

Facility Siting: The Theory-Practice Nexus

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Overview

- Contentious politics & uncertainty
- Knowledge production & utilisation
- Key Headlines
 - Theoretically & methodologically rich
 - High conceptual & instrumental utility
 - Overcoming empirical & theoretical gaps

Knowledge Production

- Earliest Review
 - Jopling & site selection
- Significant growth of literature
 - Public acceptance of domestic projects
 - Less research on international projects & post public acceptance stages
- Timely to review literature & explore utility to practitioners

Theory

➤ Foundationalist

- Real world independent of our knowledge
- Positivist

➤ Anti-foundationalist

- Social world is dependent of our knowledge & socially constructed
- Interpretivist

Method

➤ Qualitative

- Process, context & strategies


➤ Quantitative

- Statistical relationships

➤ Comparative

- Intra- & inter-country comparisons

Key Features

- Foundational vs anti-foundational theories
 - Single country vs comparative studies
 - Eclecticism in theory & method
 - Empirical validity of causal relationships
 - Middle-range theories
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Knowledge Utilisation

- Paradigm shift during 1970-80s
 - From coercive DAD approaches
 - To less coercive, more participatory approaches
- Two uses of research by practitioners
 - Conceptual (basic orientation & perspectives)
 - Instrumental (strategic & functional)

Conceptual Utility

- Overarching perspectives
- Facility Siting Credo
 - Goals/values, status quo, trust
 - Deliberative, workable & fairer siting
- Stepwise Siting
 - Participatory democracy & risk governance
 - Credo + reversibility of decisions & social learning

Instrumental Utility

- Diagnosis
 - Understanding phenomena faced
- Prediction
 - Anticipating & preventing unwanted trends
- Prescription
 - Strategies to achieve desired results
- Evaluation
 - Benchmarks for assessing success/failure

Addressing Shortcomings

- Utility of Contestable Theories
 - Possible confusion for practitioners
- Adequacy of existing insights
 - Reconciling positions & selection biases
- Contingency & utility
 - Strategic & tactical needs
- Applicability to Asia
 - Learning & transferability of knowledge