## Thesis Abstract

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Title of Thesis:

Risk and Rationalities in Japan Among Residents of Nuclear Plant Areas

Summary of Thesis:

The thesis examines the complexity of risk understandings among residents of nuclear power plants (NPP). It focuses on the local communities living in a setting similar to, but not the same as, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant (NPP) site, Omaezaki City in Shizuoka Prefecture, where the Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant is located. Through the lens of 3.11 and its aftermath, the thesis seeks to provide a detailed description of how residents of such communities have been making sense of living close to such facilities before, and several points in time after the 3.11 disaster. The thesis investigates residents' viewpoints on the nearby nuclear power plant, notions of trust and responsibility, sense of place, and the factors associated with community acceptance of the facility.

The thesis argues that nuclear-related issues simply cannot consume the residents' everyday concerns, thereby dissipating the significance of the nuclear risk. The risk of having the plant in the vicinity is merely part of the wide range of risks touching upon the multidimensional concerns of the residents' everyday life. The thesis shows how there are complex workings related to financial, communal, familial and other concerns, which make the residents' partisan choices (pro or anti- nuclear) almost mute. To the extent that the plant brings "fringe" benefits to the communities, the fundamental choice of pro- or anti- nuclear plays a secondary role in dictating the residents' outward stance toward the presence of the nuclear power plant.

Theoretically, the thesis integrates economic behavioral and sociological theories of decision-making under risk(s) and uncertainty, as developed by Daniel Kahneman, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, among others, with an ethnographic reconceptualization of individual and community security and refines these in relation to residents' lived experiences. Overall, this qualitative study argues for the value of shifting our gaze from a sole focus on the nuclear risk as a research object as well as the reduction of residents' risk calculation to a simple gains and losses to wider processes and contexts in which residents' specific meaning-making activities and everyday practices of negotiating risk(s) and in/securities are situated and embedded. Theoretical and applied implications are discussed in the context of recent Japan energy policy.

Key Word: Nuclear Power, Risk, Host Community, Fukushima, Hamaoka