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## **Siting of human services facilities and the not in my back yard phenomenon: a critical research review**

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*Abstract.* Current research on local siting conflicts are primarily about environmental threats. Following a boom during the two last decades of the 1900s, research on community opposition to the establishment of human services is a shrinking field with inadequate articulation and comparisons of various approaches. The aim of this research review is to critically scrutinize the first wave of research on local protests against human services and expose and contrast later approaches in order to lay the necessary groundwork for synthesis attempts. The first wave approach is characterized by its far-reaching generalization claims; all local protests against perceived social threats were seen as instances of Not In My Back Yard protests and as a function of general, hierarchically arranged attitudes toward client groups. By contrast, in later attempts to shed light upon neighbourhood protests, real life protests against the establishment of human services – not general attitudinal data – are focused upon. But the degree of contextualizing varies greatly within this more protest-centred research. The indirect approach is based on data that are collected in interviews with human service administrators and concern the extent and duration of neighbors' protests, while in the direct approach the protests are studied as such, and especially issues having to do with the local protests' ability to generate public support. In this article, the alternatives to the first wave of research on siting conflicts have been demonstrated for the first time and contrasted with each other. This is a necessary requirement and a first step for efforts to provide the syntheses that this research area so sorely needs.

### **Introduction**

The Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) acronym has been used by social scientists since the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s to describe the resistance of communities to the siting of controversial facilities and land uses (O'Hare, 1977; Dear

and Taylor, 1982; Takahashi, 1997). The concept does not refer to just any protests. In its original meaning, NIMBY is a term for a local opposition to a certain establishment in one's own neighbourhood, while there is no objection to locating it elsewhere. In other words, the protestors support – or are at least indifferent to – the idea that nuclear power plants or homeless shelters be established in principle, as long as their own ‘back yard’ is not affected (Dear, 1992).

The last two decades of the 1900s were something of a boom period for NIMBY research. Human geographer Michael Dear's pioneering book *Not on Our Street* (Dear and Taylor, 1982) inspired human geographers, as well as researchers from other social sciences, to study siting conflicts as NIMBY conflicts. However, the discontinuity of this research field is evident (DeVerteuil, 2013). As early as the 1990s, but especially noticeable after the turn of the millennium, the tide began to turn against this first wave of siting studies and there was an increased criticism of several of the assumptions underlying the perspective. An important general aspect of the critique relates to the failure to reflect the complexity of siting disputes; NIMBY were used as a shorthand for all conceivable types of opposition to locally unwanted sitings, not as a diagnosis for specific local responses (Burningham, 2000; Futrell, 2003; Wolsink, 2006). But, as suggested (Sjöberg and Drottz-Sjöberg, 2001; Wolsink, 2006), if all opposition to unwanted facilities were NIMBY protests, the concept would be quite empty and unnecessary. Critics have also charged the decontextualized focus on general attitudinal variables, characteristic for the first wave approach; siting conflicts were not studied *per se*, but viewed as triggering protest actions based on pre-existing attitudes toward new technologies or stigmatized clients (Futrell, 2003; Wexler, 1996; Wilton, 2002). For critics, this implies an authority-centred approach where multifaceted siting conflicts are reduced to a moral battle between rational and civic minded corporate and state planners and prejudiced and un-informed local opponents (Freudenberg and Pastor, 1992; Wexler, 1996; Burningham, 2000; Bell, Gray and Haggett, 2005; Gibson, 2005; Burningham, Barnett and Thrush, 2006).

