask how variation in these “help to explain variation in *mobilization* of challengers over time and across countries and subnational polities” (p. 155). Our emphasis is on how political institutional features create a structural potential for the formation of state-movement coalitions, which can then directly influence policy outcomes.

to ignore a social movement with the expectation that it will defuse and disappear. In such a situation, a movement is likely to attempt to engage the state by influencing public opinion, employing disruptive actions, and creating electoral uncertainty (Almeida and Stearns 1998; Burstein 1979; Piven and Cloward 1979). Disruptive actions work to raise public awareness and increase the pressure on the state to address the issue. Changing public opinion catches the attention of state actors by increasing electoral uncertainty and raising the possibility that the distribution of status and power within the state will change. Because social movements threaten the status quo or the “rules of the game,” few state actors have the incentive and/or the opportunity to enter into a state-movement coalition (Kriesi et al. 1995:54).

We argue that the political institutional structure of the state plays a key role in determining which state actors benefit or are receptive to forming state-movement coalitions. Specifically we discuss how the level of bureaucratic development, the electoral system, and the degree of fragmentation of authority within the state (Amenta 1998; McCarthy and Wolfson 1992) affect the prospects that a state-movement coalition will form with the following state actors: 1) state agencies; 2) oppositional political parties; 3) local governments; and 4) courts.

State Agencies

When a social movement grows in size and public opinion support to where the state must acknowledge it as a political actor, the probability increases that the movement will form a coalition with an “in-house” state agency.³ State agencies in their roles as policy advocates and regulators have the potential to grant social movements important access into the state’s policy-making apparatus.

A social movement introducing a *new* issue may find there is no agency to address its demands. Moreover, state-oriented social movements are often in conflict with agencies involved in promoting business confidence and supporting capital accumulation (Block 1987).⁴ Such agencies are often the larger, better-funded, and more politically influential members of the polity. Their agendas reflect the strong lobbying efforts of large corporations, and their staffs frequently come from the very groups the social movement opposes (Domhoff 2002). Hence, these agencies are not usually candidates for a state-movement coalition.

The more highly developed the democratic state bureaucracy (i.e., in terms of size and differentiation), however, the more likely there resides within it an agency favorable to the social movement’s objectives (Amenta and Young 1999a). In most cases the agency is tied to the state’s legitimation function and handles citizens’ rights and quality of life programs (Faber and O’Connor 1989).⁵ Historically, such agencies are under-funded and politically weak. As a result, an agency might be receptive to forming a state-movement coalition if the movement’s issue falls within the agency’s policy domain, promotes its agenda, advances its status, and/or increases its budget.⁶

3. Agencies for most part operate within the executive branch of national governments. Within this branch there generally exist numerous ministries or departments each with its own multiple subunits. In countries where the media is state owned and/or controlled, the media would be considered a state agency.

4. State agencies generally differ by whether they were initially conceived to promote capital accumulation or state legitimization—e.g., the Department of Commerce versus the Department of Health and Human Services, respectively. Bourdieu (1998) referred to these contradictory functions within the French state as the left and right hand: “(W)hat I call the left hand of the state, the set of agents of the so-called spending ministries which are the trace, within the state, of the social struggles of the past. They are opposed to the right hand of the state, the technocrats of the Ministry of Finance, the public and private banks and the ministerial cabinets” (p. 2).

5. Although changes in political environments and executive appointments can, and do, alter an agency’s operation (e.g., Jack Kemp’s appointment as Secretary of HUD, 1989–1993), state agencies are “imprinted” at the time of their founding (Stinchcombe 1965). As a result, public expectations, the entrenchment of career bureaucrats, and/or the presence of institutional activists place some limits on the extent to which an agency can desert its initial calling.

6. It is also possible, however, that because of its weaker position, the agency will choose not to enter a state-movement coalition, for fear of the political consequences of doing so.

When no appropriate agency exists, designate or otherwise, a social movement often pushes to have one established (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). If successful, the new agency in order to overcome the “liability of newness” and survive will seek internal and external support for its *raison d’être* (Stinchcombe 1965). Internally, as part of its staff, the agency might appoint institutional activists or known movement supporters. Externally, as part of its constituency, the agency might foster an ongoing relationship with the social movement.

In cases where the social movement addresses an *established* issue, the designated agency might have been created in a past social struggle over a similar issue (Bourdieu 1998). In general, we expect such an agency to be amenable to forming a state-movement coalition. Even more so if its staff consists of insider institutional activists and, in addressing the issue, the agency stands to acquire greater resources and status (Amenta and Zylan 1991). Indeed, prior to the formation of the state-movement coalition, the agency might have attempted to realize some of the same kinds of policies as desired by the social movement but lacked the political capital to do so. Such was the situation of hazardous waste policymaking in the United States. Only in the late 1970s, with the rise of local movements against toxic waste (in particular Love Canal) and their exposure in the mass media, was the EPA strong enough to pass through Congress the Superfund in 1980 (Szasz 1994)—a nationally comprehensive hazardous waste remediation and disposal program.

The above discussion suggests that the more highly developed a democratic state’s bureaucracy the greater the likelihood a social movement will form a coalition with an established or new state agency. Furthermore, this partnership most likely occurs when the agency’s primary mission is the maintenance of the state’s institutional credibility (e.g., healthcare, social welfare, anti-discrimination, environment, labor, housing, etc.).

Oppositional Political Parties

Looking at such things as the restrictions on political assembly, voting, and choices among leadership groups, Edwin Amenta (1998) argues, “where people count little in politics, money and access matter even more” (p. 21). As “people power” is the main resource of a social movement (not money or access to elite decision making) (Tarrow 1994), the level of democratic participation is key to its influence and the possibility of coalition formation. Under democratic conditions or during regime liberalization, it is often an oppositional political party that takes up the demands of a social movement (Almeida 2003; Kriesi et al. 1995).

An oppositional political party becomes a state actor when the following criteria are met: 1) the party has been granted (by the state) the legal recognition needed to run for and hold office; *and* 2) the party has successfully exercised that right. For it is in their role as elected officials that members of opposition parties provide social movements access to the state’s policy-making apparatus.

The political party entering into a coalition will be determined in large part by the type of electoral system. One basic distinction in electoral systems is between winner-take-all and proportional representation (Amenta and Young 1999a). Proportional representation systems generally offer social movements a greater choice of parties (which translates into more ideological and policy options) from which to form a coalition (Dalton, Recchia, and Rohrschneider 2003). In addition, competition between oppositional parties increases the incentive of these parties to form a coalition with a social movement. For not only is the oppositional party competing against the dominant party for support and votes, but against other oppositional parties as well. In winner-take-all systems, on the other hand, there is less incentive for the out-of-power party to align itself with a social movement (especially one without much initial public support). Such systems also limit the social movements’ options to the ideology and policy agendas of a few (generally two) well-established parties.

In either system, all things being equal, a social movement would prefer to form a coalition with a powerful political party because such a party improves its chances of accomplishing

its goals (i.e., more policy implementation capacity) (Burstein et al. 1995:289). This is often not possible, as entrenched powerful parties tend to view social movements as challengers to the status quo and routine politics (Kriesi et al. 1995). One exception might be in a perceived tight election if a political party views the social movement's sympathy pools as large enough to influence the election's outcome. Such was the case with the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in West Germany in the mid-1980s when the party took up the peace movement's cause of anti-nuclear energy and nuclear weapons deployment. Although in sharp contrast to the SDP's pro-nuclear stance of the late 1970s and early 1980s, this powerful party used the issue not only to take votes away from the increasingly successful Green Party, but also to win back their parliamentary majority by 1990 (Koopmans 1995:100–3).

Given political circumstances often the best a social movement can manage, however, is to create a coalition with a stable reform or minority party (Maguire 1995). For example, in recently democratized El Salvador, state employed medical workers and unionized physicians formed coalitions in 1999–2000 and 2002–2003 with the largest oppositional political party to prevent the privatization of the state-managed public healthcare system. Both times this oppositional party-movement coalition materialized during the months of the parliamentary election campaign and vote (Almeida 2002:179). On both occasions the movement achieved their stated goal of halting the privatization process, while the opposition party increased its number of parliamentary seats (Schuld 2003). The political and electoral weakness of opposition parties makes them more receptive to creating new coalitions and constituencies. For this reason, a social movement is more likely to form a coalition with a stable, ideologically similar, minority or reform opposition party.

