

Contributing to Future Cooperative Decision-Making by Residents and Governments

Analyzing consensus-building processes for a coastal embankment project following the Great East Japan Earthquake and establishing better cooperative decision-making models for residents and governments

In many of the public works projects carried out on coastal areas in Japan, attention has been placed on the process of consensus-building between residents and governments, particularly in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. In this research, researchers from various fields perform interdisciplinary analysis of the consensus-building process for a coastal embankment project in Kesennuma City. Knowledge from research performed on domestic and international coastal public works projects up to this point is applied to a cross-sectional analysis of multiple case studies to address the question of how dialogue between residents and the local government proceeded and how challenges were resolved. This research aims to establish cooperative decision-making models for the future.



Principal Investigator

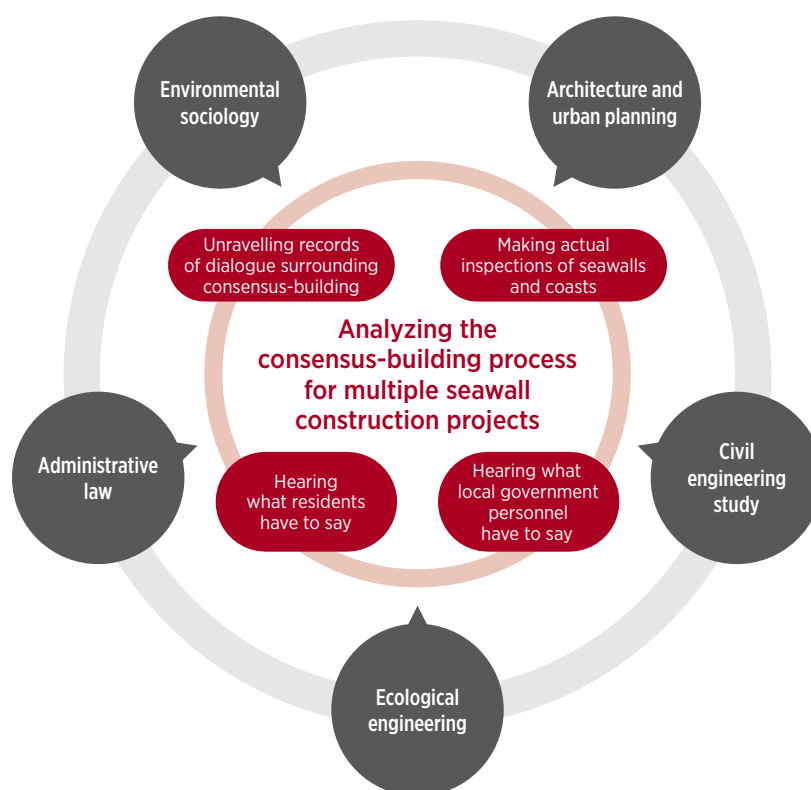
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“My hope is to do my part to create systems for better consensus-building while repeatedly engaging in careful dialogue with members of the community and local government.”

Aiming to capture new knowledge using the research method of performing cross-sectional and interdisciplinary analysis on multiple case studies

There are three main points of novelty and originality in this research. The first is that it involves the participation of researchers in multiple disciplines, namely environmental sociology, architecture and urban planning, civil engineering, ecological engineering and administrative law, in an interdisciplinary cross-section of engineering, technical research and sociological research; all of which were often conventionally conducted separate of each other. The second is that it involves deriving new knowledge from commonalities and differences that cannot be obtained through single case study research by performing a cross-sectional analysis of numerous cases studies of consensus-building in seawall construction following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Lastly, it involves an exploration of what a more substantial form of consensus-building should look like through forming an understanding of not just the superficial differences in opinions of “for” and “against,” but also the reasons behind those opinions by delving into them. Using these research methods, this research aims to gain new hints for consensus-building in future public works projects.



(Numerous seawalls in the Tohoku region were actually visited and surveyed.)

Working towards establishing cooperative decision-making models that positively serve future infrastructure public works projects

Knowledge in this research is scheduled to be disseminated so it can be leveraged in the consensus-building process for infrastructure public works projects across Japan. The “visualization” of the decision-making process is emphasized in particular. Prior case study research has shown that on occasions of consensus-building, there are disparities in the recognition and interpretation of information depending on one’s position. Sharing situations where dialogue progresses or stagnates and the points of emphasis and judgement of people in various positions could open

the doors to visibility on clues to more constructive dialogue.

Conceivable forums for the utilization of research results include workshops for residents and training programs for technical staff belonging to the local government. Careful analysis will be conducted to bring into focus elements that can be used as a reference, even within each of the various constraints and circumstances, in discussions of future infrastructure projects in Japan.