We will return to the criticism of this line of research later, but here we would like to call attention to one central point. With the first wave approach no analytical distinction was made between oppositions to different types of controversial establishments. NIMBY became a catchall concept for all protests against locally unwanted sitings, regardless of

whether these protests were directed at perceived technological and environmental threats like waste facilities and nuclear power plants, or at human service facilities like community-based psychiatric housing, halfway houses, drug treatment facilities and homeless shelters (Dear, 1992). But the difference between local protests against perceived environmental and technological threats and protests against establishments of human services is considerable. Protests against facilities representing perceived technological and environmental threats are not necessarily about *where* a certain activity should be located, but often about whether these facilities are *justified at all*. Local protests against the siting of a nuclear waste repository, e.g. do not always focus with the place for its establishment, but more often with the risks of the technology as such (Sjöberg and Drottz-Sjöberg, 2001). Opposition in the latter case is often based on issues of principle rather than on narrow local considerations. Thus it is less about Not In My Back Yard than about Not In *Anyone's* Back Yard (Heiman, 1990). These differences can have important consequences because they allow actors to draw on different rhetorical resources and framings (Gordon and Jasper, 1996). If a local protest against unwanted facility is to be successful, it is vital that it can claim to have a general cultural legitimacy and to be in the public interest and that it can withstand the accusation that it represents illegitimate, parochial interests. Local protests against technological and environmental threats often allow opponents to frame their struggles as local illustrations of more general issues; the protest against a nuclear waste repository can be framed as a universal critique against a specific technology (Rootes, 2013). The rhetorical repertoire available for protests against human service facilities are usually more limited; a protests against community-based psychiatric housing cannot be based on reasons of principle.

The suggested analytical distinction between protests against unwanted technological and environmental facilities and against human service facilities is not absolute; some human service facilities can be opposed in principle, for example centres for needle and syringe exchange, and protests against perceived technological and environmental threats sometimes combine NIMBY arguments with a more universal critique. In addition, local protests against unwanted facilities can be quite variable, with agendas and alliances changing over time (Futrell, 2003; Boudet, 2011). In spite of the ambiguity, a plausible conclusion of this reasoning is that the NIMBY concept is more relevant for characterizing protests against the establishment of controversial human services than protests against the establishment that is regarded as environmentally harmful. This is not

the same, however, as saying that the analytical and methodological foundations of the first wave approach therefore should be valid for the study of local protests against the establishment of human services. The aim of this research review is actually to critically scrutinize this approach and try to uncover different possibilities to study and understand local conflicts against the establishment of human services facilities. Carrying out such a critical analysis is important, as local protests against much-needed social services still constitute a considerable social problem. However, the difficulties in undertaking such a review are significant.

The first difficulty is that we are reviewing a research field that over time has become more marginalized. In the first wave of NIMBY research, studies of protests against the siting of human service facilities played a central role (Dear and Taylor, 1982; Takahashi and Dear, 1997). Later research on siting conflicts has been primarily about technological and environmental threats; research on local protests against undesired land use has, as DeVerteuil (2013) concludes, 'gone environmental' (Wolsink, 2006). Research on siting conflicts about the establishment of human service facilities is, however, not only a shrinking research field. The area is also, secondly, characterized by what can be labelled as inadequate methodological and analytical articulation. The research field suggests important insights and, as we shall attempt to show, several innovative approaches. While these approaches can be seen as reactions against limitations in the early NIMBY research, the empirical results that they have given rise to are seldom directly comparable with those of the first wave research; the different approaches have simply stressed different research questions. The problem is also that until now no attempts have been made to more systematically compare different attempts to shed light on neighbors' reactions to human services, and thereby no attempts have been made to create the syntheses which can promote further research in the area. In short, contemporary studies fail to build on one another.

The article is organized as follows: after a brief historical background to the research field, we provide a critical review of the first wave of studies on opposition to the establishment of human services. The first wave approach is characterized by its dependence on general attitudinal data toward client groups and local opposition to the establishment of human service facilities is seen as a function of these general attitudes. This early approach is then contrasted with a later, more contextualized approach, where

real life protests against the establishment of human services – not general attitudinal data – are focused upon. However, the degree of contextualization varies strongly within this more protest-centred perspective and two approaches are distinguished, an indirect and a direct approach. Finally, we conclude with a short discussion of the major findings.