Local Governments and Courts

We maintain that state-movement coalitions are more likely to develop in democratic nation states characterized by autonomous local governments and/or courts.⁷ Several studies (Amenta and Young 1999a; Andrews 2001:90; Baiocchi 2003; Kriesi and Wisler 1999) have shown that federalist political structures (e.g., Brazil, Canada, India, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the United States) delegate more power to local governments than top-down centralized governments (e.g., Austria, France, Norway, and Sweden). By increasing the number of "entrée points," we expect the fragmentation of governmental authority to expand the potential for state-movement coalition formation (McCarthy and Wolfson 1992:287–92). Local governments offer social movements the potential for a more straightforward, hence quicker, path to policy channels (e.g., face-to-face interactions in publicly accessible city council meetings). Courts assist social movements by granting them a public forum for their views (with the cases themselves often eliciting important media coverage).⁸ Courts also facilitate social movements by handing down decisions ordering changes (e.g., integrating schools). Finally courts can enjoin legislative action, rule on compensation settlements, and issue cease-and-desist orders.

That local government- and court-movement coalitions can influence social policy has been effectively demonstrated in the United States in the case of the ban on same-sex marriages. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the gay and lesbian movement took its case for equal access to marriage rights to the courts and local governments. It found support for its struggle in places such as Hawaii (courts), Vermont (courts), Massachusetts (courts), San Francisco (local government and courts), New Mexico (local government), and Oregon (local

7. In contrast, in exclusive authoritarian and corporatist states where single ruling parties appoint local officials and court magistrates from within their own clientelist faction, local governments and courts are greatly inhibited if not outright repelled from forming alliances with oppositional movements (Diamond 1999).

8. In most democracies courts operate at many levels. For example, in the United States there is the U.S. Supreme Court as well as federal courts, state courts, and municipal courts.

government). In 2004, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom announced that the city would issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. On four separate occasions, judges have refused to stop San Francisco from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. When California Governor Schwarzenegger declared the licenses illegal, San Francisco city and county officials, with the help of such groups as Lambda Legal (a gay rights legal organization), went on the offensive and filed a lawsuit against the state. So successful has the gay and lesbian movement's tactic to change social policy at the local government and court levels been that President Bush announced his support for a Constitutional amendment to define marriage as the legal union between one man and one woman. In a February 2004 press speech, the President referred several times to "activist judges and local authorities" and stated that, "unless action is taken, we can expect more arbitrary court decisions, more litigation, more defiance of the law by local officials" (CNN.com 2004). Below, we specify the mechanisms that bring local governments and courts into coalitions with social movements.

Local Government. Municipal governments are generally more likely to enter coalitions with social movements than national governments because of the more volatile nature of local elections. At the local level, a social movement needs to mobilize fewer voters to have an electoral impact.⁹ In addition, campaign financing by more powerful lobbying groups is less common at the local level, providing a relatively more balanced playing field for reform-minded movements (Pollin and Luce 1998; Wolfson 2001:173–6).

The likelihood that a social movement will form a coalition with a local government is greatest when the social movement's cause has a widespread, direct, and negative effect on the locality, as in the case of toxic dumps and plant layoffs. The greater the consensus within the community that a problem exists, the more likely the social movement will form a state-movement coalition (Lofland 1989; McCarthy and Wolfson 1992) with an established local political party (Swarts 2003). If the established party refuses to take up its cause, a social movement will align itself with a reform party or run their own candidates. This was the strategy of the Chicano civil rights movement in south Texas in the 1960s and 1970s. Mexican Americans created their own slates of candidates and political parties (e.g., PASSO and La Raza Unida) to compete in city council and school board elections long held by white minorities (Navarro 1998).

If a local government-movement coalition is successful implementing reform (and this is never easy given the embeddedness of political and economic power and the outsider status of challenger movements), it provides a commanding example. Success imparts a template for change and a sense of efficacy—"it can be done!" Both strengthen a social movement's mobilization efforts (Klandermans 1997) and encourage further local government-movement coalitions. For example, Robert Pollin and Stephanie Luce (1998) show in the United States that campaigns for a living wage have rapidly multiplied as a result of local government-movement coalition victories. In 1999 only five years after the passage of the first local living wage ordinance in Baltimore, 22 other major cities had implemented similar statutes, including New York and Los Angeles (Martin 2001). By 2003, 112 cities, towns, and school districts had enacted such laws. Hanspeter Kriesi and Dominique Wisler (1999) also demonstrated that the movement for direct democracy laws (e.g., direct legislation and popular referendum) in Switzerland spread rapidly across cantons in the late nineteenth century once they were adopted in the canton of Zurich. The actual practice of direct democracy laws at the local level gave them "empirical credibility" for national diffusion and eventual enactment at the federal level.

9. This assumes that democratic access for social movement supporters is the same at the local and national levels. If voting rights are determined at the local level (e.g., African Americans' access to vote in the South during the Civil Rights Movement) this might not be the case.

Courts. Social movements often try to engage the court system. Social movement-court coalitions differ from state agency-, opposition party-, or local government-coalitions in that courts do not, nor can they, seek out or maintain an ongoing relation with a social movement. Because courts must maintain an appearance of neutrality, if a social movement-court coalition is to form, it is the social movement that must initiate and set the agenda for the relation. Nevertheless, courts are very important coalition partners for furthering the claims of social movements. This is demonstrated by the fact that mature social movements maintain their own legal organization(s) (e.g., abortion rights: National Abortion Rights Action League; environmental movement: National Resources Defense Council; etc.).

While the rationale of lifetime appointments is to guarantee impartial judicial officials, judges vary in their ability and desire to be neutral. The political intensity surrounding judicial appointments attests to this. For example, in the United States, the Republican and Democratic Parties consistently battle over the selection of judges. Furthermore, U.S. presidents have on occasion taken control over the process to guarantee the assignment of their selected candidates. In 2004, during a congressional recess, President Bush did an end run around the “advise and consent” clause of the Constitution by appointing two conservative judges the Senate failed to confirm—Charles Pickering and William Pryor.

By initiating cases, social movements attempt to address immediate grievances, receive monetary compensation, and most importantly set legal precedent (Burstein 1991; McCammon and Kane 1997). For example, Lambda Legal litigated a case for marriage equality in Hawaii in the mid-1990s. In the first ruling of its kind, a Hawaii judge ordered that civil marriage licenses could not be restricted to heterosexual couples. Although a voter initiative later quashed the ruling, Lambda Legal (2004) went on to serve as a “friend of the court” in similar lawsuits in Vermont and Massachusetts. These actions led to civil unions for same-sex couples in Vermont and the order for the issuance of marriage licenses to applicants of the same gender by May 2004 in Massachusetts.

The acceptance by a court to address a case brought by a social movement creates the opportunity for a court-movement coalition to develop. While it is unlikely that any judge or court would openly acknowledge an ideological leaning, historical accounts (e.g., the liberal Warren court) and present day events (e.g., the Supreme Court’s involvement in the 2000 Florida election decision) led social scientists to question otherwise. Once a social movement’s case is accepted by a court, it can expect at minimum to have its claims given public voice, and at maximum, if successful, some action granted (Kane 2003).

In sum, the relative autonomy and greater access of court systems and local governments increase the likelihood for coalitions to form between these units and a social movement. Furthermore, the formation of a successful local government-movement coalition can lead to other local government-movement coalitions (Martin 2001).

Power in Numbers

Finally, by creating as many state-movement coalitions as possible, a social movement increases its probability of having its demands addressed. For example, recent cross-national work on environmental organizations suggests that environmental movements try to influence public opinion and to establish on-going relations with multiple state actors including state agencies, political parties, local governments, and courts. According to Russell Dalton and associates (2003:751) in a study of 248 environmental groups in 59 nations, they report: 1) 64 percent of environment groups claimed that they had made efforts to mobilize public opinion; 2) 51 percent had informal meetings with civil servants or government ministers while 39 percent had formal meetings; 3) 44 percent participated in government advisory commissions; 4) 45 percent reported contact with local government authorities; 5) 15 percent acknowledged having contact with officials of political parties; and 6) 15 percent reported taking legal action through the courts or other judicial bodies.

