

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)
DIJ Social Science Study Group



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**The New Japanese Fishery Policies
Between Revitalization and Capitalization**

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Coastal fisheries in Japan have been in decline since the early 1990s. Situated mostly in rural areas, fishing communities suffer from depopulation, aging and a lack of successors. Moreover, stagnating production levels, falling prices, decreasing demand and rising costs have led to income insecurities, further deterring young people to enter the industry. Policymakers and fishermen alike have been struggling to find solutions for this complex mix of challenges.

The dissertation projects analyzes how fishery policies have changed since the implementation of the 2001 Fisheries Basic Act. The Basic Act stipulated the revitalization of small scale coastal fisheries with a focus on communities as one of its the main goals, followed by several programs channeling subsidies into fishing to achieve this. Since 2014, however, we can observe a policy shift with several distinct features. The responsibility of developing measures for revitalization is increasingly put into the hands of the fishermen and local authorities, with a strong emphasis on economic factors. The 2018 reform of the Fishery Law further emphasizes this trend, aiming to usher in more capital-based fisheries. Moreover, management of stocks will increasingly be based on Total Allowable Catch (TAC) systems, a move away from the traditional community based management. This has left many small-scale-fishermen worried about their future in coastal fisheries.

How can we explain these seemingly contradictory policy goals of small-scale fishery revitalization on the one hand and a move towards capital-based fisheries on the other? Is there a move away from a “Japanese fishery policy” towards a more western one? Based on document analysis as well as interviews, the presentation aims to offer first answers to these questions, employing concepts of policy transfer and policy convergence.

Susanne Auerbach is a researcher at the Institute for Japanese Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her PhD project focuses on coastal fisheries in Japan and fisheries policy on the national and local level. She currently holds a PhD scholarship at the German Institute for Japanese Studies.

About:

The DIJ Social Science Study Group is a forum for scholars conducting research on contemporary Japan. Meetings are held once a month and are open to speakers from all disciplines of the social sciences. The event is open to all. Registration is not necessary but appreciated, via ganseforth@dijtokyo.org.

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