## **Research on protests against unwanted human services facilities**

It is a common conception that protests against locally unwanted establishments are typical present-day phenomena. This is a mistaken idea. In Europe there were protests against locally unwanted sitings of convalescent homes for the mentally ill as early as in the middle of the 1800s (Philo, 1987), and a study of land use conflicts in Massachusetts during the last half of the 1800s shows that local protests against planned schools, new streetcar lines, saloons, and tuberculosis sanatoriums were quite frequent (Meyer, 1995). A daily American newspaper from this period summed up the protests against sanatoriums for tuberculosis patients in a manner representative of a current NIMBY phenomenon:

*Everybody here believes in the sanatorium and wants their number increased, but almost everybody insists that they be built in other towns than this (quoted after Meyer, 1995: 305).*

It is, however, no coincidence that research on local protests against undesired establishments became more numerous at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. As Peter Hall (1989: 279) observes retrospectively, American town planners – and, he might have added, their Western European colleagues – then met ‘the multiplication of special interest groups’ engaged in various ways of protecting their neighbourhoods against perceived threats. The growing local protests can be associated with two social changes. The first was the appearance of a new environmental consciousness and reactions to the new high risk technologies that appeared after World War II. The other social change that was the origin of more widespread protests against human services can collectively be labelled de-institutionalization.

During the latter part of the 1960s and into the 1970s the large psychiatric hospitals in the USA – and a little later those in Canada and Western Europe – were phased out, and

were replaced by decentralized units (Rocheftort, 1990; Mansel, 2006). Criticism was extensive at that time against the large psychiatric hospitals' de-humanization and hospitalization of people. By closing the large institutions and moving psychiatric patients' health and social care to the local municipalities, patients' lives would be normalized, and a group that had been stigmatized would be given opportunities to be integrated into society. De-institutionalization would not, however, be limited to psychiatric health and social care. It has also become a guiding principle for the development of other social treatment and service, including addiction rehabilitation, correctional treatment, and care of persons with physical disabilities (Rocheftort, 1990).

### ***First wave NIMBY research***

The first wave of research had as its aim the exploration of community rejection of 'noxious' facilities, and understanding of mechanisms behind what is described as 'turf-protectionist behaviour of facility opponents' (Dear, 1992: 288). This approach, though, is characterized by a paradox. While the intention was to cast new light on local NIMBY protests, such local protest became the object of studies only in exceptional cases. Instead of studying actual siting conflicts, the early NIMBY research was based on such conflicts being expressions of people's general, culturally bound social categorizations of stigmatized out-groups, and thus being possible to be derived from attitude data on the general population.

With this perspective, this line of research linked itself to a long research tradition where the premises were not just about general attitudes to different social groups predicating discriminating actions of various kinds, but also that such attitudes are hierarchically arranged from short to long social distances, in other words, from how distant from or close to different social categories people feel (Bogardus, 1928; Tringo, 1970). It is hierarchical qualities like these that are the basis for the 'good neighbor hierarchy' that plays such a central role in the first wave approach. In repeated random sampling surveys, respondents from the general population were asked hypothetical questions, e.g. about how intimately they would be willing to interact with different groups of clients if they were to get them as neighbors. With the help of data of this kind, acceptance/rejection hierarchies were created in which client groups could be ranked from acceptable to unacceptable. Clients in, e.g. medical care stood out as potentially good neighbors. Farther down in the hierarchy came others like children with limited

psychiatric disorders, and at the bottom came clients with 'social diseases' – crime, drug abuse, and alcoholism (Taylor, Dear and Hall, 1979; Dear, 1992; Dear *et al.*, 1997; Takahashi and Dear, 1997).

Hypothetical questions of the type that were used to create 'good neighbor hierarchies' were asked not only to predict client groups' relative acceptability in neighbourhoods. The same method was also used in the first wave approach to study what were considered to be the secondary conditions that were seen to contribute to the degree of local opposition to the establishment of human services, specifically the facility characteristics and the social characteristics of the host community. Among many possible facility characteristics, facility size stood out as highly predictive of community resistance. A large facility will be less acceptable than a small one, while the single best predictor among host community variables is income; the more affluent tend to be less welcoming (Dear and Taylor, 1982; Daniel Yankelovich Group, 1990).