We contend that there is power in numbers. First, with more than one coalition, a social movement cannot be relegated to a single “institutional home” or ineffectual state agency (Bonastia 2000). Second, the more coalitions formed across different state structures, the more entrée points a social movement has to strategically apply and sustain pressure. Third, a greater number of coalitions helps to decrease the impact of a veto or unfavorable ruling by state actors in political structures where authoritative power is fragmented. Finally, multiple coalitions can have an additive effect, increasing the potential impact of each individual coalition.

Although we believe that a coordinated effort among coalitions increases their political impact, such an effort is not always possible. State-movement coalitions are not only loosely coupled *within* themselves but *between* themselves as well. Often the only common denominator among coalitions is the social movement and its goals. This is because each group of state actors enters into a coalition with its own interests and agenda.

It is also not necessary for all four types of coalitions to be present for positive *national* policy outcomes to occur. At minimum a state-movement coalition must exist with a national level state actor (state agency, opposition political party, or national court). The reason being, there has to be within the national state apparatus a coalition member with access to the organizational resources, legitimacy, and most important, authority required to usher through (state agency and/or opposition party¹⁰) or decree (courts) national policy reforms (Burstein et al. 1995:284). Local coalition partners (government, opposition party, or court), while important as examples of change, are ultimately limited by the geographical scope of their authority.

The more entrenched the in-power party, however, the greater the need for multiple coalitions. In such cases, court- and local government-movement coalitions help to chip away at the hold of the ruling party. Court-movement coalitions increase the costs (in terms of dollars, mass-media coverage, and public opinion) of government inaction; local government-movement coalitions provide a blueprint for change (in terms of electoral shifts and models of policy reform).

It should also be noted that state actors in general have more direct access to the media, and are more likely to be perceived as authorities regarding a policy conflict, than are social movement activists by themselves (Best 1989). Hence, social movements that form coalitions with state actors can expect to reach a much wider audience via the mass media, as the media is more willing to listen to sympathetic governmental authorities, especially when public policy is being debated.

In summary, we believe state agency-, oppositional party-, local government-, and court-movement coalitions all play key roles in bringing about shifts in social policy that favorably address the demands of social movements. We expect the greater the number of state-movement coalitions (i.e., state agency, oppositional party, local government, and court) present, the more likely policy change will occur.

Case Selection and Method of Analysis

The present article draws on existing research on Japanese governmental policy-making and environmental movements as well as archival reviews of policy in annual Environment Agency reports and governmental statistics. We employ a dynamic within case comparison design that examines temporal shifts in state environmental policy-making trajectories. Such designs are especially informative when the chosen case leads to theoretical refinements in

10. As noted above, members of the opposition party must have already gained access to the state via official appointments or electoral victories. Furthermore, if an opposition party's representation in the state government is weak, there is a greater need for a state agency-movement coalition as well.

areas that are not accounted for in existing frameworks and models of the timing and level of state policy reforms (Amenta 1991; Bradshaw and Wallace 1991). Environmental policy-making in Japan in the mid to late twentieth century offers an exemplary case for amending existing theories of state policy changes. The shift from being the most polluted nation in the advanced industrial world to an international model of environmental reform in a relatively brief period with the heavy involvement of state actors and citizens movements calls for a longitudinal analysis specifying the relationships of these two groups.

More specifically, we partition outcomes of state environmental policy over three decades. By dividing the historical timeline of environmental policymaking we are able to address interesting puzzles in the Japanese state's response to a major pollution crisis. These puzzles include: 1) why the Japanese state was slow to respond to the early years of a widespread pollution crisis (1950–1963); 2) what conditions were associated with the government's first attempts at environmental policy-making (1964–1969); 3) why the Japanese state strengthened weak environmental laws to become a global model for pollution control (1970–1974); and 4) what induced the moderate rollback in environmental reforms (post 1974). Building on recent developments in political sociology that recognize the “interpenetration” of the state and social movements (Wolfson 2001), we emphasize the varying coalitional relations between state actors and the Japanese anti-pollution movement over time and their impact on policy outcomes.

In the next section we apply the above framework to the case of environmental policy-making in Japan from 1950 to 1976. We show how together multiple, loosely-coupled state-movement coalitions brought about favorable policy outcomes and changed Japan from the most polluted country in the advanced capitalist world to a global exemplar of environmental reform.

Japan's Industrial Expansion and Environmental Crisis: 1950–1963

After World War II, the primary goals of the Japanese state were to ensure industrial recovery and promote economic growth (Barrett and Therivel 1991). State bureaucracies, in particular the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Science and Technology Agency (STA), and Economic Planning Agency (EPA), developed close working relationships between themselves and local government units and private industry groups, such as *Keidanren*. Together, this tripartite group (powerful state agencies, local governments, and large private industrial groupings) acted as an industrial vanguard in administering the fast growing Japanese economy. Rapid industrial expansion (e.g., the government's “new industrial cities” program and the rise of large chemical-industrial parks), combined with Japan's limited geography and concentrated population, however, created the potential for serious environmental problems.

Starting in the 1950s, the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) expressed concern about the negative consequences of industrial pollution (especially air and water contamination). In 1953, the Ministry conducted a national survey of different kinds of pollution; in 1958 it drafted the Living Environment Pollution Prevention Standard Act (Gresser, Fujikara, and Morishima 1981; Matsui 1992). Even though at this time a clear pattern of mass industrial pollution was documented, nothing happened as the MHW lacked political support for its efforts. Internally, the MHW had low prestige, resources, and power as compared to Ministries responsible for industrial growth, such as MITI and Ministry of Finance. Externally, there was no social movement in existence questioning the environmental consequences of the state's industrial policy from which the MHW could call for support. Viewed as being anti-growth, the MHW's draft was immediately opposed by business, as well as by all the other Ministries, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and the local governments (Gresser et al. 1981; Reich 1983).

With little in the way of public dissent, competing oppositional political parties, such as the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), had yet to make pollution control a part of their political platform. The courts were also not a factor as no pollution cases were inaugurated during this period. Simply put, so focused during this time was the Japanese state on the goal of rapid economic growth via industrial expansion, that even egregious environmental and public health mishaps failed to raise awareness of the need to develop any kind of regulatory policy towards pollution control.

In summary, no state-movement coalition existed between 1950 and 1963 simply because a nation-wide social movement—half of the equation—had yet to materialize. The MHW, a relatively weak state agency interested in promoting environmental reforms, failed to have the issue taken up by the state because the MHW lacked support, internally and externally, for its agenda.

The Emergence of State Actor-Movement Coalitions: 1964–1969

By the mid-1960s Japan was declared the most polluted nation in the industrialized world (OECD 1977).¹¹ Noticeable portions of the population in industrial cities such as Yokkaichi suffered from acute bronchial asthma, while new outbreaks of industrial pollution such as Itai Itai disease (cadmium poisoning), Minamata disease (mercury poisoning), PCB poisoning, SMON disease (quiniform poisoning), and milk poisoning (arsenic) occurred with increasing regularity (Environment Agency 1974).

These serious environmental and public health problems created mounting levels of citizen agitation. One indicator of the rising discontent was the number of environmentally related grievances registered with local and prefectural governments. While in 1960 there were relatively few environmental complaints, in 1966 the number had grown to over 20,000 (OECD 1977).¹² Another sign of the growing salience of pollution as a socially defined problem was the appearance of the word *kogai* in popular discourse. *Kogai* literally means “disamenities inflicted on public.” A Japanese dictionary compiled in 1955, and intended to cover exhaustively all the words currently in use in Japan, excluded the word. By the latter half of the 1960s *kogai* had become the most widely discussed issue in the nation (Tsuru 1970).¹³

The strongest indicator of the public’s displeasure with Japan’s pollution problems, however, was the rise of a nationwide anti-pollution social movement. This social movement started primarily as hundreds of loosely connected grassroots groups (called citizens’ movements) who fought their pollution battles at the local or regional level.¹⁴ According to government figures, by 1970 there were 292 such groups in existence (Environment Agency 1974). A national network developed among these citizens’ groups as well as a unifying master frame (Snow and Benford 1992) of “environmental rights”—the democratic right of each citizen to a healthy and safe living environment (Krauss and Simcock 1980; Miyamoto 1991; Reich 1984a; Upham 1976). Citizens groups effectively used this action frame to work collectively, highlight the injustices incurred by pollution victims, widen public awareness of pollution

11. Ehrlich (1973) called Japan “the canary in the coal mine.” A nation so polluted that it functioned as a test case of human tolerance levels (quoted in McKean 1977:204).

