

**Putting Social Movements in Their Place: Explaining Opposition to Energy Projects in the United States, 2000–2005.** By Doug McAdam and Hilary Boudet. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 278p. \$99.00 cloth, \$28.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592714001297

— Daniel P. Aldrich, *Purdue University*

In the fall of 2002, the firm Windland Inc. announced its intention to construct a cluster of 210-foot-tall wind turbines on 7,000 acres of land in south-central Idaho. Many newspapers and scholars have reported regular, broad-scale opposition to such facilities across the country due to concerns about harm to birds and bats—“wind turbine syndrome” involving dizziness, fatigue, and headaches—and worries about altered aesthetics. Yet anti-windfarm activists in Cassia County, Idaho, held only a single public meeting outlining their concerns about the proposal. They filed no lawsuits, held no protest events, and wrote a total of five letters against the project. The project moved forward with regulatory approval and will soon begin generating some 200 megawatts of electricity.

In contrast, activists in Ventura County, California, organized to fight a proposal from the firm BHP to build a large-scale liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility some 14 miles off the coast at Cabrillo Port. In the early 2000s, residents in the communities of Oxnard and Malibu wrote more than 240 letters, brought in 138 speakers, and held eight protest events against the project. Sustained opposition to LNG facilities on the West Coast, including the Ventura County program, grew into a regional movement supported by Hollywood stars such as Pierce Brosnan. Eventually, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the proposal, arguing that it had failed to meet California’s environmental standards. No doubt most social scientists envision the second case as the more common. The literature on controversial facilities and Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) politics has regularly analyzed contentious political events like those at Cabrillo Port and underscored the role played by such factors as the risk level of the project and the level of organizational capacity in the community.

Yet this new book by Doug McAdam and Hilary Boudet challenges standard accounts from the field of contentious politics, shifting the focus away from narratives about NIMBYism to the factors that make such protest events likely to occur. Despite the thousands of peer-reviewed articles and dozens of university press books on the topic of opposition to controversial facilities, the authors find that typical research exaggerates the frequency of popular protest (p. 55). Rather than being a common occurrence, the broad mobilization activities of anti-project activists in the Cabrillo Port case and the rejection of that LNG facility by decision makers were indeed the exception. In the words of the authors, actual levels of collective action in the United States against such

energy projects seem “paltry” (p. 58). Of the nuclear power, LNG, wind, and hydroelectric plants under consideration in their study, only half involved any kind of anti-project mobilization at all (p. 180), with an average of 1.4 protests in each community. In fact, much of the mobilization uncovered by McAdam and Boudet came from local citizens supporting, not opposing, such proposals (p. 91).

Beyond helping to reorient the field in order to look at communities’ likelihood of mobilization (p. 34), rather than at mobilizations only once they occur, *Putting Social Movements in Their Place* makes another important contribution through its methodological innovations. Many studies of protest movements rely on small-n analysis (SNA), such as case studies, and qualitative process tracing in combination with quantitative analysis through large-n analysis (LNA). Yet single-case studies of anti-project movements tend to select on the dependent variable, handpicking cases where there is clear evidence of mobilization. Large data sets blur important details and overlook the smaller-scale processes that may not be visible from a distance. This project adopts an alternative perspective, selecting 20 communities *at random* from those in which final environmental impact statements were filed and then evaluating them using a middle-ground methodology. The authors used interviews and advanced-preparation fieldwork to gather data on the projects and then fuzzy-set/qualitative comparative analysis (fs/QCA) techniques to analyze the cases. Advanced-preparation fieldwork involved substantive online data collection in preparation for short (two-week) visits to the communities of interest.

McAdam and Boudet’s analysis of the causal factors behind initial mobilization and project outcomes builds on the work of Charles Ragin, popularizer of continuous fuzzy-set membership (*Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*, 2008). They assigned fuzzy-set scores between 0 and 1 for potential causal factors, such as political opportunities, risk level of the proposed facility, economic hardship, and civic capacity, normalizing them across cases to allow for comparability. For scholars seeking methodological clarity and transparency, this work will surely satisfy, as the appendices contain not only the raw data about the projects and full information about informants but also detailed information on fs/QCA coding decisions. In a field where many of us struggle to meet the replication standards proposed more than a decade ago (Gary King, “Replication, Replication,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28 [1995]: 443–499), this book gives hope that at least some take the challenge seriously.