The first wave of siting studies thus presumed a significant continuity between general attitudes and local opinions and protest actions; the idea was not only that local reactions to certain types of facilities interact with widespread general ideas about what kind of activities involve risk; the perspective implied, as Futrell (2003) pointed out, that NIMBY attitudes were latent, and that these attitudes were manifested in local protests when a certain facility, with a certain category of clients, is in the process of establishing itself in one's own neighbourhood. This strong emphasis on local protests as absolute functions of general social categorizations stands out in retrospect as theoretically noteworthy. The 'good neighbor hierarchy' was in fact developed in a period when behavioural and social scientists were calling into question an earlier often taken-for-granted, absolute connection between attitudes and actions, and pointed out the situational influences on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Wicker, 1969). In contrast to this general attitude-based approach, alternative approaches developed; these were closer to the contemporary problematization of the relationships between general attitudes and actions. The questions were no longer about how people *think* that they will react in an imaginary situation, but rather how they *actually react* in connection with change in their everyday local context. In other words, instead of deducing the mechanisms behind local protests from hypothetical general attitude studies, the effects of actual establishments in real life situations were studied.

The new interest in situated local reactions to controversial establishments represents a shift from the first wave research's decontextualization to a new contextualization of local protests against unwanted land uses. It does not, however, involve a uniform research agenda. One significant difference is the researchers' distance to the protesting neighbors, whether these protests are studied *indirectly* or *directly*.

### ***The indirect approach***

In the indirect approach, local opposition to establishment of human services is mirrored using interview data from human service administrators; local officials are confronted with the task of making various estimates of the protests against the facilities of which they are in charge.

In a survey of administrators in Massachusetts, Zippay (1997) found that somewhat more than half of the establishments of community-based psychiatric housing were met with negative neighbor reactions (varying from extreme to moderate to mild opposition). A similar picture appears when the same researcher (Zippay, 2007; Zippay and Lee, 2008) studied reactions to the establishment of psychiatric housing in six American states; negative reactions – ranging from expressions of worry to organized protests – occurred in about half of the establishments. An important finding in the latter study was that neighbors' dissatisfaction seems to subside with time. By linking survey data from residents with data collected from housing administrators, it can be seen that barely 10 percent of the neighbors were negative to the activity, and that there were no longer any statistically significant differences between neighbourhoods where the reactions were positive at the time of the establishment, and those where the reactions were negative. Several smaller American studies had shown related results earlier. Wahl (1993) showed that after about one year neighbors of psychiatric group homes did not think that the neighbourhood was affected negatively by the activity. Their attitudes toward group homes were also considerably more positive than those expressed by the respondents in a control group that was to decide hypothetically about the prospect of having such a facility as a neighbor (Gale, Fan Ng and Rosenblood, 1988; Hudson-Allez and Barrett, 1996; Cook, 1997).

A similar picture was given in the only, as far as we know, nationally statistically representative study of neighbourhood reactions against human services. Gerdner and

Borell (2003) investigated, with the help of interviews of housing administrators in Sweden, neighbourhood reactions to Homes for Care and Residence (which includes homes for children and adolescents with various social, emotional and substance-related problems). Three different forms of neighbourhood reactions to the establishment of activities were found. In 16 percent of the cases there were organized protests (such as petition lists or protest meetings), and in another 14 percent there were signs of worry (such as telephone calls to activity administrators and negative rumours). In over 50 percent of the establishments there were no neighbourhood reactions at all. In line with the North American studies, this analysis shows that protest and worry primarily belong to the establishment phase (most of the negative reactions actually occurred long before the services started to operate), and only in a few cases did the conflicts remain over a longer period of time.