12. Also the infrequent environmental disputes that did occur in the late 1950s and early 1960s were very localized and received little media attention. See Iijima (1979) for documentation of some of these pre-1964 pollution conflicts.

13. In 1960, in one month’s time, a single representative newspaper had 16 articles and .4 percent of its new stories related to environmental issues. In 1971, the same paper in the same time period had 124 stories and 2.8 percent of the news related to environmental concerns (OECD 1977:17).

14. As Broadbent’s (1998) seminal study of Japanese environmental politics notes, citizens’ movements mobilized relatively free of coercive repression as a result of the post-war constitution that limited the power of the state. Citizens’ movements were able to effectively utilize the freedoms of assembly, speech, and media that their new political institutions provided.

problems, and successfully recruit new members and supporters. The anti-pollution movement grew to the largest outburst of political participation in Japan's recent history (Broadbent 1998; McKean 1977).

With a sustained social movement in place by the mid to late 1960s, the potential emerged for multiple coalitions between the citizens' anti-pollution groups and interested state actors. As local governments, the courts, weak state agencies, and opposition parties increasingly coalesced with the emerging national anti-pollution movement, it became exceedingly difficult for the national government and pro-industrial groups to dismiss pollution as an insignificant political issue.

Local Government-Movement Coalitions. Local governments were the first to implement many elements of Japan's environmental reform policies (Reed 1981). This occurred because local governments were more susceptible to popular protests and proximate demands than the national government. In the political competition between the ruling LDP and the long subordinate opposition parties at the local level, opposition parties had the advantage of being able to be more responsive to public demands and to offer more innovative solutions to environmental issues. In addition, the popularity of these programs, and the local politicians who promoted them, produced a self-reinforcing cycle. As local opposition party officials gained confidence in their capabilities to resist national ministerial pressure, they extended their activities into other areas where they experienced similar successes (Reed 1981).

As early as 1964 in the tri-city region of Numazu-Mishima-Shimizu, local anti-pollution mobilization (backed by approximately 85 percent public opinion support) convinced city councils and the three respective mayors to cancel industrial park expansion plans in fear of suffering the pollution problems of other industrial cities (McKean 1981:29–30). The powerful state agencies of MITI and the Economic Planning Agency were reportedly "shocked" by this outcome (Hashimoto in Broadbent 1998:107). They worried that the success of the Numazu-Mishima-Shimizu movement would encourage other local groups to collectively challenge industrial development (Apter and Sawa 1984; Reich 1984a). Should this transpire, the state agencies and industrial business associations worried they might be severely restricted in where, and what kinds of factories, they might build in the future. Their concerns appeared to be valid. As the 1960s progressed, more local state actor-movement coalitions were forming in economically strategic centers of the country.

Starting in 1968 local government-movement coalitions formed in large municipalities (e.g., Tokyo, Kyoto, Okinawa, Fuji, and Osaka) with the successful election of pro-environmental candidates (MacDougall 1976). Supported by the local citizens' movement, the mayor and/or city council in these cities enacted substantive anti-pollution ordinances. Among local governments, Tokyo undertook the most dramatic measures. In 1969, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Pollution Prevention Act came into effect with its main input from Michitaka Kaino, the head of The Institute for Pollution Research. This act established that residents had a right to live in a healthy environment. In addition, it established that polluting sources such as factories had a responsibility to prevent pollution. Furthermore, the law set emission levels that were much more stringent than the nationally required levels and included hazardous substances that were left out of the national regulations. Although the central government maintained that the metropolitan act violated national statutes, the law served to further de-legitimize the national government's current handling of environmental problems by offering popular and highly visible alternatives.

The early 1970s were the peak of the local government-movement coalition. Whereas in 1963 only 4 local governments had established pollution control ordinances, by 1970, 46 local governments had such measures (Environment Agency 1974). By 1974 the 135 cities with progressive, pro-environment mayors included 38.2 percent of the entire Japanese population (Steiner 1980:325–6)—a clear sign that local governments were working alongside the social movement to address pollution issues.

Court-Movement Coalitions. Although the Japanese judiciary has a reputation for political independence, it normally does not play as strong of a role in shaping social and political developments as the judiciary in the United States. Rather, Japan's courts usually tend to stick to narrow legal decisions and to defer to the laws passed by the Diet (Japan's national legislative body) (Reischauer 1988). Japanese laws, in turn, are generally phrased in broad terms with specifics left to administrative guidance (*gyose shido*).¹⁵ Because laws remain legally informal, judicial intervention rarely occurs (Upham 1987).

Furthermore, individual lawsuits go beyond the liberal democratic notion of formal rights in Japan. A lawsuit breaks with strong normative pressure not to stand out or put individual needs above the community. Japanese political culture has long valued consensus and civil obedience (Reischauer 1988; Vogel 1980). Individuals and small groups are taught to supplant their own desires in the name of the larger good, with the state often designated as caretaker of that good. Nonetheless, the escalation of environmental disputes throughout Japan in the late 1960s demonstrated that the courts had the potential to act as major players in influencing national policies by agreeing to consider the claims of the pollution contamination victims.

As the anti-pollution movement's disillusionment with the state escalated, so too did their willingness to use unconventional tactics (Almeida and Stearns 1998). Between 1967 and 1969, the victims of Japan's most grave pollution cases (Minamata, Niigata, Toyama, and Yoikkaichi) filed lawsuits (called "the Big Four") against several of Japan's most eminent industrial firms for gross negligence and malfeasance. Such lawsuits, by ordinary citizens against prestigious industrial firms, were unprecedented and hence institutionally disruptive acts (Huddle and Reich 1975; McKean 1981; OECD 1994; Upham 1976, 1987).¹⁶

In the early 1970s, the pollution victims won all Big Four pollution suits outright. The victims' lawyers attributed this success to the complementary roles of legal and political action. With the Big Four pollution cases being tried during a widespread national anti-pollution social movement, there was media and public pressure for favorable verdicts. Still Frank Upham (1987) notes,

Although one can only surmise judicial motivation . . . (f)rom the opinions themselves it is clear that the judges were sensitive to the moral dimensions of the cases. The tremendous doctrinal leaps necessary to find for the plaintiffs, the unprecedented size of the compensation awards, . . . and the judiciary's own official and unofficial comments about extrajudicial activity lead to the conclusion that the judges too were caught up in the moral momentum of these cases. (p. 44)

Especially demonstrative of the courts' power and their inclination to favor the pollution victims was the exercise of their authority to set the standards for what was considered evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between pollution outbreaks and the actual onset of a medical disease by the victims in each of the Big Four pollution trials (Gresser et al. 1981). This is notable in light of the fact that prior to the Big Four cases, pro-industry state agencies and industrial associations steadfastly employed the "lack of conclusive scientific evidence" rationalization to deter the anti-pollution movement.

The news media (newspapers, magazines, radio, and television) gave the Big Four Pollution cases widespread exposure between 1967 and 1973. In addition, to the local governments and the courts, the environmental movement also developed coalitions with state agencies and national opposition political parties in the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s.

State Agency-Movement Coalitions. In 1964 both MITI and MHW created pollution bureau subunits within their ministries. These two ministries represented the two poles of the

15. Administrative guidance provides ministry bureaucrats extensive leeway in interpreting and enforcing legislation.

16. In part the pollution victims agreed to adopt this strategy because they perceived themselves as bringing to the surface the violation of social norms by the state and polluting firms (Upham 1976).

government's position and functions (industrial expansion/accumulation and institutional credibility/legitimization, respectively) on the pollution dilemma. The MITI wanted continued rapid growth whatever the social cost; the goal of its pollution bureau subunit was to maintain the status quo. The MHW, on the other hand, wanted to give priority to cleaning up and preventing pollution, as well as protecting public health; the goal of its subunit was to change the state's environmental policy.