Several interesting findings emerge from the project. While investigating the factors that spur mobilization against proposed facilities, the authors found little evidence for the importance of conventional variables

regularly highlighted by social-movement scholars, such as risk from the facility, political opportunity, and organizational/civic capacity (p. 67). Rather, context variables—meaning variables specific to the community itself—proved critical. This list included economic hardship, prior land use, and prior experience in opposing similar projects: “[T]hese community context factors provided the spark for mobilization” (p. 78). Next, their analysis of the predictors of outcomes like failed or successful siting showed how the factors of absence of opposition and intergovernmental conflict were critical; a lack of opposition was essentially sufficient to explain approval of a project. A combination of local mobilization by residents with disagreement among governmental decision makers (such as those at regional and local levels) served as the “best path to rejection” (p. 120).

I had two minor quibbles with the work. Chapter 5 felt somewhat disconnected—methodologically and theoretically—from the rest of the book, especially as it raised a host of new issues not explored elsewhere, such as East Coast versus West Coast differences and the presence (or absence) of experts who could broker between opposition groups. Next, the choice to select the 20 cases at random meant that this draw brought out a tremendous number of LNG projects, but other, more deliberate, case selection might have generated different findings. For example, roughly half of the attempts to site nuclear power plants in the United States have ended in failure. Were their “paths to rejection” parallel to those of LNG projects?

Minor flaws aside, *Putting Social Movements in Their Place* sets the stage for a new generation of scholarship based on extensive fieldwork and knowledge of cases and on the recognition that mobilization and contentious politics occur only rarely. In our post-Fukushima world, policymakers and residents alike have much to learn about the siting processes that can create sustainable and locally supported energy sources, and this book sets out a clear research agenda for doing so.

**The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities.** By Harris Mylonas. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 271p. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592714001303

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In *The Politics of Nation-Building*, Harris Mylonas seeks to explain “variation in state policies to manage social diversity” (p. 2). The core of the argument is that the international system plays a key role in determining the types of policies that states pursue as part of their nation-building strategies. Mylonas makes several theoretical moves that each constitute a major contribution to our

understanding of nation-building policies. First, he steps away from the usual distinction between national majorities and minority groups to focus instead on core and non-core groups. Core groups are defined as all of the inhabitants of a country who share those common national markers that are seen as defining national identity. Non-core groups include all other inhabitants of the country. This terminology allows Mylonas to avoid the common problems of how to deal with numerical minorities that may dominate a particular polity on the one hand and subordinate groups that may comprise a majority of the population on the other hand.

Second, Mylonas identifies three broad types of policies that may be pursued by ruling political elites vis-à-vis non-core groups. These include exclusionary policies that “aim at the physical removal of a non-core group” from a particular territory, assimilationist policies that seek to force the targeted group to adopt “the core group culture and way of life,” and accommodationist policies that generally respect the different culture and status of the non-core group (p. 21-22). By distinguishing between accommodation and assimilation, Mylonas broadens our conception of nation-building policies beyond the usual distinction between inclusion and exclusion while remaining sufficiently parsimonious to allow for the development of explanatory theories. The distinction between assimilation and accommodation is particularly important in highlighting a commonly pursued middle-ground policy that seeks to increase the dominance of the core group without pursuing overtly hostile policies against other groups.

The main theoretical contribution of the book is in the explanation of how political elites make choices to pursue one of these three policies. The key factors include a combination of international relations and comparative politics variables. The key IR variables include whether the non-core group has external support from another state and whether this state is an ally or enemy of the host state. Although several domestic factors play a role, the key variable in the explanation is whether the host state is pursuing revisionist or status quo foreign policy goals. Revisionist goals are pursued when a state has lost territory and/or increased in power relative to its competitors, whereas status quo goals are pursued when a state has gained territory and/or declined in power relative to its competitors.

Non-core groups without external support are expected to be subject to assimilationist policies. If there is an external state providing support for the non-core group, things get more complicated. If the external state is an ally of the host state, then the host state is expected to pursue accommodationist policies toward the non-core group. If the external state is an enemy of the host state, the host state’s foreign policy goals come into play. In that situation, revisionist host