The aim of the studies that examined local reactions to the establishment of human services with the aid of quantitative data from human service administrators was not to investigate the earlier research's principal thesis – that it is primarily client characteristics that determine if human services will be met with acceptance or with hostility (but see Cook, 1997). Nor have the conditions that were given a secondary significance for local opposition against establishments in the first wave approach – the neighbourhood's sociodemographic characteristics and facility characteristics – been systematically observed in the more direct studies of neighbor reactions. To the extent that the indirect approach has been used to study these questions, the findings are mixed; the results both contradict and confirm the first wave research. In neither Zippay's studies of Massachusetts (1997) nor that of seven American states (2007) are there statistically significant differences in the degree of acceptance between areas with differing sociodemographic profiles (median household income, unemployment rate and race). However, the emphasis on the importance of occupancy rates is confirmed. In Zippay's (1997) study from Massachusetts the opposition was significantly associated with occupancy; sites with six or more residents were more likely to experience opposition than those with five or less. The results from Gerdner and Borell's (2003) Swedish study go in the same direction; larger institutions met a significantly greater opposition than did smaller institutions (but it should be noted that those units studied were all relatively small).

## *The direct approach*

The indirect approach to the study of opposition to the establishment of human services, based on data that were collected in surveys for human services administrators, deal with actual, real life local protest and with the size, duration and significance of such protests – in contrast to the early wave research. Data of this kind are, however, not unproblematic. Respondents are often confronted with the task of providing information on events and situations that are sometimes far in the past, and the risk of memory lapses is obvious. A more critical problem concerns the studies' exclusive dependency on information from administrators; it is not actually the local protests as such that are studied, but instead the administrators' assessments of them. In the research on protests against locally unwanted establishments, however, can be discerned another alternative approach that has an immediate focus on the local protests. The contrast between what can be called a more protest-centred perspective and the first wave approach are very clear here. Conflicts about locally unwanted facilities are not simply expressions of general attitudes against client groups, nor can they easily be predicted using knowledge about facility characteristics or social demography. With this approach, we are dealing instead with complex situation-based processes involving large numbers of actors and power relations. The perspective shift also implies a radical methodological change where a naturalistic approach with qualitative case studies replaces the quantitative surveys.

One of the first qualitative case studies of local protests against unwanted human service facilities was carried out, paradoxically, by one of the advocates of the first wave approach, Lois Takahashi. In her book *Homelessness, AIDS and stigmatization* (1998), hypothetical data from 'good neighbor hierarchies' is still given much attention. But in parallel the heterogeneity of community responses to the homeless and people with HIV/AIDS and how community responses change over time are studied with the aid of qualitative methods. The distance from the first wave research is significant here, and Takahashi's book can be seen as an interesting expression of growing insights on the limitations of the hypothetical approach from the representatives of this perspective (see also Takahashi, 1997: 906–907). At about the same time Piat (2000) published her findings of a study on community oppositions to group homes in Montreal, Canada. A central point in this study is its criticism of the first wave research's generalized,

hypothetical approach which, according to Piat, 'do not predict actual behaviour or how people would react when confronted with group homes for people with disabilities' (2000: 128).

Qualitative, direct studies of siting conflicts are more contextualized than indirect studies of such conflicts, but the most striking difference between the indirect and the direct approach has to do with the depiction of local protesters; the direct approach often focuses on local protesters and, especially, their ability to win public support for their cause and, more specifically, on the challenging rhetorical problems that are brought by opposition to the establishment of human service facilities.