Realizing that within the state and business community it had limited power, the MHW devised tactics to gain external support for its cause. When the news media started to publicize the Big Four pollution cases mentioned above, the MHW took advantage of the situation and started posting pollution levels (sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide concentrations) in highly visible public places in Japan's largest cities to inform the wider public of potentially damaging health effects. Of the action, one MHW official stated, "We were in the minority without power or money. In order to push forward pollution prevention administration, we had no other way but to inform the public" (quoted in Broadbent 1998:115). The MHW's actions helped fuel the environmental movement's mobilization efforts; in return, the movement's increasingly vocal and disruptive protests granted the MHW the needed attention within the state system for its agenda.

The MHW used the occasion to push for environmental reforms. In 1965 the MHW appointed the Environmental Pollution Commission (*Kogai Shingikai*) to design a comprehensive environmental legislation package (Gresser et al. 1981:20; McKean 1977). In August 1966 the MHW suggested that a basic law be written around four principles: 1) human health should have priority over economic growth; 2) pollution should be regulated at its source; 3) polluting industries should be liable for damage even when they are not legally negligent (the principle of no-fault liability or *mukashitsu sekinin*); and 4) the polluter should bear the cost of prevention (Barrett and Therivel 1991; Gresser et al. 1981; McKean 1977).

Despite some internal and external support for its position (i.e., the Ministry of Home Affairs and the growing anti-pollution movement, respectively), the MHW still faced considerable resistance. Externally, the business community was totally opposed. On October 5, 1966, the *Keidanren* (industry trade association) released its counter opinion. They maintained that: 1) life and health should not have priority over economic growth—as the economy is what permits good health and high living standards; 2) there was no need to fix pollution standards in law; 3) a polluter who observes the legal standards, and is thus not at fault, has to be exempt from liability even if damage results; and 4) the government has to bear some burden for pollution, industry should not be solely responsible. Internally, MITI and the Ministry of Construction sided with business and argued a special law was entirely unnecessary.

On November 24, 1966, ignoring the opposition, the MHW produced a basic draft of a bill that retained the principle that human safety would have priority over economic growth. Cited as an effort to resolve the conflicts between ministries, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) formed the Liaison Council. The Liaison Council, which included members from MITI and its ally, the Economic Planning Agency, produced a draft bill that came down decidedly in favor of the business community. It included a so-called harmony clause: "while planning for harmony with healthy economic development, we will protect the living environment and guarantee the public welfare" (Gresser et al. 1981). In contrast to the MHW's position that the polluting industry should pay for pollution prevention, the Liaison Council's bill stated that the government would pay part or all of the costs (McKean 1977).

On February 24, 1967, the MHW was directed to incorporate the Liaison Council's proposals into its bill. The PMO and Diet's willingness to bow to the wishes of business groups and the pro-accumulation ministries resulted in a law that removed or eroded all four of the MHW's original points and incorporated the "harmony clause." The new law (called the Basic Law for Pollution Control) passed on August 3, 1967, and initially was viewed as a win for the powerful, pro-business actors within the Japanese state.

The Basic Law, however, backfired against these groups and served to strengthen the state-movement coalition between the MHW and the social movement. Rather than placate the growing anti-pollution movement, citizens' groups often invoked sections of the law in their struggles to protect the environment. Intense public debate arose on how to best strengthen the law through new amendments. Concurrently the efficacy of the MHW and the oppositional political parties increased (see below). The law provided them an administrative hold from which to act in the public's and their own interests. These state actors often cited the law to justify a certain line of action and subsequently used the law as an impetus for drafting new legislation (Gresser et al. 1981; Reich 1983). Thus, paradoxically, a legal act intended to impede the nascent anti-pollution forces led instead to strengthening multiple state-movement coalitions.

Opposition Political Parties-Movement Coalitions. In large part due to its legal and political involvement in the grassroots anti-pollution movements, the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) rose in popularity during the 1960s and early 1970s (McKean 1981; Sumisato and Hiroshi 1977; Tsurutani 1977).¹⁷ An extensive survey of fourteen citizens' groups in the early 1970s found that the movement participants supported the JCP more than any other political party (McKean 1981).

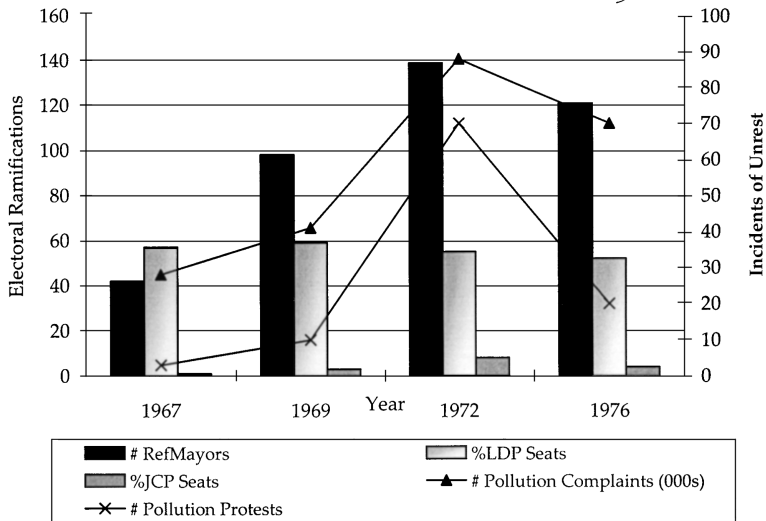
Benefiting from its coalition with the anti-pollution movement, the JCP increased its representation in the House of Representatives from 5 members in 1967 to 14 in 1969 to 39 in 1972. The party also increased its representation in the House of Councilors from 7 in 1968 to 11 in 1971 to 20 in 1974 (Tsurutani 1977). By 1972 the JCP received 10.5 percent of the popular vote in national elections (up from 2.9 percent in 1960). Analysts attribute this growing electoral success to the JCP's anti-pollution policies and involvement with citizens' movements (McKean 1981; Reich 1983). The predilection of anti-pollution adherents for the JCP motivated other opposition parties (e.g., Japanese Socialist Party [JSP]) to also champion the pollution issue as part of the larger political process of inter-party competition (Reich 1991:232).¹⁸

The JCP, along with the JSP, was instrumental in effecting favorable policy outcomes by refusing to pass the Basic Law without provisions that would provide at a later date for the establishment of environmental standards, a system for arbitration and mediation of pollution disputes, and a procedure for dividing the burden of prevention costs. Because the LDP had made a campaign promise to enact a pollution-control law, it conceded to these open-ended provisions demanded by the opposition parties in order to secure the bill's passage in 1967. Although not legally binding, the resolutions were extremely influential in shaping future policy. They publicized the most salient weaknesses of the government's current position. They also were adopted as goals by the environmental social movement, dramatized in the mass media, and discussed in academic and professional circles. As a result, the resolutions fueled ongoing public criticism of the government's diffident policies and became the preferred blueprint for future government action (Gresser et al. 1981:23–4).

Power in Numbers: Coalitions and Policy Thresholds. Except for a very brief interlude when an alliance that included the Socialist Party came to power, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) controlled the Diet from 1947 through 1993. The LDP's share of the national vote, however, declined significantly in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Sumisato and Hiroshi

17. The JCP provided legal expertise in the pollution suits and media coverage via its popular party newspaper, *Akahata*.

18. Lawyers affiliated with JSP also provided legal representation for pollution victims in the Big Four trials (Upham 1976), and both the JCP and JSP played a role in the first successful local anti-pollution battle in Numazu-Mishima-Shimizu (Lewis 1980).



Source: Broadbent 1998; OECD 1977

Figure 1 • The Legitimization Crisis Facing Japan's Liberal Democratic Party

1977).¹⁹ By 1969 the LDP Party (along with its appointed Prime Minister and Ministry heads) became aware of the necessity to change its environmental policies. Such action was needed to deprive the JCP of the platform from which it could continue to expand its political influence (McKean 1981; Reich 1983).²⁰ Figure 1 illustrates the increase in the percentage of seats occupied by the Japanese Communist Party (JCP). It also shows the LDP was losing elections at the local level as well. Between 1967 and 1972 the number of reform mayors elected more than tripled.

These electoral results coincided with a growing discontent among the citizens' movements and the public with the government's handling of the country's pollution problems (measured in terms of number of environmental protests and complaints). Much of the public's dissatisfaction stemmed either directly from experiencing pollution or indirectly from empathizing with the plight of the Big Four pollution victims and their highly publicized court trials (1967–1973). To regain diminishing institutional credibility and popularity, the LDP recognized it would have to address the concerns raised by the opposition parties' resolutions to the Basic Law as well as match some of the pollution regulations put in place by the reform mayors. Fortunately for the LDP, the MHW in its original draft of the Basic Law had raised many of these same issues.²¹

Between 1964 and 1969 the anti-pollution social movement grew to be a formidable force. But, it was the multiple state actor-social movement coalitions that raised the stakes of

19. Voters in Japan have traditionally been imbued with a strong sense of duty to vote. In addition, because the Japanese government assumes the responsibility of ensuring that voters are properly registered, nearly all eligible citizens (all male and female citizens 20 years and older) are registered to vote. During the 1960s and 1970s voter turnout in general and local elections were approximately 65–75 percent and 75–95 percent, respectively.

20. The JCP electoral strength grew at the expense of both the JSP and the LDP (Tsurutani 1977).

21. Most legislation that passes the Diet every year is written and promoted by ministry officials. The national parliament serves less as an initiator of legislation than as ratifier or minor modifier of bills prepared by the bureaucracy and approved by the LDP (Reich 1984a).

inaction for the entrenched and powerful LDP and created the conditions necessary to bring about favorable policy outcomes. The LDP could no longer ignore the public health consequences of industrial pollution as it had done in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Wherever pro-industry state managers and large business associations turned, they now faced state actors (i.e., local governments, the courts, parliament, and even national state agencies) working alongside anti-pollution groups pushing for environmental reform.

Favorable Policy Outcomes: 1970–1974

The period from 1970 to 1974 witnessed the high point of Japanese environmental policy implementation. In December 1969 the Pollution Victims Relief Law was passed. MITI and industry groups hoped the law would defuse the citizens' movements and keep pollution victims out of the courts. This did not happen. Instead, when between 1971 and 1973 the courts awarded victory verdicts to all of the Big Four pollution cases, the movement increased its demands for pollution victim compensation. The LDP acquiesced. To keep more cases from going to court, the law was revised and strengthened in 1973 as the Compensation Law. Under the Compensation Law, once pollution victims were certified by the Health Damage Certification Council (a group of medical, legal, and other experts) they would be eligible for seven types of compensation benefits ranging from medical care to funeral expenses (Environment Agency 1978). As suggested in the MHW's initial version of the Basic Law, all expenses except administrative costs were to be incurred by the polluting industry (Morishima 1981). Between 1974 and 1992 over ¥1.39 trillion was paid out in compensation and health costs to tens of thousands of pollution victims for damages caused by industrial polluters (OECD 1994).

The need for a system of arbitration and mediation of pollution disputes was one of the resolutions the JCP and JSP added to the Basic Law. In 1970 the Law for the Resolution of Pollution Disputes was passed establishing independent subsystems for dispute settlement (Gresser et al. 1981). Again the first law passed by the LDP was found inadequate. It was revised and strengthened in 1972 as the Dispute Law. The amended act had three objectives: 1) to set forth uniform procedures for the settlement of disputes related to pollution covered by the Basic Law (e.g., water and air); 2) to establish administrative collegial bodies that would be charged to handle these procedures; and 3) to institutionalize the treatment of pollution-related grievances by the local governments (Kondo 1981).

In December 1970 a Special Session of the Diet (which has become known as the Pollution Diet) enacted or amended fourteen environment-related laws. These included an amendment to the Basic Law that removed the "harmony clause," and amendments to the Water Pollution and Air Pollution Control Laws to include more types of pollution, to establish nationwide standards, and to extend the pollution control powers of prefectural governors. Among the new laws were: the Pollution Control Works Cost Allocation Law, which required developers to pay a portion of the cost of certain types of government-executed pollution control projects; and the Law for Punishment of Environmental Pollution Crimes Relating to Human Health, which penalized individuals and corporations which discharged substances harmful to human health. Most of the laws were drawn from either the MHW's initial Basic Law, the opposition parties' resolutions to the approved version of the Basic Law, or the environmental regulations adopted by reform governments at the local level. In other words, the national government appropriated the policies of the same state actors that entered into loose coalitions with the anti-pollution movement.

The last significant reform was the creation of the Environment Agency in 1971. The mandate of the Environment Agency was to promote policies for pollution control, nature conservation and other environmental issues. The idea of an administrative commission with plenary regulatory powers was suggested by the JCP and JSP in 1967 as part of the debate surrounding the Basic Law. Initially rejected, in 1970, Prime Minister Sato finally took up the

cause and requested the government prepare the necessary legislation to create the Environment Agency (Gresser et al. 1981:26).²²

On the one hand, the new Environment Agency had limited power. Although its Director General was designated a Minister of State and a member of the Cabinet, the agency was not given the authority of an independent Ministry.²³ On the other hand, to show serious intent, Prime Minister Sato appointed Oishi Buichi, a former medical doctor and public health advocate as the Environment Agency's first Director General. Buichi fits the profile of the institutional activist; he took his mandate seriously. Under his leadership the agency reduced the allowable levels of sulfur dioxide, made it easier for citizens to win suits against polluting companies, and created the "polluter pays principle" whereby companies were forced to pay compensation to victims out of fees paid to local government.²⁴

Hence, the period from 1970 to 1974 witnessed the swift passage of several substantive environmental laws and policies. The effect was to convert a "polluter's heaven" into a "polluter's hell" (Nishimura quoted in Broadbent 1998:125). By the mid-1970s Japan was being held up as a global model of environmental reform. The most far-reaching reforms either directly addressed the demands and policies of state-movement coalitions or were enacted to recapture administrative power away from the courts and local governments. The loosely coupled nature of state-movement coalitions made them susceptible to dissolution once the state responded with a vigorous national anti-pollution policy package.

Post-1974: Dismantling the State Actor-Movement Coalitions

The cumulative power of the state-movement coalitions was vulnerable when in 1975 oil shortages caused Japan's economic growth rate to decline for the first time in two decades. Worried about a possible pending accumulation crisis, business and political elites joined together to push for economic growth. With the ascendancy of accumulation concerns, environmental reform became subject to backlash attacks (Miyamoto 1991:87). Polity members with routine access to power, such as *Keidanren*, the Japan Chemical Association, the Japan Federation of Steel Manufactures, and other large industrial groups, lobbied the Environment Agency (principally through MITI) for modification of the pollution-victim compensation system. Industry alleged that the scientific premises of the system were unsound, that the use of the "polluter pays" principle was inappropriate, and that central and local authorities should finance a larger part of the compensation benefits. The system's assailants questioned why Japan should treat pollution victims with greater deference than other afflicted persons (Gresser et al. 1981:309).

In 1976 the once friendly Environment Agency (EA) came under the directorship of Shintaro Ishihara. A conservative, Ishihara took the position that the anti-pollution movement had become a kind of "witch hunt" and that it had been a mistake to discard the

22. It should also be noted that the United Nations held its first international environmental conference in Stockholm in 1972. Its preparatory documents called on nations around the globe to establish environmental agencies. This international normative pressure likely facilitated environmental movement-state agency coalitions in Japan in the early 1970s by legitimating the formation of environmental administrative units in which the anti-pollution movement could align.

23. Compared to autonomous Ministries (e.g., MITI, MHW) who handle their own administration, the Environment Agency reported to the Prime Minister's office. Such agencies historically have been less effective as they are staffed by personnel from the independent ministries and tend to become the battleground for jurisdictional disputes between these ministries (Reed 1981).

24. During its early years the Environment Agency actively engaged the newspaper media. "One *Asahi* reporter commented, 'Bureaucrats want to appear in the press, especially on policy problems, to show that they are doing something. They want coverage, even if it is somewhat critical.' The same reporter noted 'a kind of interdependency' between reporters and officials, a form of 'give-and-take.' Those reporters and officials shared similar social values, especially in believing in the need for more effective environmental controls. Those common social values provided a basis for news articles" (Reich 1984b:152-3).