As briefly discussed in the introduction to this article, local environmental siting conflicts often offer opportunities to be run generally and on principle. In these cases, it is not only the siting that becomes the object of protests, but also the activities themselves and the technologies on which they are based (e.g. coastal oil drilling or nuclear power technology). As a consequence, environmental siting conflicts provide opportunities for what social movement researchers refers to as alignment strategies (Snow *et al.*, 1986). Such strategies involve establishing connections with other issues and movements – e.g. by adapting the local protest movement's rhetoric to more legitimate sources such as scientific findings on risk – counterknowledge – or forming alliances with environmental movements or other generalist movements (McAvoy, 1998; Shaffer, 2000; Sherman, 2015; Rootes, 2013). Measures of this kind can be seen as central mechanisms underlying so-called scale sifts, i.e. processes that result in the expansion of a certain movement from the local to the regional, national or even the international level (Boudet, 2011). Protests against the establishment of human services cannot be legitimized in these ways. Neighbors who for instance protest against projects like community-based psychiatric housing cannot make claims that their 'defense of the neighbourhood' will at the same time be a defense of general, principle-based interests because human services of this type usually have a broad general support. Neighbors who protest against human services lack, in other words, opportunities to develop what sociologist Jasper (Gordon and Jasper, 1996; Jasper, 1998) describes as a principle-based global rhetoric and of forming alliances with generalist movements. To legitimize the protests, they are directed instead to a local rhetoric to win the opinion support needed to prevent the establishment of a social service facility. Grillo's (2005) and Hubbard's (2005) case studies of protests

against the establishment of centres for asylum seekers in the United Kingdom are illustrative of this. A strong effort to avoid a debate on the establishments as such, and thus avoid accusations of racism, was a general principle for the local protest groups studied. The argumentation that developed was instead above all about the 'unreasonable' stress the camp would place on the limited local infrastructure. One protest group representative in Saltdean, on the southern English coast, urged protesting neighbors 'to avoid a racist slant and keep to the Saltdean infrastructure and whether Saltdean could sustain a large influx of asylum-seekers with regard to schools, etc.' (Grillo, 2005: 254).

Local residents who protest against the establishment of human services tend, thus, to focus on the practical local problems rather than on worry about the activities as such and the otherness in their midst. Contrary to many protests against facilities perceived as environmentally detrimental, these protestors lack the option to develop a more principle-based rhetoric. They are obliged, in short, to use a typical NIMBY rhetoric, i.e. to arguments that in various ways are variations on the theme of 'by all means somewhere else but not just here.' Such a local rhetoric is, however, vulnerable, and here the term NIMBY has come to play an unexpected role, illustrating what Giddens (1993) discuss as a continual 'slippage' of concepts constructed in the social sciences; concepts, originally coined to analyse different lay actors, can be appropriated by these actors. The originally scholarly concept NIMBY (initially formulated as a collective action dilemma, see Wolsink, 2006) is today frequently used by decision-makers as a rhetorical argument against protesting neighbors. Thus, referring to a local protest using the label 'just a NIMBY' is an established tactic of discrediting protesting neighbors. In a case study of local protests against the establishment of a homeless shelter in Northampton, MA, one of the protestors says:

*NIMBY has been used as a flag to turn off protest, to shut people down instead of really listening to people ... it becomes a battle tool on the part of people who don't really pay attention ... to say, 'Oh, well, that's just a NIMBY response, we don't have to take that into account.'* (Lyon-Callo, 2001: 193. See also Burningham, 2000; Gibson, 2005; McClymont and O'Hare, 2008).

As a rule, the protesters cannot question, in their 'defense of the local community', the facilities as such, and they have difficulty defending themselves against complaints that

the protests are expressions for 'narrow' and 'selfish' opinions. In order to develop a more general, opinion-winning rhetoric, it remains only for the protesters to formulate what Jasper (Gordon and Jasper, 1996; Jasper, 1998) describes as a semi-local argumentation. Such an argumentation, which can be seen as an attempt to motivate protests at a level based more on the principal of being against the establishment of human services without questioning the kind of activity, can be expressed in several ways. One example of such a rhetorical solution is to say that an establishment in people's neighbourhood is negative above all for the clients. In the studies referred to earlier on local opposition against asylum centres in England, an advocate of one of the studied protest groups emphasized that the siting of this camp would not only involve an intolerable stress on a small community's infrastructure but also negative effects for the asylum seekers themselves: 'They'll not want to stay playing table tennis all day, they'll want to be out and about' (Hubbard, 2005: 8).