“harmonization principle” of the former Basic Law of Environmental Pollution Control (Gresser et al. 1981). The appointment of Ishihara seriously diminished the efficacy of the EA-movement coalition.

Coinciding with the LDP’s rising concerns regarding economic growth was the belief of the Japanese public and environmental protestors that the pollution battle was over—the government had moved to eradicate the most egregious pollution outbreaks and the pollution victims had been compensated. Following ten years of annual increases, environmental-related complaints declined in 1973 (Environment Agency 1978). By the late 1970s, those still interested in the environmental movement shifted from championing specific pollution problems to focusing on more abstract quality of life and nature conservation issues (OECD 1994; Upham 1987). By the early 1980s, even these splinter groups had largely faded from the political scene.

The demise of citizens groups dismantled the local government-movement coalition and left reform candidates and environmental reforms without a support base. Beginning in 1978, conservatives started to retake local governments. The governors and mayors of Kyoto, Tokyo, Okinawa, and Osaka all changed from progressives to conservatives. This marked the end of the era in which progressive local authorities took the lead in environmental action. Eventually, most of these local governments adopted the more conservative national government’s policies. For example, the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly voted down its own “citizen participatory” environmental assessment act passed during the time of progressive Governor Minobe.

Increased support for the LDP in the voting booth also showed up at the national level. In 1978, for the first time following a steady decline throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the percent of votes received by the LDP actually increased (Broadbent 1998). As a result of the change in voting behavior, the power of the opposition parties (particularly the JCP) declined and with it the impact an opposition party-movement coalition might sustain.

Finally, after the favorable verdicts handed down in each of the Big Four cases, the role of the courts receded and the coalition ended. The main reason for the severance was the new Compensation Law kept most pollution cases from going to court. Those cases that did make it to the courts tended to be dragged out with far less favorable compensation awards than in the Big Four cases.

In brief, the state actor-movement coalitions dissolved with the decline in social movement mobilization and the parallel decline in power of its state partners. As might be expected, these changes were accompanied by some downgrading of environmental reforms. For example, when pushed via administrative guidance by the Environment Agency, the trend of private investment in anti-pollution measures in absolute Yen and percent of total investment increased between 1970 and 1975 (from 188.3 to 964.5 for the former and 5.3 percent to 17.7 percent for the latter). Freed from government pressure, the trend steadily reversed itself—slipping in 1980 to ¥312.8 in absolute investment and 3.9 percent in percent of total investment (Miyamoto 1991:82). Another example of the backward trend was in July 1978 when the Environment Agency relaxed the 24-hour daily standard of NO₂ from 0.02 ppm to 0.04–0.06 ppm. Nevertheless, it is important to note, even with the watering down of environmental reform, the state-movement coalitions had through their efforts succeeded in providing contemporary Japan with an enduring structure of anti-pollution policies.

Discussion

Examining Japan’s anti-pollution politics between 1956 and 1976, we have demonstrated that favorable policy outcomes were the result of multiple coalitions between anti-pollution movements and state agencies, opposition political parties, local governments, and the courts. The Appendix summarizes the shifting state actor-social movement coalitions and policy reform outcomes over time, among these four categories.

Japan's remarkable environmental policy outcome is more than just a social movement or a political institution story. While the anti-pollution movement was the largest outburst of political protest in recent Japanese history, the movement could not produce these policy outcomes on its own. These policy outcomes required state actors who would offer an alternative to the LDP and its agenda, and who would work within the government to create, pass, and implement the reforms.

The LDP's entrenched domination in the Japanese polity made the task of reform too great for a single state actor; instead the undertaking required multiple state-movement coalitions. Each early state-movement coalition success—such as the Basic Law initial proposal and its resolutions, court cases, and subsequent local election victories—prompted increased mobilization of the anti-pollution movement. In turn, as the movement gained support and received greater mass media coverage, the coalitions' victories grew also, with new laws, favorable court verdicts, strict local pollution regulations, and national election victories. By thus attacking the LDP and powerful ministries on multiple fronts, the various coalitions created a crisis of uncertainty that demanded action. The ruling party lost its veto points in the courts and local government, and its unanimity in the parliament and state bureaucracies. Afraid of losing its capacity to define the nation's agenda, the LDP acted to reinstate its authority by claiming as its own many of the same policies suggested or enacted by state-movement coalitions.

Although the 1974 economic recession reinstated industrial growth, rather than the environment, as the state's top priority, the impact of state actor-movement coalitions on Japan's environmental policy must not be underestimated. The significant improvements in Japan's environmental quality between 1970 and 1975 are demonstrated both by scholars (Broadbent 1998; Matsui 1992; Reed 1981; Weidner 1986) and by quantitative indicators (Environment Agency 1977; OECD 1977). Furthermore, in the more than 25 years since, Japan has never returned to be the polluters' haven it once was. While Japan's current environmental performance might stem from normative global pressures in the 1990s for nations to include environmental protection as a basic state responsibility (Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000), the favorable policy outcomes achieved by the state-movement coalitions brought Japan up to par with the environmental conditions of other advanced capitalist industrial democracies (ACIDs). In short, while Japan's state-movement coalitions were short-lived, they deposited enduring structures of reform within the Japanese state, which include pollution boards, compensation programs, a series of stringent pollution and chemical control laws, and the Environment Agency.

Conclusion

Even into the late 1990s and early 2000s several notable review, empirical, and theoretical articles on movement impacts and consequences concurred that the study of movement outcomes is much more underdeveloped than studies focusing on movement emergence, recruitment, tactical choices, and the mobilization process (see Amenta and Young 1999b:22; Andrews 2002:105; Burstein et al. 1995:276; Cress and Snow 2000:1063–4; Giugni 1998:373; Giugni 1999:xiv–xv; Meyer 2002:6). We believe the kinds of state actor-social movement coalitions found in this case provide a useful framework to advance the study of policy outcomes of state-oriented social movements. Political process models of social movements have long noted the importance of influential and elite allies (e.g., scientific and legal experts, mass media, other social movements, celebrities, etc.) for explaining movement outcomes. Indeed, as Edwin Amenta and Michael Young (1999b) note, “challengers are rarely alone in pressing for collective benefits for a group” (p. 36).

This study suggests that a focus on state-centered allies may be the most fruitful avenue for understanding the variation in the level of policy reform achieved by national social

movements. The most successful movements of the past few decades (e.g., civil rights, women's rights, environmental, and anti-nuclear/peace movements) seem to have generated similar kinds of multiple state actor-social movement relations as observed in Japan in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That is, they entered into loose coalitions with the courts, local governments, state agencies, and political parties to enact policy change (Burstein 1991; Costain 1992; Meyer and Marullo 1992; Sawyers and Meyer 1999). Along these lines, scholars are increasingly examining the relationship between social movements and state actors (e.g., courts, political parties, legislatures, and institutional activists) to explain the variation in policy outcomes (see Burstein 1991; Goldstone 2003; Kane 2003; McCammon and Kane 1997; Santoro and McGuire 1997; Wolfson 2001). Not only do we concur with this recent trend of analyzing the intersection of specific state actors and social movements to understand differential levels of policy change, but also propose that the existence of multiple coalitions between state actors and social movements greatly raises the probability that favorable policy implementation occurs.

Favorable policy outcomes range from the state's acceptance of demands, placing them on the policy agenda to adopting new policies and finally implementing them (Burstein et al. 1995:283–5). The present study suggests that state actor-movement coalitions may be indispensable at each stage of the policy reform process as well as increasing the likelihood of more substantive enactment—beyond mere symbolic gestures. Courts, political parties, and sympathetic state agencies all have the capacity to place social movement policy issues on the political agenda for further political debate/deliberation. Political parties and state agencies have the bureaucratic power to get new laws passed. State agencies are the primary sources for policy implementation. At the local level, city councils and regional governments have the ability to push through all stages of the policy process within their delimited jurisdictions. Local policy enactment and implementation provide both viable models (Martin 2001) and increasing pressure for national level state actors to move in the same direction for policy reform on the issue in question (Kriesi and Wisler 1999:53–6).²⁵ Courts have the ability to order changes as well as issue cease-and-desist orders, award compensation settlements, and call for legislative action. Furthermore court actions establish legal precedents.