A more frequent attempt to develop a more general rhetoric against undesirable establishments of human services deals with focusing on procedural issues and the fairness of the process by which the decisions were arrived at (Gordon and Jasper, 1996; Farkas, 1999). By focusing on issues that have to do with the neighbors' opportunities to express themselves on a certain local establishment, questions about the type of activity can be avoided, and the protests can find legitimacy by invoking general democratic values on influence and participation.

## **Conclusions**

Research on community opposition to unwanted land uses was developed primarily against a background of de-institutionalization of psychiatric care and other social treatments and services, and on the local protests that followed these first attempts to decentralize such activities. Researchers are still interested in community opposition to unwanted land uses, but at present more in protests against environmentally detrimental objects, rather than against human services (despite the fact that nothing indicates that the latter type of protests have decreased). The research on local conflicts on the establishment of human services is also characterized in other respects by discontinuity; the research area is not only characterized by decreasing interest, but also by significant fragmentation. Since the 1980s various theoretical and methodological approaches have been introduced, but only in exceptional cases have researchers sought to articulate the

differences between these. In other words, the basic conditions for syntheses have for the most part been missing. The aim of this study has been to expose these approaches and compare them in a more systematic way than has been previously considered.

Characteristic of the first wave of research on community opposition to unwanted land uses were the extensive generalization claims. The purpose was to explain community rejections against 'noxious' facilities, but the local protests were seldom made the objects of study. The approach was instead primarily dependent on general attitudinal data among the general population regarding people with perceived differences. Opposition to human service facilities was seen from such hypotheses, more specifically, as a function of general hierarchically arranged attitudes to client groups.

In contrast to the first wave approach and its emphasis on the decisive roles of general attitudes, other approaches develop – ones that are more in line with the contemporary social science problematization of the relationships between attitudes and behaviour. The decontextualized perspective of the first wave approach is replaced by contextualization, and studies of actual protests against the establishment of human services are put in the place of the general 'good neighbor hierarchy'. But the degree of contextualization varies strongly within this more protest-centred attitude. The indirect approach proceeds from data that are collected with the aid of interviews with human service administrators, and responds only in exceptional cases to the main question on the first wave approach about the connection between protests and type of client. The studies are concerned, instead, with primary questions which concern the extent and duration of neighbors' protests. The direct approach is used to study the protests as such, and especially the questions that have to do with the local protests' ability to generate opinion support. A central premise for several of these studies of the protest movements' rhetoric is the distinction between different types of community opposition to unwanted land uses. In the first wave approach, the term 'NIMBY' characterized protests both against perceived technological and environmental threats and the establishment of human services facilities (even though it was the latter that attracted the most attention). However, the rhetorical repertoire available to those battling human service facilities are more limited than the repertoire available for those battling environmental threats; protests against human services cannot develop the criticism based on principle that many environmental battles can claim. Neighbors who protest against human services facilities are referred to a

typical NIMBY rhetoric – that is, ‘by all means somewhere else but not just here, where we live’ – and thus become vulnerable to accusations for ‘narrow-minded’, ‘egoistical’ opposition.

We conclude that both the direct and the indirect efforts to shed light on local protests against human services should be seen as attempts to handle the problems in the first wave approach. Instead of seeing local protest as a function of general attitudes to different client groups, reactions toward actual establishments are studied. While the direct and indirect approaches represent a more realistic approach in comparison with the first wave research, the differences between the two approaches are important. The indirect attitude, with its emphasis on quantitative data, opens up for interesting generalization opportunities, but also is limited by a conveyed secondhand perception of the protests. It is not the protests by themselves that are studied, but rather the decision-makers’ judgement of the type, extent, and duration of the protests. The direct approach, with its emphasis on qualitative, contextual data, is characterized by proximity to the protesters, and by the possibilities to understand their rhetorical challenges, although the difficulties in generalizing such findings are obvious.

In this article the alternatives to the first wave of research on unwanted sitings have been demonstrated for the first time and contrasted with each other. This is a necessary requirement and a first step for efforts to provide the syntheses that this research area so sorely needs.

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