Although the cultural context of policymaking and the strong and enduring presence of the LDP are unique to Japan, we believe our framework may be useful to help explain policy outcomes in other democratic settings. Variation among democratic state structures would obviously have important implications for the kinds of state actor-social movement coalitions likely to form, and which coalitions would be most efficacious in terms of policy change. For example, parliamentary systems with multi-party competition provide greater potential for the establishment of opposition party-movement coalitions (Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995), as is the case for several European and Latin American polities in the contemporary period. Furthermore, democratic states integrated into the world system of emerging global standards (e.g., environmental quality, health, human rights, and labor protections) with large bureaucracies are more likely to house state agencies that specialize in institutional credibility and legitimacy (Meyer et al. 1997). It is precisely such state agencies where reform-minded social movements may find receptive allies to push forward policy changes.

Legal systems also vary across democratic polities in terms of their autonomy and political strength. The fact that Japan's court system was relatively marginal demonstrates the potential power (symbolic and real) of courts even in states where they have historically been weak. Lastly, the power of local and regional governments depends on the level of national government centralization. We expect federalist political structures (e.g., Brazil, Canada,

25. Kriesi and Wisler (1999) argue that with regard to local government reform and social movements: "The success of an initiator movement in one context has two additional effects on similar kinds of movements in other contexts of the federal state: they are put under pressure to achieve the same goal, and, at the same time, they learn from the successful movement how to go about doing this" (p. 55).

India, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the United States) that give more power to local governments than top-down centralized governments (e.g., Austria, France, Norway, and Sweden) would supply greater potential for social movements to form coalitions with them (Amenta and Young 1999a; Andrews 2001:90; Baiocchi 2003; Martin 2001).²⁶

Besides variations in national political structures, the pattern of state actor-movement coalitions and policy reform will also vary by the type of state-oriented social movement under consideration. Once a movement is relatively powerful with widespread mass media and public opinion support, it will more likely find sympathetic state actors that fall within its issue domain. Thus labor-based movements will more likely coalesce with ministries of labor and/or occupational health agencies, gender and ethnic-based movements will find more support within anti-discrimination offices of the modern state, while environmental movements form coalitional relations with environmental and public health agencies. Opposition political parties are also more prone to align with movements closer to their ideological platforms (Rucht 1999) (e.g., green parties with environmental movements; labor parties with labor-based movements). Courts and local governments, on the other hand, are more catholic and potentially penetrable by a variety of state-oriented social movements.

The claims made in the present analysis regarding the efficacy of state actor-movement coalitions require further study in other polities and with different kinds of state-oriented social movements. Comparative and quantitative designs may be especially informative when they include cases of both successful and failed social movements in terms of achieving policy reform (Cress and Snow 2000; Giugni 1999:xxiv). Analysts should give special attention to the kinds of state actor-movement coalitions that form (courts, local governments, political parties, and state agencies) as well as the overall number of state actor-movement coalitions for each of the compared cases in order to decipher if these variations result in differential rates of movement success. Additionally, scholars may want to expand the theoretical scope of state actor-movement coalitions to incorporate cases in which the policy conflict includes a well-organized countermovement (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996) that also forges ties to state actors. Such settings may include coalitions between economic elites and state actors that shape policy-making.

Finally, while this article has introduced the cumulative effect of multiple state actor-social movement coalitions with regards to promoting new policy reforms, the same thesis might be useful in analyzing the ability of coalitions to prevent unwanted policy retrenchments (Reese 1996) (e.g., welfare state cutbacks, pension system economizing, and public sector privatization schemes). Political conflicts involving policy retrenchments increasingly characterize the period of neo-liberal economic reform around the globe (Almeida 2002; Korpi and Palme 2003). Analyzing the kinds of defensive state actor-social movement partnerships that coalesce to prevent such "reforms" may help to explain the variation in the pace of such policy changes within and between countries in democratic polities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

26. Some evidence to support this claim in the United States can be found in Wolfson's (2001) work on the anti-tobacco movement whereby he reported anti-smoking policies and ordinances to be more likely implemented at the municipal level. The *Campaign for a Living Wage* has also had much more success at the local city level than at the state or national level (see Martin 2001).

Appendix

State Actor-Social Movement Coalitions and Policy Outcomes Time Line

<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Local Governments</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Weak State Agencies</i>	<i>Opposition Political Party</i>	<i>Reform Policy Outcome</i>
1953–1963	No coalitions.	No coalitions.	No coalitions.	No coalitions.	MHW conducts national survey of forms of pollution (1953).
	Local governments inactive.	Courts inactive.	Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) active (1953) but unsuccessful.	Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) uninvolved.	MHW drafts Living Environmental Pollution Prevention Act. The Act is never implemented. It is successfully deposed by local governments, government ministries, and the ruling LDP (1958).
	No social movement.	No social movement.	No social movement.	No social movement.	
1964–1969	First local government-movement coalition forms in Tri-city region of Numazu-Mishima-Shimizu (1964).	Court-movement coalitions emerge as “Big 4” pollution law suits (Yoikkaichi, Itai, Niigata, and Minamata) are accepted by the courts (1967–1969).	MHW-movement convergence around passage of first Basic Law (1967).	Opposition political party-movement coalitions emerge as JCP and JSP fight to attach resolutions to the first Basic Law (1967).	MHW drafts Basic Law for Pollution Control (1966).
	Local government-movement coalitions begin to form in largest cities (Tokyo, Kyoto, Okinawa, Fuji, and Osaka) and enact anti-pollution ordinances (1968).			Opposition political party-movement coalitions form when JCP and JSP lawyers convince pollution victims to bring their cases to court (1967–1969).	A watered-down version of the Basic Law for Pollution Control that is pro-industry is enacted into law (1967). Opposition political parties refuse to vote for the Basic Law without provisions that would provide at a later date for the establishment of environmental standards, a system of arbitration and mediation of pollution disputes, and a procedure for dividing the burden of prevention costs (1967).
					Opposition political parties petition for an environmental regulatory agency to be created (1967). Pollution Victims’ Relief Law enacted (1969).

(Continued)

Appendix (continued)

<i>Time Period</i>	<i>Local Governments</i>	<i>Courts</i>	<i>Weak State Agencies</i>	<i>Opposition Political Party</i>	<i>Reform Policy Outcome</i>
1970–1974	Local government-movement coalitions successful. Local pro-environmental governments remain in power in largest cities (1970–1974).	Court-movement coalitions successful. Pollution victims in all “Big 4” pollution trials win favorable verdicts (1971–1973).	Formidable state agency-movement coalition created with the establishment of the Environment Agency (1971). New agency successful in implementing enacted reforms.	Oppositional political party-movement coalition successful. JCP increases its representation in Diet where it champions anti-pollution policies.	Law for the Resolution of Pollution Disputes passed (1970). Japanese government convokes the “Pollution Diet” and passes or amends 14 environmental laws (including the strengthening of the 1967 Basic Law for Pollution Control) (1970). Creation of the Japanese Environment Agency (1971). Dispute Law enacted (a strengthening of the 1970 Law for the Resolution of Pollution Disputes) (1972). Pollution Compensation Law enacted (strengthens the 1969 Pollution Victims’ Relief Law) (1973).
Post 1974	Dismantling of local government-movement coalitions. After 1975 few new major Local anti-pollution governments begin to lose office in largest cities. Some progressive anti-pollution laws are overturned (1978). Social movement wanes.	Dismantling of court-movement coalitions. After 1975 few new major anti-pollution lawsuits are resolved in victims’ favor. Remaining lawsuits drag out for decades. Social movement wanes.	Dismantling of state agency-movement coalitions. The Environment Agency is taken over by a pro-industry director hostile to environmental movement (1976). Social movement wanes.	Dismantling of opposition political parties-movement coalitions. Number of seats in Diet held by JCP decline while number of LDP seats increase (1978). Social movement wanes.	New toxic-substance diseases (e.g. chromium poisoning) fail to be designated eligible for compensation (1975). Pro-industry director appointed to Environment Agency (1976). Environment Agency tightens standards for Minamata pollution victim compensation (1978). Environment Agency relaxes standards for NO ₂ levels (1978). Private investment in anti-pollution control decreases due to relaxation in government pressure and regulation (1980).

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